

Tea for a Medical Doctor and Man of Letters

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Tea for a Medical Doctor and Man of Letters¹

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Introduction

This paper explores an encounter between scientific knowledge and literary studies before and during WWII in Japan, when those intellectuals who had acquired Westernized education were searching for their ways to cope with the tide of the day. It is also an examination on the role and stature of a medical doctor in pre-war Japan. My focus is on Tamotsu Morooka (1879-1946)². He learned English at a missionary school, Steele Memorial Academy in Nagasaki, entering the Imperial University of Kyushu. Following the course of life of ambitious high-profile intellectuals, he went abroad to complete his education in 1919. He stayed in London, though elite medical doctors' usual destination was in Germany. There he learned psychiatry and psychology at the London County Council's Pathological Laboratory between 1919 and 1921. Back in Japan a place in the department of psychopathology in the medical school at Kyushu Imperial University was waiting for him.

Authority: Medical Teaching Staff at Kyushu Imperial University

He took a doctorate in medicine in 1922, being promoted to Assistant Professor in 1923. He was fortunate in securing his place at the prestigious university. In spite of somewhat belated doctorate as he was forty-three years old when he took it, his experience of studying abroad did good to his career. For his additional pleasure, he was awarded 7th Rank in 1925 and Junior 6th Rank of the Japanese Court Order. It was not unusual a teaching staff at the universities should be endowed with this kind of conferment. In addition, he was appointed as a member abroad by British medical societies³. Later in 1957, Ikeda Tojiro, Director of the 1st Fukuoka Municipal Hospital acknowledges his debt to Morooka, who 'studied under the late Lord Frederick Mott and was an English corresponding member since 1922'⁴. Morooka attempted to build his career in one of the authoritative imperial universities in Japan with the foreign assistance of the cultural privileges of the British Royal societies.

¹ This research is part of the joint project on tea supported by the Dean's Funds (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Shizuoka University). This paper is based on the presentation read at the 14th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia (14th ICHSEA) in Paris, 6-10 July 2015. It was organised under the auspices of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), on behalf of the International Society for the History of East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine (ISHEASTM).

² Morooka's life and works have been described in detail in serialized essays by Machiko Iwama, who kindly encouraged me to speak about him at the Paris conference. I am indebted to her essays for greater part of information. Iwama Machiko, 'A Pioneer in Tea Studies: Morooka Tamotsu' *Tea Monthly* January issue (2008): 56-60; February issue (2008): 48-51; March issue (2008): 48-51; April issue (2008): 50-54; May issue (2008): 48-52.

³ Iwama, January (2008): 60. Here she mentions that Morooka was nominated for membership in the Royal Society (60). I have searched for his name in the list of members of the Royal Society in vain.

⁴ Tojiro Ikeda, 'An histological study on the submucous nerve plexus of the alimentary canal with special reference to the three types of nerve plexus', *Journal of Comparative Neurology* 107 (1957): 43-56. Sir Frederick Mott (1853-1926), psychiatrist and sociologist, was engaged in neuropathology. In 1895 he became Director of the London County Council Laboratory at Claybury Asylum. He was elected in 1896 Fellow of Royal Society.

Trauma in Career

He was a late starter at the academic career and the usual elite medical profession's destination was in Germany, not London, so he was not taking the highroad to success, but immediately after he came back from London he got a job. The next year saw him a man with an MD degree; still one year later he was an assistant professor. In short he was climbing the career ladder speedily in the university.

However, after this auspicious late beginning, he did not have smooth sailing in his career. Two years after he was appointed as Assistant Professor, in 1925, the Faculty underwent a devastating hardship: consultation fees scandal. His boss, Sakaki Yasusaburo (1870-1929) seemed an epitome of an elite doctor⁵. However, he was one of the group of people who had to resign from the posts due to the scandal. Three professors, one associate professor and one assistant gave up their jobs. This was a disaster. There were also other strange incidents at the faculty, including fires. The faculty was in utter confusion. Morooka was lucky enough to avoid resignation⁶. This was all the more so because one of the reasons for the backgrounds behind the scandal was the disputes over the validity and propriety of Steinach's rejuvenation treatment which Sakaki practised. Morooka co-translated Steinach's book with Sakaki. The translation was published in 1912, when Morooka belonged to the faculty but was not a medical doctor yet. Anyhow, he stayed in the faculty. However, Shimoda Mitsuzou (1885-1978) came as a head of the department. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, studying in Germany and was respected as one of the founding magnates of medical faculty at Keio University. He later worked as the Dean (1941-43) at the Faculty of Medicine at Kyushu. In short Shimoda was a typically bright successful man with impeccable personal history as a professor. And he was six years younger than Morooka, virtually closing his promotion route. The situation made him think about his career.

A New Direction: Science and Culture

In the wake of the consultation-fees scandal, Morooka gave up his position at Kyushu University in 1927, moving to Komazawa University, a private Buddhist institution which was dedicated to studies in Buddhism⁷. Personal connections with the president of Komazawa University, Nukariya Kaiten, invited him to Tokyo⁸. In his words: 'After returning to Japan, I had much to think about. As a result, I moved from Kyushu to Komazawa, where I pursued my interests in Zen and tea.'⁹ Nukariya organized Marunouchi Buddhists' studies society in 1928¹⁰. Its first anniversary lecturer was Morooka, speaking about the Venerable Myoe's ten virtues of tea. Morooka took the initiative to make it open to the public, setting the venue at the

⁵ Sakaki was born in Numazu in present-day Shizuoka ken. He was born in medicine-oriented family as his father was a Dutch scholar; his brothers were medical doctors. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, being appointed as an associate professor at the age of 32 in 1902, studying abroad as a government-sponsored overseas student from 1903-1906 and gaining the position as a professor at Kyushu Imperial University immediately after his return to Japan at the age of 36.

⁶ The scandal was revealed on 18 July in 1925. The professors resigned on 11 August. On 7 August Morooka was officially sent to China for research there. The record does not include his departure or return dates.

⁷ Komazawa University was open to the general public in 1925. Before 1925 it was for the sons born at temples. In 1949 it adjusted to the new system, consisting of three faculties: Buddhism, Arts and Commerce.

⁸ From 1908 on Nukariya Kaiten visited Kyushu University as a summer school lecturer to teach invited by Buddhism studies group. Nukariya stayed abroad, including in the United Kingdom, before WW1 (Yamauchi Shunyu, *Nukariya Kaiten and the History of Komazawa University* (Tokyo: Keiyu, 2009), p. 98). It is possible Nukariya and Morooka shared time or memories abroad.

⁹ Morooka Tamotsu, *Supplement to the Commentaries on the Book of Tea* postscript, p. 3.

¹⁰ Morooka claims that he was a co-founder of the society (*Ibid.*, p. 3).

hall owned by the Tokyo Nichinichi Newspaper Company¹¹. This lecture helped him to build up an extensive network of contacts with tea and publishing people. Handa Buhei (1867-1940) of Sayama Tea Company discussed publication of Morooka's erudition with Fujiwara Sosui (1880-1990), working for Jitsugyo no Nihon Sha. It was realized as *A New Note on Drinking Tea for Good Health* (1930). It ran into one hundred impressions in two years. Via this achievement he got a commission from the Japan Central Tea Association to become its consulting scholar in medicinal aspects of tea¹².

After his shift to Tokyo, his learning in Chinese classics, which he had pursued for pleasure, and his abilities as a writer helped him. In fact, he had been the editor of a literary magazine, 'Enigma' in Kyushu, which first appeared in 1913. His involvement in literature also includes a very strange and imaginative work, *Dogra Magra* (1935) by Yumeno Kyusaku, which is said to have been influenced by Morooka. The novel takes place in the psychiatric ward of Kyushu University Hospital.

He got committed to tea studies and established himself as a man of letters while his credentials were based on science as he made use of his qualification and knowledge as a medical doctor through his publishing career. In retrospect, his learning in medicine and Chinese classics, his stay in London, his interests in Buddhism, especially Zen, all pointed to tea. His style is both literary and scientific: his sentences often include evidence, explanations, reasons and analysis.

When people talk about tea, they can be single-minded, especially in laudatory ways, ignoring whatever else, he claims¹³. His emphasis is on that specialized and fragmentary information in tea would not satisfy intellectual people. He regards tea as synthetic science and it is his field¹⁴. Usual connection between tea and art is developed in his view in wider context. His ambition is to talk about tea in historical, philosophical, geographical and geological context. Tea is also a moral beverage in contrast with alcohol¹⁵. He maintains that gatherings over tea are civilizing and civilized, polite, virtuous and artistic¹⁶. He criticizes the ostentatious display of the riches at tea gatherings. For him tea represents cleanliness and simplicity¹⁷. In addition to this view of tea as something involving general arts, he had science. For him it is a refined art based on the subtle learning of chemistry. He draws on the recent discoveries of tea research, referring to the composite elements in tea¹⁸. Scientific observation for the general public needed information on tea plant's geography, geology, chemistry and its effects on psychology.

Tea is an economical product. It prevents people from spending money and time on addictive drinks. It encourages people to use time more effectively by keeping people awake longer. It can be a substitute to food, which helps people to go without taking food. Even the wartime shortage of food was part of the reasons to focus on tea as it enabled people to do with less food¹⁹.

Importantly he regards tea as political goods rather than commercial. He argues that in Chinese history tea was something like a gift given condescendingly by the ruler to the ruled in the marginal areas. He repeatedly insists on the importance of tea as a political product. Traditionally China used tea to assume the imperial leadership; they gave tea to the smaller countries around it, making tea as a necessity and thus making the countries depend on China. In a similar way powerful nations, notably the British in his argument,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹² Iwama, February Issue (2008): 50.

¹³ Morooka, *Tea and Its Culture* (Tokyo: Daito, 1937), p. 162.

¹⁴ Morooka Tamotsu, *Commentaries on the Book of Tea*, p. Ch1

¹⁵ Morooka, *Tea and Its Culture*, p. 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-166.

¹⁸ Morooka Tamotsu, *Tea: Its Science and Medicinal Properties* (1943).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

use tea as a political product. Quoting Samuel Ball's conclusion that the British had brought happiness, health and sobriety to the Indian people, he pushes forward the logic of tea as a tool to get people under their control²⁰. In his analysis the British was successful in India and Sri Lanka, but failed in other areas while Russians did well with the Mongolians. In fact, Russian commercial policy of tea transportation was effective in good relationship between the Russians and the Mongolians²¹.

Thus his solution in life was to use the authority of medical degree and qualification, the title of a medical doctor to his utmost advantage outside the field of specialized practice of a medical doctor. It must be noted that he continued his practice as a psychiatrist, though. Rather than clinging to the academic profession, he opted for dealing with patients and possible patients and those who sought for good regimen. He chose ordinary people as his audience. In preparing himself for the wide audience, he had learned lessons from experience. Before he got the job at Kyushu, he was engaged in translation work of Steinach's vasoligature method to keep young. His boss Sakaki was engaged in this somewhat dubious kind of operation on his patients, causing bitter controversy with Tokyo Medical Doctors Association²². Although the reason for his resignation was the fees scandal, not only the money matters but the operation and the purpose of the operations could have been the object of criticism²³. So he knew the doctors' influence on common people. And on the other hand he knew that doctors' beliefs can be controversial especially when the practice is related to innovative intervention in the life of patients rather than remedy to injury or illness. Then, his choice of tea was apposite. It was the field where he could use and develop his capacities without risking efforts.

He admires tea very enthusiastically but his praise is not done blindly. Admiration of tea culture is accompanied by the conditional remarks, pointing to the unwelcome effects of the ostentatious display of wealth of the riches and the obsequious flattering of the mean spirited people. His intention is to resuscitation of true tea, in his perspective, scientific tea that goes along with the way it is practiced.

Although in his later works the British are just the most cunning and deceptive nation, in his 1937 publication, his argument is usually well-balanced and his discussion of tea in Britain is mostly pleasure to read. Here the British are striving to promote tea for the welfare of the people whom they think inferior. His criticism is directed to the Japanese and the Chinese, who cannot deal with such moral beverage as tea. The Japanese and the Chinese are too narrow-minded and obstinate to be aware of the necessities of scientific management of tea. The keys to the success of the British are their use of modern science, their adoption to modern industrialization, their enthusiasm in scholarly research and the brave entrepreneurship of each individual. They stick to mechanization to achieve cleanliness in tea making methods.

A Doctor Appealing to Ordinary People

What he did was to dedicate his erudition and scientific knowledge to the edification of ordinary people in civilization, health and regimen, especially in the benefits of tea-drinking. His new target was general public, especially women²⁴. The fact that his chapter, no other chapters by other writers but his, has charmingly

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-93.

²² "Tokyo Association of Doctors sends Dr Sakaki a scathing open letter on the rejuvenation treatment" *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 14 August 1921.

²³ Minami Makiko, 'Sakaki Yasusaburo and the Studies of Superior Children' *Keio University Graduate School of Social Studies Bulletin* 63 (2006): 19-36.

²⁴ The emphasis on women might have come from the domestic source. In the leaflet attached to the 1978 edition, Morooka

illustrated boxes to appeal to the readers represents his intentions in *Modern Women and Japanese Tea* (1938). His strategy went well, making himself a popular and respected health advisor and author. Part of the reasons for this strategy was the source of his research funds. He was appointed as consultant at Central Tea Council, as an expert in medicinal quality in tea. The council was an institution run and managed by tea merchants. So it is basically directed by commercialism and consumerism, but assuming general knowledge in literature, agriculture, technology and chemistry. The commercially based institution found Morooka an ideal promoter with literary and scientific backgrounds and also abilities to write for the audience ordinary and refined.

Re-steering

In his short autobiographical writing published in 1943, his passions in Chinese civilization were a driving force in his intellectual pursuit. His retrospective narrative takes on a wartime hue and his emphasis is on East Asian traditions. Nevertheless, he was an embodiment of the fusion and negotiation between China-oriented text-based knowledge and scientific minded Westernized medical education.

The retrospective account of his early life written as part of the afterword to the supplementary volume of the *Book of Tea* emphasizes the wartime aversion against US and Britain²⁵. In his reconstruction, he went to Steele Memorial Academy, which was established in 1887 by American Dutch Reformed Church, only to refute them, for which English language was necessary. His reason to learn English was repugnance to the ‘wanton cruelties’ of the Americans and the British, he maintains. A child as he was, the resentment was so fierce that he wanted to castigate them. For five years he lived together with an American missionary who had just come to Japan to master the language. As a result the headmaster Henry Stout (1838-1912) appreciated his diligence, holding an impressive ceremony for him alone. If his repugnance invited this care, favour and kindness, the teachers were completely duped. In addition, he was attracted by the Western civilization; following the usual practice of high-minded graduates, he went abroad. His destination was London, where he stayed over two winters, from May 1919 till June 1921.

If his motivation was purely repugnance, his perseverance seems beyond our imagination. In a book he published as a co-author in 1902, the authors argue that social reform is not achieved by political uprising or riots, but education should be a true force of social reform²⁶. As they predict the conflicts between the nations in the world, between the West and the East, they promote the alliances with China and Korea, uniting Japanese wisdom and Chinese diligence, Japanese bravery and Chinese riches – these were the authors’ notions of each nationality²⁷. This is part of a typical argument of the eclecticism between the traditional Asian spirit and scientific and practical western knowledge. As the authors argue, the education they acquired endowed them with wills to reform the social situations, and their westernized education was part of their personalities. In the same book a friend, Takahashi Hideomi (1864-1935), who later became an MP, describes Morooka as a person whose admired qualities are: his ‘pure and sound high-mindedness, his profound western learning, his lofty ideal, his patriotic indignation toward the topical situations and his

Taeko, his daughter, a professor at Tokyo Women’s Medical College, underscores the contributions offered by Taka, his wife. She records the mother’s remarks that it was the usual practice that the mother wrote down what the father dictated and the mother made fair copies of the father’s revisions. Though her emphasis is on the role of a scribe to complete his works, her contribution could have been more extensive. Indeed, Taka taught hygiene studies at a high school.

²⁵ Morooka Tamotsu, *Supplement to the Book of Tea* (1943), appendix, p. 1.

²⁶ Takahashi Masakuma and Morooka Tamotsu, *On Society and Education* (1902), pp. 4-5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

innovativeness.²⁸ The object of his lamentation or indignation is sometimes the backwardness of his native region, sometimes the general circumstances in Japanese society, sometimes the context of the international affairs, and sometimes the enemies in conflicts, but the changing indignations always gave impetus to his pursuits in learning.

Post-war Reputation

In 1978 a reprint set of his 1941 and 1943 books was published. The original copies were just 500 in number and many were lost during the war. However, somebody preserved the paper moulds of the 1941 and 1943 Commentaries on the Book of Tea.

In the leaflet attached to the reissued version, Furuya Hiroshi, a headmaster at Tokyo Takenodai High School, who was engaged in studying tea ceremony, welcomes the work of Morooka because ‘people who are interested in tea look up to Rikuu so much that they regard it as the Bible, while Morooka reads it from the viewpoint of a sober scientist’. For those who have been involved in tea research he is a pioneer in placing tea in scientific context and making much of the classic books on tea. His indignation is transformed into the representation of a scientist’s piercing determination to tell the truth. However, probably it is time to examine him from the sober and balanced viewpoint. Mine has been one attempt forward, however crude and unsatisfactory.

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²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.