

AROUND THE WORLD WITH A BOOK: OKAKURA KAKUZŌ'S *THE BOOK OF TEA* AND ITS TRANSFORMATIONS

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Abstract: *This paper investigates a work that still circulates widely, both as a bilingual primer for the study of English, and as an introduction to “the heart of Japan”, and has been translated into over thirty languages. The paper first looks at how Okakura Kakuzō’s The Book of Tea reshaped and reinterpreted a piece of Japan for the English-speaking world in 1906, discussing the author’s choice and methods. Next, it considers the rendering of The Book of Tea back into Japanese (1929, 1938, 1956), analyzing the challenges and timeliness of each translation. Lastly, it looks at the Romanian versions (1925, 2008), in order to raise the question of the world translating Okakura’s Japan into languages other than English.*

Keywords: *Okakura Kakuzō, “The Book of Tea”, linguistic and cultural translation, Japanese and Romanian translations*

Okakura Kakuzō is a fairly well known name worldwide, as are his English works introducing Japan to the world, such as *The Ideals of the East*¹, *The Awakening of Japan*² and this paper’s main topic, *The Book of Tea*, which is still popular with Japanese and foreigners alike, and often introduced as a key to “the heart of Japan”. Having studied English since his early childhood days, Okakura was fluent in the language, a skill extremely rare and valued – then and now – , which put him in direct contact with numerous Japan-fanatics, artists and travelers, whom we might refer to as proto-Japanologists today. He was their connection to Japan, and they were his connection to the West – but at the same time with himself and his cultural heritage, which many Japanese rediscovered and learned to re-appreciate after the Meiji Restoration³.

While the amount of scholarly knowledge in English and Japanese about Okakura’s conception of art, nation, Asia, Japan and the world, as

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¹ John Murray Publishers, London, 1903.

² Century Publishers, NY, 1904.

³ More details about the process, for example in Christopher Benfey’s *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics and the Opening of Old Japan* (Random House, NY, 2003).

well as the way his work was (mis)interpreted and used in support of Japanese nationalism has been growing constantly, there have been comparatively few attempts at looking at his writing from the standpoint of translation⁴, regardless of the fact that the process of rendering words from one idiom into another, and ideas from one culture into another played an extremely important role, both in Okakura's writing of his English works, and in their "relocation" and "re-acclimation" within Japanese consciousness, twenty years after the publication of the original work. The fact that Japanese (and Chinese) culture was "translated" into English to match the needs of a specific audience left its mark from the beginning on the structure, language, and contents of *The Book of Tea*; subsequent translations into other languages are, in their turn, bound to show the traces of the above-mentioned process – a process of merging texts from different languages/ cultures/ ages into a unifying and apparently transparent "modern" English text; also, the translator's access to knowledge about, and understanding of the source-culture (Japanese) or secondary source-texts (Japanese translations) are further elements that have to be taken into account when analysing the linguistic and cultural implications of Okakura's text.

Therefore, in my paper I intend to consider first the way *The Book of Tea* was written, incorporating translations of various classical Chinese and Japanese texts; furthermore, I plan to analyse two very different ways it was rendered into Japanese, in 1929 (revised in 1938) and 1956, and finally briefly look at the Romanian translations of 1925 and 2008, in order to tackle issues such as translator (in)visibility, foreignisation and domestication, culturally-informed translation⁵, etc.

When we think about translation and Japan, the first thing that comes to mind is the period of frantic rendering of Western texts into Japanese, at the beginning of the Meiji period. As it has been often pointed out, when opening to the West after hundreds of years of isolation (*sakoku*, 鎖国), Japan was facing an across-the-board crisis, which was to be remedied via translation, the best way to reboot the country's "old" cultural/ social/ linguistic system, at the level of both form and content. One of the problems faced by translation in the early years of the Meiji was the lack of a unitary target-language, since Japanese had yet to find itself, especially

⁴ One such attempt, to which the present study is indebted, is Naoko Fuwa Thornton's insightful "Translation as a Counter-Colonial Tool: Okakura Kakuzo's *The Book of Tea*", in *Studies in English and American Literature* 40, pp. 13-19 (Japan Women's University, 2005).

⁵ For the definition of the terms, refer (mainly) to Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (Routledge, NY, 1995) and Itamar Even-Zohar's *Polysystem Studies* (in "Poetics Today" 11:1, 1990).

as the language of knowledge and literature, among the various styles (*gikobun* 擬古文, *gabun* 雅文, *kanbun-kundokutai* 漢文訓読体, *genbun-icchi-tai* 言文一致体, etc), as well as dialects in circulation at the moment⁶.

On the other hand, Japan had, as a matter of fact, a long tradition of translating Chinese texts, using katakana glosses to indicate the word order and add Japanese grammatical markers to produce the so-called *kanbun kundoku*; except that, neither was *kanbun* considered a piece of writing in a foreign language, nor was the practice of adding Japanese glosses to it considered translation per se. For a long time after the Restoration, it was as natural, for the elites at least, to read and write in *kanbun* as it was to do it in Japanese⁷.

While Japan was bringing itself up-to-date with western realities, it was being in its turn discovered, its culture sampled, its idiosyncrasies translated for the West. There were the accounts of the first travelers to Japan, the guidebooks, the “Things Japanese”⁸ collected by Chamberlain, or the “Queer Things about Japan”⁹, as experienced by Douglas Sladen; then there were Morse’s monographs on Japanese architecture¹⁰, or Fenollosa’s essays about Asian art¹¹. Japanese literature too was gaining English expression, with Suematsu Kenchō’s famous 1882 translation of *Genji Monogatari* (源氏物語), as well as numerous other collections of mainly classical poetry, Nō theatre, and folk stories, put together by Japanese and foreigners alike¹².

⁶ Details about the numerous “styles” in usage at the beginning of the Meiji era, and their connection to translation can be found, for example, in Yukari Fukuchi Meldrum’s “Source-Based Translation and Foreignization: A Japanese Case”, in *An Invitation to Translation Studies in Japan 2*, pp.39-53 (Japan Association for Interpretation Studies, SIG Translation Studies, Tokyo, 2008. Available online at http://honyakukenkyu.sakura.ne.jp/shotai_vol2/03_vol2_Meldrum.pdf. Accessed July 2013).

⁷ An extensive study on *kanbun kundoku* as translation can be found in Judy Wakabayashi’s “The reconceptualization of translation from Chinese in 18th century Japan” (pp. 122-145, in *Translation and Cultural Change: Studies in History, Norms and Image-Projection*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, 2005).

⁸ Basil Hall Chamberlain (John Murray, London, 1890).

⁹ Anthony Treherne & Co, London 1903.

¹⁰ For example, the famous *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* (Harper, NY, 1885).

¹¹ For example, his *The Masters of Ukiyo: a Complete Historical Description of Japanese Paintings and Color Prints of the Genre School* (The Knickerbocker Press, NY, 1896) etc.

¹² Among the foreigners translating Japanese texts into English, let us mention here only a few very famous names, such as Lafcadio Hearn, B.H. Chamberlain, Fenollosa, and Ezra Pound, all of whom have greatly contributed to making Japanese literature known abroad.

Around the turn of the century, therefore, Japan was finally turning to look upon itself; this is when Japanese men of letters such as Uchimura Kanzō¹³, Nitobe Inazō¹⁴, or Okakura Kakuzō wrote their English works, in an attempt to counter the western misconceptions about Japan and show the world its genuine face. But to believe they could actually do that was obviously an illusion. First of all, they were using the language of the cultural colonizer, which inexorably shaped their way of seeing and representing their own country and culture. Second, their choice of subject, as well as their approach, were determined by their expectations, and previous knowledge of their foreign audience, for whom they needed to both domesticate and foreignise Japan, in order to capture their interest and stimulate their admiration in a way that would make cultural idiosyncrasies charming, but not incomprehensible.

Let us now look more closely at one of the prominent figures promoting Japan abroad at the beginning of the 1900s, the Japanese arts scholar, Okakura Kakuzō.

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Born in Yokohama, Okakura Kakuzō received intensive English education at the Hepburn missionary school, until his father accidentally discovered he could not read kanji, and sent him to study the Chinese and Japanese classics at a temple. Later, he studied law and politics at the Tokyo Imperial University, but, in a twist of fate, wrote his graduation thesis on the theory of art, and was assigned after graduation to work for the ministry of culture and education, where he met Ernest Fenollosa, his former professor, and became his assistant, accompanying him in his various trips, during which they surveyed and collected Buddhist art from the temples of Japan.

Later on, he acted as guide and interpreter for a number of foreigners visiting Japan to discover its beauties and discover themselves. A young man in his twenties, he saw his own country for the first time through the orientalisising eyes of his companions, while translating its culture for them; this informed his experience, as well as shaped his discourse (and theirs)¹⁵.

His appreciation for Buddhist and other types of traditional art was shaped by Fenollosa's concepts, and Okakura even converted to an esoteric

¹³ Author of *Japan and the Japanese* (Min'yusha, Tokyo, 1894), republished as *Representative Men of Japan* (Keiseisha, Tokyo, 1908).

¹⁴ Author of *Bushidō: the Soul of Japan* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1905).

¹⁵ Such as the physician and art collector William Sturgis Bigelow, the zoologist and orientalist Edward Sylvester Morse, or the painter John LaFarge and his historian friend Henry Adams, who were all guided around Japan, at some point or other, by Okakura.

sect of Buddhism together with his teacher and W.S. Bigelow. On the other hand, as Charles Benfey points out in his volume *The Great Wave*¹⁶, the friendship with the American painter LaFarge, who “knew precisely where Japan belonged in American culture”, made him begin “to assemble the heady mix of “the wisdom of the East”, the charm of Japanese arts and crafts, and a taste for martial valor that so impressed Western audiences later in his career”. Around 1900, Okakura also translated various Tao texts for Fenollosa, an experience that most likely bore fruit later, when he undertook the writing of *The Book of Tea*.

It would thus be appropriate to say that Okakura found his voice and identity through translating and interpreting language and culture, in other words, by re-mixing the discourses of several of the foreign travelers he had come in contact with. As the most obvious examples, let me mention here that the expression “a tempest in a teacup”, which we find in the first chapter of *The Book of Tea* draws on Chamberlain’s “a veritable storm in a teacup”¹⁷, while the reference to the “bric-a-brac” of European interior design in the chapter on the tea room echoes Morse’s observation in his *Japanese Homes*. It is, of course, only natural that his English vocabulary was borrowed from the books he had read, and that the words (and with them, the ideas) of the Other had thus become his own, as in any process of language acquisition—which is more often than not motivated by the learner’s desire to identify with the foreign culture¹⁸.

The Book of Tea is a patchwork of texts, quoted from English, Chinese and Japanese—but some of the quotations are incomplete, some of the translations inexact; sources are often not mentioned, interpretations inappropriate, texts attributed to the wrong person. For example, Laotse’s ideas about “emptiness” are incompletely quoted and interpreted from a western perspective¹⁹, and Kutsugen’s words “the sages move with the world” are misquoted as “the sages move the world”; in another instance, Laotse’s words are translated as “Heaven and Earth are pitiless”, while different translators give almost opposite interpretations to the

¹⁶ See 3.

¹⁷ From *Things Japanese*, see 8.

¹⁸ As Gardner, E.C. states in his study, *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation* (Arnold, London, 1985).

¹⁹ As Fuwa Thornton notices (see 4), Okakura uses the word “vacuum” to refer to Laotse’s “emptiness” under the influence of Robert Boyle’s scientific terminology, and, instead of stressing, as Laotse does, the idea of non-existence, interprets vacuum as something to which each person can attach a different meaning: “A vacuum is there for you to enter and fill up to the full measure of your aesthetic emotion.” (cf. *The Book of Tea*, p.27).

philosopher's original *kanbun* aphorism. Moreover, Fujiwara Teika's poem²⁰

*I look beyond;/Flowers are not,/Nor tinted leaves./On the sea beach/ A solitary cottage stands/In the waning light/Of an autumn eve. (p.37)*²¹

quoted in *The Book of Tea* as an expression of Rikyū's image of the ideal *roji*'s "utter loneliness" is actually illustrating his master's concepts²²; on the other hand, the *tanka*

If I pluck thee, my hand will defile thee, O flower! Standing in the meadows as thou art, I offer thee to the Buddhas of the past, of the present, of the future. (p.58)

Is attributed by Okakura to Empress Kōmyō, while it actually belongs to Monk Henjō²³. Also, many of the so-called quotations are so ambiguous that they are impossible to trace, which makes one wonder if they are not actually figments of Okakura's imagination. One such example is the observation of "a Ming author" about the shortcomings of translation, which Okakura quotes in the chapter about Taoism.

Translation is always a treason, and as a Ming author observes, can at its best be only the reverse side of a brocade,— all the threads are there, but not the subtlety of colour or design. (p.22)

The metaphor of translation as the back of a brocade strikes a chord, and the words have often been quoted as illustrating Okakura's ideas about translation, usually without reference to the said "Ming author" to whom they are supposed to belong. The way the quotation appears in *The Book of Tea*, half-internalized, without exact mention of the source, is emblematic for Okakura's attitude: he has made the Other's discourse his own, erasing himself as a translator. While lamenting the inferior status of translation, as something robbed of the original's "subtlety of colour and design", by making free use of approximate quotations and translations, Okakura avoids bringing in front of his readers the irregular and unclear reverse side of the patchwork brocade. He has hidden all the loose threads, and

²⁰ Okakura does not mention the author of the poem, only that, according to Rikyū, "the secret of making a *roji* was contained in (this) ancient ditty".

²¹ In my paper, for the sake of convenience, I am using the Dreamsmyth edition (William Adams, US, 2001; pdf file of the 1906 edition, available online at http://mysite.verizon.net/william_franklin_adams/portfolio/typography/thebookoftea.pdf).

²² According to Sen no Sōtan (Rikyū's grandson), as quoted in his book *Sawa Shigetsu Shū* (茶話指月集, dictated to his disciple; 1701).

²³ According to Hiroshi Muraoka's notes in the 1929 translation.

created a new texture, one that obscures the old ones, that is, the texts before translation.

He has also achieved another thing: by piecing together fragments originally in English, with classical Chinese or Japanese texts translated in the same beginning-of-the-20th-century idiom, by coining new words or finding English equivalents for Japan-specific terms, and drawing parallels between Japanese culture and western culture, he has succeeded in showing, on the level of both form and content, that Japan is on par with the world, and that its traditions can be resurrected within the modern framework. At the same time, by giving foreign expression to Japanese culture, and offering it an international luster, he has paved the way for its re-appreciation on a national level.

Michael Emmerich, in his article “Making *Genji* Ours”²⁴ points out that Arthur Waley’s translating *The Tale of Genji* into English was crucial for the re-evaluation of the 11th century work in modern Japan. He quotes Masamune Hakuchō’s words from *An English Translation of Genji Monogatari*: “I always found it a very boring book—limp and slippery and devoid of anything that might strike a chord in the readers’ hearts. But now, reading it in English, I find for the first time that I can follow the plot, I understand both the action and the psychology of the male and female characters (...) I have the feeling, though, that if this English translation was translated anew into Japanese, it might attract a large and avid readership that would enjoy it as one of the great novels of the world.”²⁵

Of course, Waley’s *Genji* was not translated back from English into Japanese, but *The Book of Tea* was, first in 1929, then in 1936. The 1929 edition was revised and republished in 1938, and then in 1939 (all three editions appeared from Iwanami Shoten).

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A lot had been written on *cha-no-yu* in Japan before, mainly in moral training textbooks and almanacs²⁶, but most references were to the formal

²⁴ “Making *Genji* ours: Translation, world literature, and Masamune Hakuchō’s discovery of *The tale of Genji*,” in *Translation in Modern Japan*, edited by Indra Levy (Routledge, 2010), pp.234-253.

²⁵ From Masamune Hakuchō’s “Eiyaku *Genji Monogatari*”, in *Kaizō* 15-9, September 1933 (quoted in Emmerich, 22).

²⁶ The examples are indeed numerous; from 1886 and well into the 1940s, various textbooks for children and almanacs for ladies include volumes such as “The Basics of *Cha-no-yu*” (茶の湯の心得), and discuss elements of *sadō* in connection with “good manners” and “domestic order and harmony”. From the second half of the 1920s aesthetic or historical studies of *cha-no-yu* start appearing (for example *Senke Sōan Cha-no-yu no hihō* (The Secret Ways of Senke Tea Ceremony, 1937), or *Mono no aware*

aspects and tea ceremony etiquette, as part of the necessary education of children and women. According to historian and tea ceremony specialist Kumakura Isao²⁷, it was only after the publication of the first translation of *The Book of Tea* that Teatism and flower arrangement started to be considered central to Japanese art.

Nevertheless, while the translation might have renewed the interest in tea as an art, it must have done so in a more “re-domesticating” way than Okakura would have ever appreciated. First of all, even though *cha-no-yu* and *sadō* were terms already known and used in the western world, Okakura had made a point of using the word Teatism to encompass the tea ceremony, the way of the tea and all its cultural ramifications, a choice Naoko Fuwa Thornton²⁸ identifies as his reaction to the cultural colonialism of the west. On the other hand, the Japanese versions all use *sadō* to refer to the conceptual side of Teatism, and *cha-no-yu* to refer to its formal requirements, in the way it had always been done. It can indeed be argued that Okakura’s intentions are thus nullified, and tea is, at least partially, dragged back into the “Japanese-only” context.

But Hiroshi Muraoka’s translation²⁹ goes much further than that: most of the other Japan-specific terms that Okakura had translated into English are re-connected to their original signifieds, with all the historical and cultural meaning they carry within the Japanese tradition; thus, “the art of flower arrangement” becomes *ikebana* (生け花), the Taoist “real man” is *shi* (士), and the phrase “landscapes, birds and flowers” is translated as *sansui-kachō* (山水花鳥).

Also interesting is the way quotations from Chinese and classical Japanese sources are translated, and especially the way the approach changes over the years. In Muraoka’s first translation, wherever the source could be identified, the original text was quoted instead of a translation of Okakura’s text; the Chinese did not even have the *katakana* glosses necessary for transforming it into *kanbun-kundokutai*; brief explanations of words and expressions were given in the text, but overall it was assumed that the reader will be able to understand the classical language as such; a similar treatment is seen in the case of quotations from Japanese classics, where, regardless of misquotations or mis-referencing, Okakura’s text is short-circuited, and the so-called “original” is introduced into the

(1939), with chapters about “Cha-no-yu no michi” (The Way of Tea), and “Cha-no-yu no kokoro, bukyō no kokoro” (The heart of tea, the heart of buddhism).

²⁷ “Sadō-ron kara mita *Cha-no Hon* no issitsu-sei” [The Peculiarity of *The Book of Tea* from the Point of View of Tea Ceremony Theories] (in *Cha no hon no hyaku-nen*, Shogakukan, Tokyo, 2007)

²⁸ See 4.

²⁹ *Cha no hon* (『茶の本』) 1929, Iwanami Shoten.

Japanese translation. The 1938 revised edition³⁰ includes glosses and more explanations and endnotes, but is, in effect, employing the same “re-naturalizing” translation strategy, which firmly places Okakura’s theories about art and tea within the Japanese/ Asian culture and tradition. The reasons (conscious or subconscious) behind both the choice to translate *The Book of Tea* at this specific point in time (more than twenty years after the publication in English)³¹, and the “re-domesticating” translation strategies employed by Muraoka can be found in the socio-historical background of the period. The 1930s are the years when a new current, Japanese Romanticism (*Nihon Rōman-Ha*, 日本浪漫派), opposing modernism and calling for a re-evaluation of traditional Japan was becoming popular in the literary and artistic circles; in the second half of the decade, this current merged with a greater movement towards re-evaluating Japan in opposition with the West, a movement backed by the nationalistic government, and which culminated with the special events organized to celebrate 2600 years since the enthronement of emperor Jinmu, in 1940³².

In stark contrast with Muraoka’s Japanese version of *The Book of Tea* we find Akira Asano’s translation, published in 1956³³. Before translating *The Book of Tea*, Asano, a well-known nationalist, had published a collection of essays about Okakura, in 1939³⁴. From around the same time,

³⁰ There exists another Japanese version of *The Book of Tea*, translated in 1936 as *Cha no Sho* (茶の書) and included in *Okakura Tenshin’s Complete Works* (岡倉天心全集), published from Seibunkaku, and translated by Watanabe Masakazu. I have chosen not to deal with it in my current paper as the strategies used by Watanabe are a combination of those used by Muraoka’s in his first and second editions.

³¹ On the other hand, Nitobe’s *Bushidō*, published first in English in the US in 1900, was immediately afterwards (1901) published from Shokabō, a Japanese publishing house in Tokyo, and the Japanese version (translated by Sakurai Ōson) appeared in 1908 from Teibi Publishers. Even before the Japanese translation, the book circulated rather widely in English; its popularity might be ascribed to the fact that the ideas discussed by Nitobe were more attuned to the Japanese military ambitions around the time of the Russo-Japanese War and afterwards.

³² 二千六百年記念行事 preparations for this event were officially announced in 1935. The celebrations included the summer Olympics in Tokyo and winter Olympics in Sapporo, the International Exposition, special arts exhibitions, issuing of commemorative stamps, and ceremonies at the Meiji and Ise Shrines. Along with revised editions of the first translation of *The Book of Tea*, and two new English editions from Kenkyūsha (1938) and Kairyūdō (1938), two new Japanese versions of *Bushidō* (1935, from Keibundō, translated by Ishii Kikujirō, and 1938, from Iwanami Shoten, translated by Yanaihara Tadao) and an English reprint (1938, Kenkyūsha) appeared around the same period, obviously related to the exaltation of Japan and Japanese values taking place officially and unofficially around the year 1940.

³³ *Cha no hon* (『茶の本』), Kadokawa Bunko.

³⁴ *Tenshin Ronkō* (『天心論攷』), from Shisōsha, 1939.

he had also become an active member in Daitō-juku (大東塾), a rightist group with ultra-nationalistic ideas, which supported Shintō beliefs, the imperial family, and traditional Japanese values. Also, as a member of the Association for the New National Studies (*Shin-kokugaku Kyōkai*, 新国学協会), Asano was dedicated to the establishment of the so-called “Imperial Way” literature (Kōdō-bungaku, 皇道文学). Considering his background and areas of interest, it is no surprise that he found Okakura’s text appealing and embarked on rendering it into Japanese after the War. A new translation was indeed long overdue, and Asano’s responded most directly to the needs of a generation that, even though it was no longer fluent in *kanbun* or old Japanese, felt the need to believe in the value of Japanese traditions, and the revival of Japan after the scarring experience of the war³⁵.

Nevertheless, and quite unexpectedly if one considers Asano’s penchant for Japanese-ness— but, on the other hand, maybe predictably, in view of the “new”, postwar Japan-in-the-making, Asano chooses to actually translate *The Book of Tea*, exactly as it had been written by Okakura half a century before, and avoids using domestic terms, informed by Japanese culture and tradition. Except for the case of *sadō*, he tends to translate Okakura’s terminology more literally, with the “traditional” equivalents mentioned occasionally in brackets. Thus, “the code of the samurai” is *samurai no okite* (さむらいのおきて), not *bushidō*, “the art of flower arrangement” is *hana wo ikeru jutsu* (花を生ける術), not *ikebana*, and the Taoist “real man” is simply *shinjin* (真人). He does the same with the classical Chinese and Japanese texts which had been translated by Okakura in English, and which are here rendered into what can be considered the equivalent of plain 20th century English, that is, the plain modern Japanese of the 1950s. Of course, the sources are mentioned in the endnotes, the originals quoted, and Okakura’s inconsistencies clarified, but overall Asano’s strategy clearly takes into consideration the fact that *The Book of Tea* is a foreign language text, which should be translated as such, its defamiliarizing capabilities exploited wherever possible.

Moreover, Asano makes the translation process itself visible for the reader, by using glosses such as *kareiji* for *daigaku*, *oriento* for *tōhō*, *echiketto* for *reigisahō*, etc. In other words, the Japanese culture is given back to Japan, but only after being filtered through the English language, and while preserving most of the signs of the filtering process. This choice

³⁵ It is also far from surprising that for more than two decades after the end of the Second World War, there are no reprints or new translations of *Bushidō*; in English, it only appeared from Tuttle in 1969, and from Teibi (Japan) in 1970, while new Japanese translations also tend to be grouped around the same year.

is, as I have mentioned before, informed by the needs of a different audience, too, but at the same time marks the changing attitudes towards translation, in which the translator's goal is no longer the text's transparency and his own invisibility. Along with a diffidence towards "repossessing" Okakura's discourse as-is, in an age when national values had been shaken and submitted to the relativising gaze of the West-as-enemy, Asano's translation succeeds in presenting before the Japanese reader's eyes a text that is at the same time familiar and foreign, a text both about their own culture/ language, and about the culture/ language it has been filtered through— as opposed to Muraoka's versions, which had been oblivious to the role of English as medium, thus simplifying Okakura's discourse to fit perfectly their readers' horizons of expectation, and the socio-historical background at the time of the publication.

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As for the Romanian translations, they also show two rather distinct strategies; the first one, published in 1925, is signed by Emanoil Bucuță, who admits in the Preface to not knowing much about the author, and to have used the book initially to practice translating from English to Romanian. It is probably safe to say that he did not have a lot of knowledge about Japan, and therefore his translation is "clean" of all the cultural implications the Japanese translators could not avoid referring to. Bucuță transliterates Japanese names according to Romanian script and common pronunciation rules, and declines foreign words according to Romanian grammar. He uses rather "local", culturally-informed words to render Japan-specific terms (such as "biserică"/ church for "zen Buddhist chapel", or "lac"/ lake instead of "mare"/ sea as a translation of "sea"), but on the other hand, literally translates Okakura's English, uncontaminated by any scholarship about Japan or the Japanese language, choosing to render Teism as "cultul ceaiului" (the cult of tea), which might be quite close in meaning to Okakura's intention.

My translation, on the other hand, is tainted by my knowledge of the book's "original" culture; I chose to mark long vowels and double consonants according to modern transliteration norms³⁶, and steer clear of "over-localized" words (such as "church", which Bucuta had used to refer to the "Buddhist chapel"); thus, I would say that I err by relying too much on my own knowledge of Japan, when translating Teism as "calea

³⁶ Also because what was acceptable in 1925 in terms of rendering foreign words into Romanian is no longer valid, and, to the much more cosmopolitan reader of today such representations as "Cicamațu", "Kioto", or "Așikaga Yoșimasa" would have appeared strange.

ceaiului” (the way of tea), “the art of flower arrangement” as “ikebana”, and “No dances” as “teatrul Nō” (Nō theatre). On the other hand, my knowledge about the Japanese culture helped me, in my opinion, make better decisions when translating expressions such as “foolishness of life” as “nimicnicia vieții”, since both the original cha-no-yu, and Okakura’s Teism are closely connected to the idea of the ephemeral, a nuance lacking in Bucuță’s term “nebulia vieții”, i.e., “the insanity of life”.

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In order to write *The Book of Tea*, Okakura had skillfully put together a variety of sources, some of them documented, some maybe invented. He—more or less—succeeded in effacing himself as a translator, making the discourse of the Other his own. He turned a tradition deeply imbedded in the Japanese background into something completely new and universal, by using one equalizing idiom, the English of his time. When his book first traveled to Japan, it was poured back, not only into the mould of the Japanese language, but also into that of its underlying culture, in a way that reinterpreted Teism as “the way of tea”, thus ignoring some of Okakura’s efforts towards internationalization. This happened at a time when Japan had started its march towards nationalism, and the transformation was unavoidable, even if, maybe, unconscious.

Akira Asano too is associated with nationalism, but his version of *The Book of Tea* takes a different stand when it chooses to flatten all types of discourse and translate them as plain, modern Japanese. His method makes the translation process more visible, and reinstates Okakura as translator, too. It presents Teism as something Japanese, but at the same time new and modern, even if, or exactly because, it is filtered through the defamiliarising lens of a foreign language. This is a different attitude towards self and Other, which points to the changes Japan was undergoing in the post-war period.

On the other hand, the Romanian versions clearly show the role knowledge about the source culture can play in the translation act, as well as the differences in the translation strategies favoured by the two moments in time and societies that gave birth to the two versions. Worth noting here is the fact that the 1925 edition is part of a collection of books aimed at bringing culture to the masses, while the 2008 one is a so-called coffee-table book, a hard-cover with illustrations that one is supposed to peruse while sipping tea or coffee in one of the numerous tearooms-cum-bookstores that are recently becoming popular in Romania.

With every word chosen or coined, with the decision to add in-text notes, endnotes, footnotes, *kanbun* glosses, *ateji*, illustrations, hard covers

or the English version for comparison, *The Book of Tea* goes through another transformation; a new text is created every time, corresponding to a new Japan: made in translation.

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