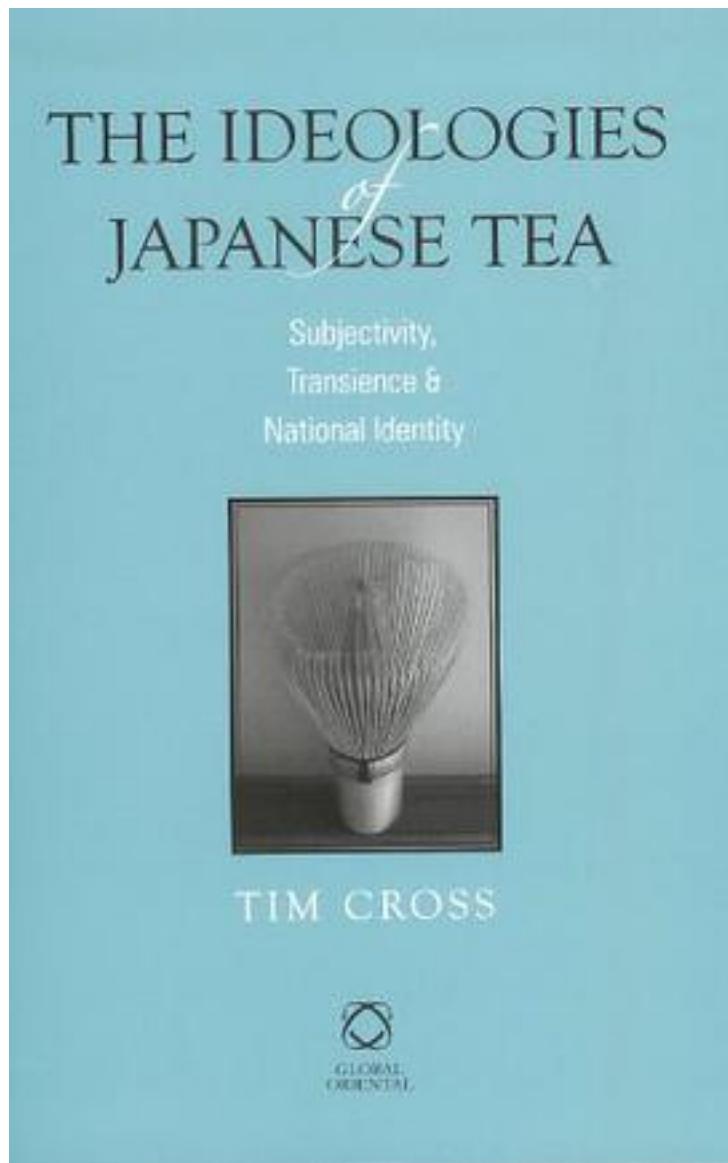


The Ideologies of Japanese Tea



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This provoking new study of the Japanese tea ceremony (chanoyu) examines the ideological foundation of its place in history and the broader context of Japanese cultural values where it has emerged as a so called 'quintessential' component of the culture. It was in fact, Sen Soshitsu XI, grandmaster of Urasenke, today the most globally prominent tea school, who argued in 1872 that tea should be viewed as the expression of the moral universe of the nation. A practising teamaster himself, the author argues, however, that tea was many other things: it was privilege, politics, power and the lever for passion and commitment in the theatre of war. Through a methodological framework rooted in current approaches, he demonstrates how the iconic images as supposedly timeless examples of Japanese tradition have been the subject of manipulation as ideological tools and speaks to presentations of cultural identity in Japanese society today.

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