The goal to manipulate foreign media focused on ‘guiding world opinion concerning Japan’, ‘splitting world opinion regarding Japan and the China Incident’, and ‘breaking the front of unified anti-Japanese opinion’.1

Introduction

This chapter addresses the theme of tea as medium for nationalistic expression in five sections. The first section outlines the 1937 proposal of an official belief in Japanese nella as a divine entity characterized by a sacred martial spirit. Attention is drawn to the internal contradiction of endorsing this sacred martial spirit as an essential Japanese trait when the harmonious administration of Japan is also praised. The second section takes this domestic tension between conflicting sets of idealized values and examines propaganda aimed at deceiving foreign governments. Tea is one element of the state-sponsored campaign to use international tourism to systematically negate worldwide criticism of December 1937 atrocities committed by Japanese in Nanjing.

These first two sections assume that tea operates as cultural nationalism inside the discourse of state nationalism. Cultural nationalism
can be a merely descriptive term that outlines how leisure practices operate as a type of chauvinism within state borders. For example, a belief in the superiority of the performance of cultural activities by Japanese people inside Japan can be a form of cultural nationalism. However, our interest is in the more normative forms of cultural nationalism that use leisure activities as a means of bringing citizens into networks of support for the Pacific War effort. When the ideal of a distinctive national culture appeals to the Japanese state as the central and definitive authority, that political entity functions as both the source of legitimizing power and the destination of desired authenticity. Once cultural practices are defined by and located within this cycle of national authority, cultural nationalism becomes state nationalism.

The third section surveys the role of tea in times of war and peace. The popular role of tea as an image that built support for a warring Japanese state is contrasted with the post-war place of tea in a global market for tea culture. The relationship between the Imperial House and the Houses of Sen is outlined in terms of the political location of tea.

Within the fourth section, several subsections document how the three hundred and fiftieth commemoration of the death of Sen no Rikyū functioned as state nationalism. As part of the national radio broadcast of the Rikyū memorial service, the grand master of Mushanokōjisenke school of tea, Sen Sōshu, concluded that Rikyū was an example of how to live and die well.2 It is important to note grand master fluency with the nationalistic rhetoric at this celebration of the life of Rikyū. The fourteenth Urasenke grand master Sen Sōshitsu uses the bakkō ichin imperialist slogan, ‘the whole world under one roof’, that was explicitly outlawed by the 15 December 1945 Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shintō.3 As one event associated with the celebration of Rikyū, the 23 April 1940 evening of lectures featured grand master appreciation of commitment to the holy war by Japanese soldiers. The cultural nationalism of tea becomes state nationalism once the grand masters of tea invoke and endorse the sacred martial spirit of Japan.

The fifth section addresses the post-war role of tea in re-introducing the mythology of Japan as the land of harmony by extending the analysis of the first section.