



The Book of Tea [with Biographical Introduction]

Kakuzo Okakura

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An elegant and intellectual work, "The Book of Tea" was written in 1906 by Kakuzo Okakura, a brilliant Japanese man with an early education in English. Through his intimate knowledge of Japanese aesthetics and ability to effectively communicate them to a Western audience, Okakura is able to discuss 'Teaism' and its impact on Japanese culture, thought, and life in an informative and profound way. He develops this theory by explaining the history and universality of the tea ceremony, its inextricable connection to the Tao and Zen religions, and the importance of one's surroundings when taking tea. This essay expounds on simplicity, nature, and art, from paintings to flower arrangements to architecture, and ends with an anecdote about one of the most famous tea masters, Sen no Rikyu. This eloquent work puts readers at ease as it explores beauty and imperfection, the subtleties of austerity, and the philosophies of monks, artists, and gardeners in 'the way of tea.'



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