

ZEN & TEA: Sen no Rikyū & Hideyoshi

FILM: Sen no Rikyū (Teshigahara Hiroshi, 1990)

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| Sen no Rikyū | (1522-1591) |
| Oda Nobunaga | (1534-1582) |
| Toyotomi Hideyoshi | (1537-1598) |
| Tokugawa Ieyasu | (1543-1616) |
| “Christian Century” | (1543-1638) |
| 1587 | Hideyoshi’s expulsion edict |
| 1597 | “Twenty-six martyrs” |
| 1614 | Ieyasu’s expulsion edict |
| 1637-38 | Shimabara rebellion |
| Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea: | 1592, 1597-98 |

ZEN & TEA

The 4 key elements (Suzuki):
Harmony (*wa*)
Reverence (*kei*)
Purity (*sei*)
Tranquility (*jaku*)

Sabi [more “objective”] & wabi [more subjective]:
Poverty
Simplification
Aloneness
“Insufficiency”
“Imperfection”

RIKYŪ versus HIDEYOSHI

- Cultural authority (taste, transcendent values)
Vs.
Political authority (power, this-worldly values)
- Aesthetic restraint (Soji's black tea bowls; *wabi* [less is more]; etc.)
Vs.
Aesthetic flamboyance (black as depressing; ostentation as in gold teahouse)
- Personal gracefulness
Vs.
Personal ugliness, lack of polish (Hideyoshi as "monkey")
- Personal Restraint (and strength)
Vs.
Lack of personal restraint (megalomania: conquer China; kill Soji, Rikyū)

RIKYŪ'S "CONTRADICTIONS" (Suzuki): "While he was in actual life not a man of *wabi*, 'insufficiency,' but one endowed with material wealth, political power, and an unusual amount of artistic genius, he longed deep in his heart for a life of *wabi*."

RIKYŪ'S "OFFENSES" IN HIDEYOSHI'S EYES (speculative):

1. Statue of Rikyū in upper chamber of the giant temple gate at Daitokuji (thus Hideyoshi will pass *under* "Rikyū").
2. Rikyū's criticism of Hideyoshi's plan to conquer China.
3. Rikyū's failure to poison Ieyasu, as Hideyoshi had requested.
4. Rikyū shows Hideyoshi how *powerless* he really is (through his ability to "change the world"—as seen in the film scene where Rikyū strips petals from a branch). Thus, Hideyoshi sees Rikyū as mocking his worldly authority by demonstrating his own greater spiritual and aesthetic power. (Had Rikyū saved his life by apologizing to Hideyoshi, he would in effect have reaffirmed Hideyoshi's greater authority.)