Japanese culture and attitude is exhibited immensely through the tradition of Japanese tea ceremonies. This ancient tradition dates back to over one thousand years ago in Japan. Also called “chanoyu” in Japanese, tea is consumed in a ceremony to demonstrate respect through the drinking of tea as a host prepares and serves this delicate treat. I originally thought that a tea ceremony had a purpose to only bring the enjoyment of drinking tea, but I couldn’t have been more wrong.

I had come across the Japanese tea ceremony before even being exposed to it in my global history class at school. I had been watching TV, and America’s Next Top Model had come on. This season, cycle 3, the girls traveled to Japan and were staying in Tokyo to continue their journey in the modeling competition. As part of the competition, the girls were to study the specifics of a tea ceremony. This included a reflection of control in body and mind, as the girls experienced their own tea ceremony. Being originally from America, the usual uncontrolled behaviors from their home country hindered their learning of Japanese control and perfection. A lot of girls struggled with this task, and could not achieve the structured steps in order. Many of the things they did in the ceremony, such as movements and placement of tea utensils, were deemed disrespectful. The tea ceremony also targets strengthening a relationship between the host and the guests through etiquette and decorations spread precisely around the room (http://japanese-tea-ceremony.net/).

This tea ceremony is seen as such a difficult event in my eyes, however the Japanese woman leading the girls through it moved gracefully through the steps. It was hard for me to understand how something as simple as this tea ceremony could show so many aspects of life that the Japanese so often use. I assume the models were asked to participate in a tea ceremony to practice the discipline that is a common factor in Japanese life and a modeling career. Also, an appreciation of beauty is seen in both modeling and the tea ceremony as well. At first, one may never think to compare these two things; however when comparing them, I see that these two things are so similar.

The tea ceremony objective is to reach harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility. Living in an American household does not show most of these qualities daily. Hectic transitions from
events throughout the day offer little peace in my home and respect is sometimes hindered in the
craziness of the day. To see the ceremony and all the calming characteristics, I think I would like
to enjoy some time like that. If this is how most Japanese live as well, and these characteristics of
the tea ceremony translate into Japanese life, than Japan is also I place I would like to personally
visit. A goal of mine is to eventually be able to participate in a tea ceremony, particularly in
Japan.

The tea ceremony of Japan is so different from American traditions. As I have seen on tv
and heard through teachers at school, a tea ceremony is much more than what expected. As I
have learned more about this Japanese ritual, I have become more interested as it is so different
to what I am accustomed to. As I have grown older, I have learned to appreciate peaceful things
more, such as a tea ceremony, as I find myself with less free time to relax. To be part of an actual
ceremony would be a dream.
Works Cited