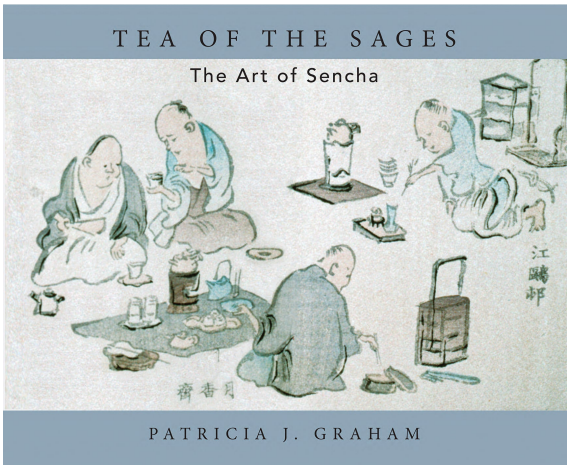
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Tea of the Sages

The Art of Sencha

Patricia J. Graham

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- Focuses on the Japanese green-leaf tea called sencha
- The only comprehensive English-language book on this important cultural phenomenon
- Recounts the origins of sencha in China and its transmission to Japan
- Details the significant influence of sencha on Japanese arts
- Describes the enduring popularity of sencha worldwide

The Japanese tea ceremony is usually identified with chanoyu and its bowls of whipped, powdered green tea served in surroundings influenced by the aesthetics of Zen Buddhism. ***Tea of the Sages*** introduces the philosophy and material culture of an alternate Japanese tea ceremony featuring sencha (steeped green leaf tea). Sencha initially gained popularity among Japan's Sinophile intellectuals, who learned of it from immigrant seventeenth-century Chinese scholar-monks of the Ōbaku Zen school. They championed the beverage as an elixir consumed by ancient Chinese sages. Sencha inspired painters and poets, and fostered major advances within craft industries, especially ceramics, metalwork, and bamboo basketry. Its popularity as an everyday drink remains strong and has spread widely outside Japan. The sencha tea ceremony survives as well, with more than a hundred schools still in existence today.

Patricia J. Graham, a former professor and museum curator, is an independent scholar based in Colorado, affiliated with the University of Kansas Center for East Asian Studies as a Research Associate, and a certified appraiser of East Asian art. Among her many other publications are *Japanese Design: An Illustrated Guide to Art, Architecture and Aesthetics in Japan* (Tuttle, 2021) and *Faith and Power in Japanese Buddhist Art, 1600–2005* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

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