コミュニケーション手段としての茶道
―コミュニケーションのネットワーク分析の紹介―

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The Japanese Way of Tea as a Way of Communication
—An Introduction to the Theory of Communicative Network Analysis—

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"Just have a cup of tea!" says the monk Zhaozhu Wuzi in a Zen parable. One day a monk came to visit Zhaozhu. Zhaozhu asked him: "Have you ever been here?" The monk replied: "Yes, I have." "Then have a cup of tea!" said Zhaozhu. Then another monk came. Zhaozhu asked him:"Have you ever been here?". "No," he said. "Then have a cup of tea!" said Zhaozhu. [1]

For me, this parable expresses the simplicity of communication with other people. "Let's drink tea and have a nice time together, no matter who we are!" In Zen Buddhist terms, this implies, that we should overcome our self-consciousness and attachments and thereby all distinctions that separate us from one another, in the Way of Tea, these being host and guest. When there is no host, there is no guest: *Muhinshu* (無賓主 No host, no guest).

When there is no host, there is no guest, refers to the relationship between two people. Nothing is easier than to make a cup of tea. What else

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[1] Quoted in SEN Sōshitsu: "Hyakka no Haru". In: Tanko 51, 4, 1997. pp. 22 − 23.

is the Way of Tea, *sadō* (茶道), than to boil water, make tea and drink it and at the same time have a good talk with each other?

Or to say it in the words of Sen no Rikyū from the last chapter of the "Nambōroku"[2]:

The art of tea,	茶の湯とは、
You have to know,	ただ湯をわかし、
Is nothing else,	茶をたてて、
Then to boil water,	飲むをばかりなる、
Make tea and drink it.	事と知るべし。

Of course, Chanoyu (which literally means "hot water for tea") has turned into more than boiling water, but through all its changes in history it has kept its original meaning until our days: the realization that the

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[2] The author of the "Nambōroku" ("Notes by the monk Nambō") is believed to be Nambō Sōkei (南坊宗啓, ? – 1624?), a priest of the Nanshūji in Sakai. He wrote the first five volumes with at least a tacit approval of Rikyū. Rikyū requested, that the sixth volume should be destroyed because it contained secrets (秘事 *hiji*), which should not be open to the public. Nambō decided to keep it and not show it to anyone. The seventh volume was written after Rikyū's death. There is doubt whether Nambō was the author of the Nambōroku, as he doesn't appear in the history of tea. Its discoverer, Tachibana Jitsuzan (立花実山, 1655 – 1708), a leading vassal of Kuroda Mitsuyuki, *daimyō* from Hakata, Kyūshū, might have been the true author. As it happened, its discovery coincided with the one hundredth anniversary of Rikyū's death. On this discussion see also: VARLEY, H. Paul: "*Chanoyu* from Genroku to Modern Times". In: VARLEY, H. Paul; KUMAKURA Isao (Ed.): "Tea in Japan – Essays on the History of *Chanoyu*". Honolulu, 1989. p. 166.

smallest event of everyday life involves the possibility of the experience of a higher existence.[3]

In spite of all simplifications and generalizations, it should not be forgotten, that the Way of Tea is a performing art, with a large cultural, historical and philosophical background, which has its origins not only in Japan, but also in China and other Asian countries.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to mention all the aspects of *sadō*, so besides concentrating on its theoretical background in order to evaluate the position of *sadō* within Japanese culture, I will give short introductions into the history of *sadō*, the meaning of communication in Tea and its definition as well as into network analysis.

A short history of *sadō*

The Way of Tea as we know it today had its formative period between the late 15th and the 17th centuries. During this period the until today vivid characteristics of the *sadō* were found in a spontaneous way and without fixed codes or rules.

The parable given above, shows the close relation between Zen Buddhism and Tea on the one hand, and the communicative aspect of the Way of Tea on the other hand, as nobody, regardless of where they are from or who they are, is excluded from drinking tea. It is well known, that zen monks were making use of the stimulating effect of tea during their long meditations. From the beginning, Tea was closely linked to Zen. Most tea

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[3] EHMCKE, Franziska: "Der japanische Tee-Weg – Bewußtseinsschulung und Gesamtkunstwerk". (The Japanese Way of Tea – Training for the consciousness and synthesis of the arts). Cologne, 1991. p. 8.

masters of the time were also very firm in Zen practice.[4] Most of the components that make up the Way of Tea had already been created and cultivated in the practice of tea-drinking by the Higashiyama-era (1483 – 1490): "the ancient Chinese sense of the mysterious powers of tea, the esoteric Buddhist attitude toward the healthful benefits of the drink, the refinement of culture association with its astringent taste, the cultural reversal involved in the rise of popular aesthetics in tea parties, the Buddhist sense of communal and ritual use of tea, even after the move to the luxurious pavilion and the refined living room (書院 *shoin*), and the liberation of the Buddhist ritual ceremony from the Zen monasteries".[5] Tea associations were found to provide opportunities for people to come together to drink tea and discuss matters, which concern the community. These associations included monks, *bushi* and even commoners. The passage of a cup of tea from hand to hand provided a sense of fellowship and communion.

The far-reaching turning point in the development away from the tea parties (茶寄合 *chayoriai*), the monastic tea rituals (茶礼 *sarei*) and the Higashiyama formal tea party (書院の茶 *shoin no cha*) to the Way of *wabi* Tea (*sadō*) can be linked to three names: Murata Jukō (村田珠光 1423 - 1502), Takeno Jōō (武野紹鴎 1502 - 1555) and Sen no Rikyū (千利休 1522 - 1591).

Henceforth everybody was allowed to participate, not only certain

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[4] VARLEY, H. Paul; ELISON, George: "The Culture of Tea: From its origins to Sen no Rikyū". In: ELISON George; Smith, Bardwell L. (ed.): "Warlords, Artists and Commoners". 1981

[5] LUDWIG, Theodore M.: "Before Rikyū. Religious and Aesthetics Influences in the Early History of the Tea Ceremony". Monumenta Nipponica, 36, 4, 1981, pp. 367 – 390.

members of high-class society. This can be seen for example in the Kitano Ōchanoyu in 1587. Everybody was allowed to come, was even forced to come if they wanted to continue their practice in Chanoyu.

In the now used tea hut, which was very simple and without any luxury a new atmosphere was created, where everybody was equal, and on the same level. Class differences did not exist. Here a way of communication on equal terms was started. Entering the tea room became entering another world, "the make- believe world of tea" as Kendall Brown said.[6]

Tea became a link between the world inside the tea room, which is free from of any social ranks, and the real world with its different social rankings and strong hierarchical orders outside the tea room. Inside, the tea bowl brought the participants together and created the community between them. Outside, the tea master took over this role. He was the link between the *chajin* (茶人 person of tea) and the different social groups they belonged to.[7]

Since every *chajin* knows the rules of Chanoyu and the norms of communication are prescribed, there is no need to think about them. This gives the participants the basis for their equality. One could even speak of an emancipation of the *chajin*, as they were free here to behave in a way normally outside their social ranks.

Although every each *chajin* had his profession and a social position, due to their relation to Tea, they could communicate on an equal level. This

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[6] BROWN, Kendall H.: "Symbolic Virtue and Political Legitimation – Tea and Politics in the Momoyama Period". In BROWN, Kendall H.: "The politics of reclusion: painting and power in Momoyama Japan". 1997. pp. 51 – 72.

[7] SECKEL, Dietrich: "Soziale und religiöse Aspekte der Tee-Keramik". (Social and religious aspects of tea ceramics) In: Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, 126, 1979. pp. 19 - 36.

even worked, when they were outside the tea room. The tea masters where able to communicate between people and even took over very important roles in political life. We just have to think of Rikyū and his position as lord of Ōsaka-jō while Hideyoshi was away.

To continue with this short introduction to the history of Tea, in the early Edo period we come upon the *wabicha* of Sen Sōtan (千宗旦 1573 – 1658) on the one hand, who continued the tradition of Rikyū, and on the other hand we meet with tendencies for an elaborate Chanoyu, which adjusted to the preferences of the ruling *daimyo*. Here Furuta Oribe (古田織部 1543 – 1615) and Kobori Enshū (小堀遠州 1579 – 1647) should be mentioned. But, of course, there were many others, who practiced Tea at that time.

In any case, the basis of Chanoyu stays the same, the equalized communication between participants, whether it was in a simple tea hut or in a luxurious tearoom.

With time, the rules of Chanoyu become coded and fixed. The *iemoto seido* (家元制度 iemoto-system) arises and gives the Way of Tea an institution. Spontaneity almost disappears. Although independent masters like Matsudaira Fumai (松平不昧 1751 – 1818) were able to find their own style, Chanoyu is now practiced more and more as a popular social event for giving people lectures on proper behavior and taste. Even though it may be true, that the spreading of Chanoyu within all social classes made fixed rules necessary, the strength of Chanoyu is its dialectic between its simplicity and its freedom of social ranks, between freedom and rules, between modernity and tradition. The Way of Tea changed taking along with the changes in history. Otherwise, Chanoyu couldn't have survived until today.[8]

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[8] SECKEL, 1979. p. 22.

Communication and Culture

When it comes to communication, it seems necessary to give a proper definition. Over the years many researchers brought up different definitions. In 1977, Klaus Merten could identify not less than 160 definitions of communication.[9] What makes it so difficult to find an adequate definition for the word "communication" is its abstract meaning. It does not refer to concrete, touchable objects, but derives its meaning rather from its figurative sense. A book is a book, but the content, the words and their meaning written in the book are abstract and therefore have to be interpreted. A tea room is a room, but its contents and what happens inside is rather abstract and cannot be described in one word. This makes it very difficult to find a definition for communication.

One approach to a definition could be to ask ourselves, in which ways we communicate with whom and what we expect others to do as a result.

Saying it in the words of Lasswell:[10]

"A convenient way to describe an act of communication is to answer the following questions:

> Who
>
> Says What
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> In Which Channel
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> To Whom
>
> With What Effect?"

In terms of Tea, the questions can be answered as follows:

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[9] MERTEN, Klaus: "Kommunikation: Eine Begriffs- und Prozeßanalyse". (Communication: Term and process analysis) Opladen, 1977.

[10] LASSWELL, Harold D.: "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society". In: BERELSON, Bernard, JANOWITZ, Morris (ed.): Reader in Public Opinion and Communication. New York, 1966. pp. 178-190.

Who? The host is the one who acts first as he is the initiator of the tea meeting.

Says What? The host sends one of the main messages of the Way of Tea, namely that Tea is a form of self-discipline and a way toward self-discovery. But he also sends the message of social harmony.

In Which Channel? There are various channels; one is the passing of the tea bowl, it being the mediator between the participants. Another channel is the *tokonoma* (床の間 alcove), where a scroll and an ikebana are displayed to convey the message of the gathering and the season.

To Whom? The host sends his message to the invited guest.

With What Effect? Host and guest seek for harmony by creating social equality.

The classic communication model differentiates between the following components, which are the smallest units in the abstract building called "communication", the act of communication:

- Communication is the relationship or the process between at least two communicators, one sender and one receiver.
- There are two communicative acts, the message of the sender and the reception of this message by the receiver.
- Sender and receiver must have similar symbols and signs at their disposal to code or decode the message.
- Sender and receiver must have a channel for their communication.

If all these premises are fulfilled in both directions, we can speak of a "communication cycle" (see illustration below). In case one of the above-mentioned elements is not fulfilled, the cycle is interrupted, which leads to the end of communication. Pursuing this further, one realizes, that the cycle shown here is only one of many, as we intercommunicate with many other people. This leads us to the conclusion that many cycles exist and

even if one is interrupted, others will take the message to the next cycle. A network is created which brings information in form of messages to other receivers.
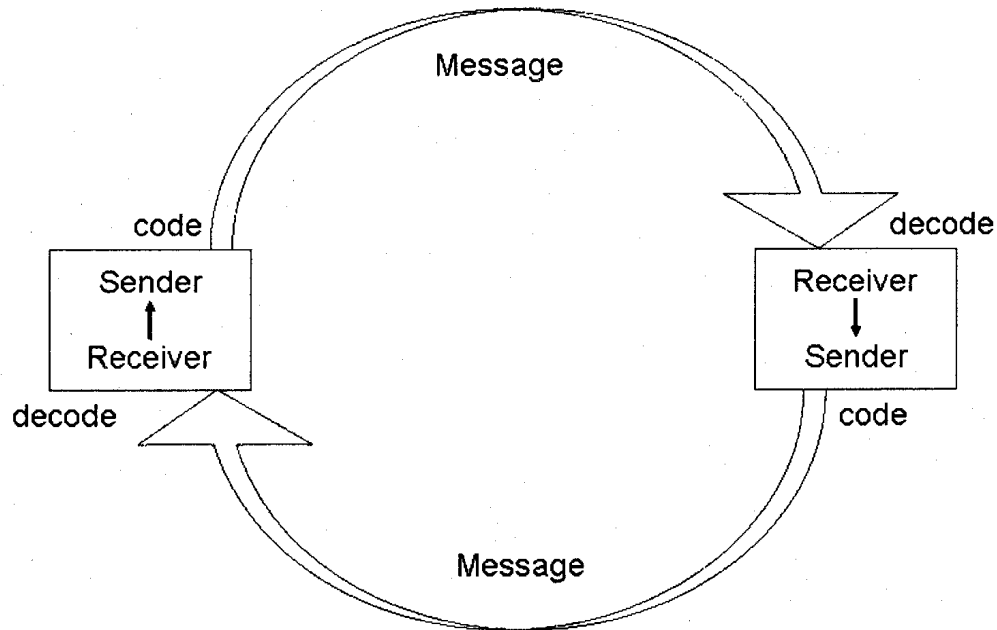
Figure 1: Communication Cycle[11]

In terms of Tea, one can describe the components of the act of communication in a tea gathering as follows. The sender is identified with the host who sends the message of Tea with the code of *sadō*. The code of *sadō* is the language, the rituals and movements every *chajin* understands and can decode. The receiver, the guest, decodes the message using the same code as the host. Otherwise he wouldn't be able to understand the message. An example for the code of *sadō* is the handing over of a cup of tea in a special way that expresses respect for the other.

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[11] Illustration by the author

Communication is a matter of understanding. Understanding between people occurs when both, sender and receiver, speak the same language using a code in common. A code is created in many ways, although as a prerequisite a common culture is needed. In this context, culture should not been confused with the term "civilization" as S. Huntington uses it in his well discussed "Clash of Civilizations". Within the context of communication and the Way of Tea, the abstract building of culture can be defined as a set of institutions and rituals one group of people shares.[12] It derives its meaning from the symbols, rituals and everyday procedures for those initiated. The content has to be condensed into certain symbols, in order to be handed down to future generations. This gives rise to defined structures, which have special functions and purposes. An institution fulfills these purposes as the original Latin meaning of this word (*institutum*: purpose or aim) indicates. It does not come about suddenly, but instead grows slowly according to its purpose or aim.

Using this definition, one can speak of the "tea culture". By creating this tea culture, all *chajin* have the institutions and rituals of Tea in common. On this basis, the *chajin* create their own code, which includes not only words but also gestures and other non-verbal forms of action.

By handing over a cup of tea to the guest, the host, while using the language of the Way of Tea, sends the message: "Let's live together in harmony and without social differences for this moment".

On the basis of a created culture, which consists of a set of institutions and rituals as well as a language or common code, one is able to communicate with others who consider themselves to be part of this

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[12] COULMAS, Florian: "Die Kultur Japans – Tradition und Moderne". (The Culture of Japan – Tradition and Modern Age) München, 2003.

created culture.

The objectives for communication can differ. As seen in the Way of Tea, many purposes exist: religious, social, and political purposes or solely for the sake of art. The development of the Way of Tea occurred on a religious and philosophical background. Therefore, the practice of the Way of Tea reflects a search for self-enlightenment according to Zen Buddhism. But the origins of the Way of Tea were also social, as people came together to discuss communal matters over a cup of tea. In later history, one can observe a political message. One example could be Rikyū's handling of diplomatic negotiations through tea gatherings.[13] Lastly, there is the message of art for the sake of art. No specific message has to be transferred.
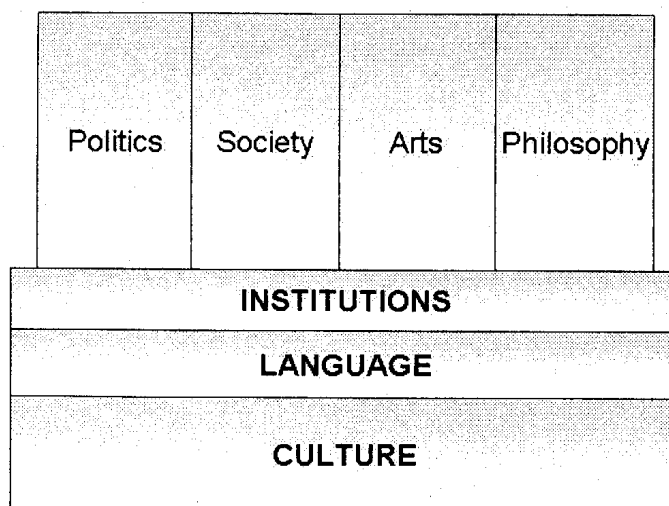

Figure 2: Base and kinds of communication

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[13] For the history of Sen no Rikyū see: BERRY, Mary Elizabeth: "Hideyoshi". 1982; BODART, Beatrice M.: "Tea and counsel - The role of Sen no Rikyū", Monumenta Nipponica, 32, 1, 1977. pp. 49 – 74; KUMAKURA Isao: "Cha no Yu no Rekishi – Sen no Rikyū made" (History of Tea – until Sen no Rikyū). Tōkyō, 2005 (8th edition).

In terms of the Way of Tea we have a fixed set of codes of communication, which every participant is aware of. The basis of every institution is that a certain way of communication and behavioral pattern has been found and that every member of the institution is willing and able to follow. Depending on the purpose of the institution, a standardization of communication, thought, feeling, behavior and action takes place. In the cultural context as a whole, different levels of communication can be distinguished, e.g. political communication or social communication. All this has to be kept in mind if speaking of a cultural institution like "Tea".

Taking into consideration that the Way of Tea is a major way of communication between various social groups in Japan, we might already have found its purpose. On the one hand, we have communicative actions and, on the other hand, the understanding of these communicative actions. In the Way of Tea, this interaction is performed by ritualized actions, upon which its members have agreed.

A closer look on the "interactors" in the Way of Tea brings us to the tea masters, who perform the ritual in perfect harmony. As pointed out above, they become the main communicator in the outer, as well as, in the inner world. The main role of the tea masters is establishing a connection between the participants. This role of the tea masters continues outside the tea room and, with the approval of the *chajin*, a communication on the basis of Chanoyu is possible in the outside world.

Social network

If we see the Way of Tea as a large community of people interacting with each other, it is possible to find a structure in this community and see it as a network. Communication in any form is the basis for the

development of a social network.

Networks are everywhere! Wherever people communicate and interact with each other, a network between them is created. A network is a set of nodes connected by edges between them. One can measure the efficiency of a network by the possibility of transmitting information within the network. According to the connectivity of the nodes, i.e. the distribution, there are different kinds of networks. The simplest network is when every node is connected to its two neighbors, thereby forming a ring. This is called a regular network. Here the speed of the flow of information is slow, as it has to go through every node. In a different network, the nodes are connected at random, without any order. This is called a random network. In this network the speed of the flow of information is not predictable. A Poisson-distribution is representative of a random network. This means that a majority of the nodes has an average number of edges, whereas a minority has either more or less. The third possibility is called a scale-free network. This network shows regular as well as random connectivity. Shortcuts in the regular network occur, which gives the network a higher density. The information flow is fast and predictable, since he fastest way is always chosen.

The structure we see in most social networks is a scale-free network, which consists of a few hubs with many edges and small nodes with only a few edges. Because of this structure, scale-free networks are resistant to random attacks (chances are high that a node with only a few edges is effected), but very vulnerable to targeted attacks (if a main hub is hit, the network would be destroyed).[14] One can obtain a graphic representation

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[14] Basic works on network analysis are e.g.: BARABASI, Albert-Laszlo: "Linked". New York, 2003 (2nd edition); WASSERMAN, Stanley; FAUST,

correlating to a power-law distribution, which is the typical distribution of edges per node in a scale-free network.

In the network of Tea, people are viewed as nodes, whereas the ties between them are tea ceremonies they attend together and letters they exchanged. Actors (tea people or *chajin*) and their actions (tea ceremony, letters) are viewed as interdependent rather than independent, autonomous units. The relational ties between the actors are channels for the transfer or flow of resources and communication.

One can find a lot of examples in history for destroyed networks. This must not necessarily be something negative, since this harbors a chance of change. When a social network is destroyed, it falls apart into several groups, which are not connected or only through single bridges. The flow of information then usually stays within in the group. Turning to Sen no Rikyū, we can see that after his death in 1592, the Way of Tea was split into many fractions, which all claimed to represent Rikyū's proper heritage. Talking in terms of network analysis, Rikyū's network was very dense, he himself being one of the main hubs. After his death this network fell apart and groups surrounding other hubs, which where only connected by weak ties, developed. This means that the groups somehow still managed to exchange information, not via one hub but via several hubs, which might not have been connected directly. In terms of Tea this means that certain bits of information relating to tradition and rules were circulated only in one group and were not transmitted to the next one. This might be the

Katherine: „Social Network Analysis – Method and Applications". Cambridge, 1994; SCOTT, John: "Social Network Analysis – A Handbook". London, 2000 (2nd edition); WEYER, Johannes (Ed.): "Soziale Netzwerke" (Social Networks). München, 2000.

reason for the establishment of several schools after Rikyū's death, which all claimed to follow his tradition. This was true for each group, but, nonetheless, several different traditions developed.

One of the post-Rikyū groups is the group around Sen Sōtan, the grandson of Rikyū. Sen Sōtan was thirteen years old, when his grandfather died. Due to the experience that his grandfather was forced to commit suicide because of Rikyū's proximity power, Sōtan refused to serve in a feudal family to ensure his income, not wanting to repeat history. Sōtan, although steadfast in his determination not to accept employment for himself under any *daimyo*, was not averse to exploiting the opportunities on behalf of his sons and on several occasions he called upon the help of his influential acquaintances to gain support for his sons.[15] Although Sōtan's opposition to the aristocratic Way of Tea, he was officially acknowledged as Rikyū's descendant. Therefore, he was able to make use of his family's connections to influential people of the time.

Analyzing the network around Sen Sōtan, it becomes clear, that he is one of the nodes with a lot of edges, namely a hub. Most of the information is transmitted through him. Within this group, Sōtan is the one who is reached by everyone very quickly, information and communication running mostly through him. This makes him a very powerful node.[16]

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[15] TSUTSUI Hiroichi: "Sen Sotan". In: Chanoyu Quarterly, 46, 1986. pp. 7 – 31.

[16] Data for this network was taken from the correspondence of Sen Sōtan. The research on this specific network is still in progress. Therefore, the interpretation of the network is only temporary. For many reasons the given example is not representative and should only give an idea of a network to the reader. However, arguments can be gathered through the analysis of historical data. The diagram should show at least two groups of
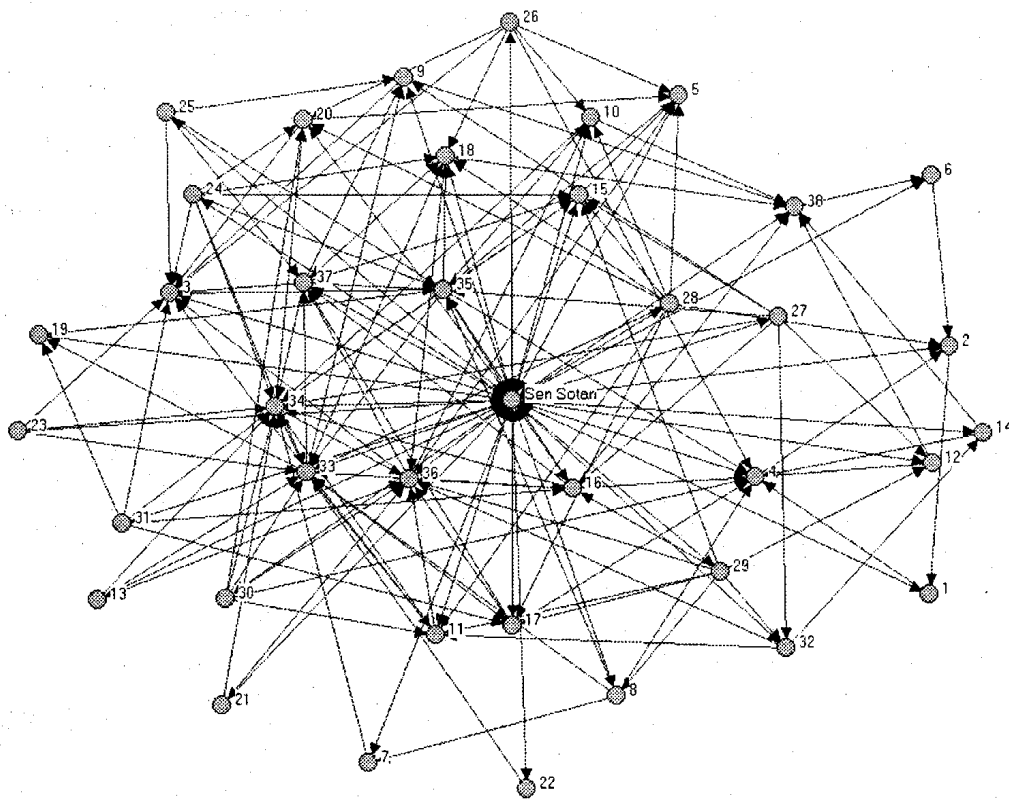
Figure 3: Sample Network for Sen Sōtan

If Sōtan, being the main hub, disappears, this network would fall apart into several groups, which might not be connected to each other anymore. Of course, we already know what happened after Sōtan's death. The Senke-Schools of Tea, which then arose, might be considered as the post-Sōtan groups.

Taking the historical context into consideration, we know that the network presented here, represents only one group within the whole

this period, probably one around Sen Sōtan and one around Kobori Enshū, linked by so-called weak tighs in form of bridges between the groups.
Picture created by the author.
Data taken from the following: TANAKA Minoru: "Sōtan Monjo". Tōkyō: Keibunsha, 2004; SOGABE Yōko; KIYOSE Fusa: "Sōtan no Tegami". Tōkyō, 1997.

network of Tea of that time.

Of course, we should not forget that even a network with hundreds of nodes will never be able to represent reality as a whole, but it can show some interesting aspects such as the flow of power or information.

Conclusion

When analyzing cultural phenomena like the Way of Tea one has to use a lot of abstract terms. By way of clear definitions and their interdependency one can create structures, which can then be analyzed. The Introduction on Communicative Network Analysis given here, has shown that the Way of Tea, despite its complex background, can be examined with sociological and mathematical methods, which show the importance of the *chajin* in Japanese history and can also give an explanation of how changes in cultural traditions occur.

Although these tools are quite new in the human sciences, it is possible to combine them with the traditional methods of the interpretation of historical sources.

The simplicity of drinking tea has developed into an abstract structure with a large cultural, historical and philosophical background. When trying to take all these aspects into account, analysis becomes difficult. In my point of view, it is necessary to regain the simplicity of Chanoyu and then analyze parts of its construct. Afterwards, the parts can be put together again to be able to view the full picture. We have to see the history of *sadō* as a way of communication as a whole.

The relationship between host and guest is one of the main issues in the analysis of the Way of Tea, since without them, there would not be any communication and, consequently, no network of Tea to analyze.

Communication between people leads to the creation of cultural phenomena.

When there is no host, there is no guest.