How did an activity as mundane as tea preparation and drinking become one of the potent symbols of Japan? This talk will explore the tension-filled transformation of the tea ceremony from an aesthetic pleasure of elite men to a hobby of housewives as it came to embrace not merely the privileged few, but the nation as a whole, and it will examine the ways that tea masters have capitalized on the association between tea and Japanese culture. The tea ceremony, as such, serves as an exceptionally vivid illustration of one of the fundamental processes of modernity: the work of making nations.

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