

茶の湯を 体験しよう

Experiencing Chanoyu!

表千家不審菴

OMOTESENKE Fushin'an

About Tea

There is a well-known tea harvesting song that begins; *"Summer is arriving, the 88th night."*

The song refers to the 88th night after February 4th. The 88th night is called Risshun. Risshun is the first day of Spring by the lunar calendar, and the day after Setsubun. Setsubun is the scattering of beans to cleanse a house of evil spirits. The 88th night falls on May 1st or May 2nd.

In early summer tea picking is at its height. In Kyoto's Uji and in Shizuoka, where tea production thrives, you can see tea pickers at work on the extensive tea plantations.

There are several kinds of tea; Matcha (powdered green tea), Gyokuro (refined tea), Sencha (green tea), Hojicha (roasted green tea) and so on.

The teas listed above are all made from the same tea plant using different processes. Matcha is made by grinding the leaves in a mortar and putting the powder directly into the tea bowl. Matcha is whisked with a Chasen (tea whisk) before being drunk.



A covered tea plantation



Tea mortar

The Beginnings of Chanoyu

Matcha was brought to Japan by the priest Eisai during the Song Dynasty in China 800 years ago. At first it was used to prevent drowsiness during meditation. It also was used as an aid for digestion. Eventually people gathered to drink and enjoy tea together. Guests were invited and entertained with tea, food and sweets. This was the beginning of the culture of Chanoyu.



Kinmokaku, the main gate of Daitoku-ji temple
Important cultural asset

Sen no Rikyu appearance



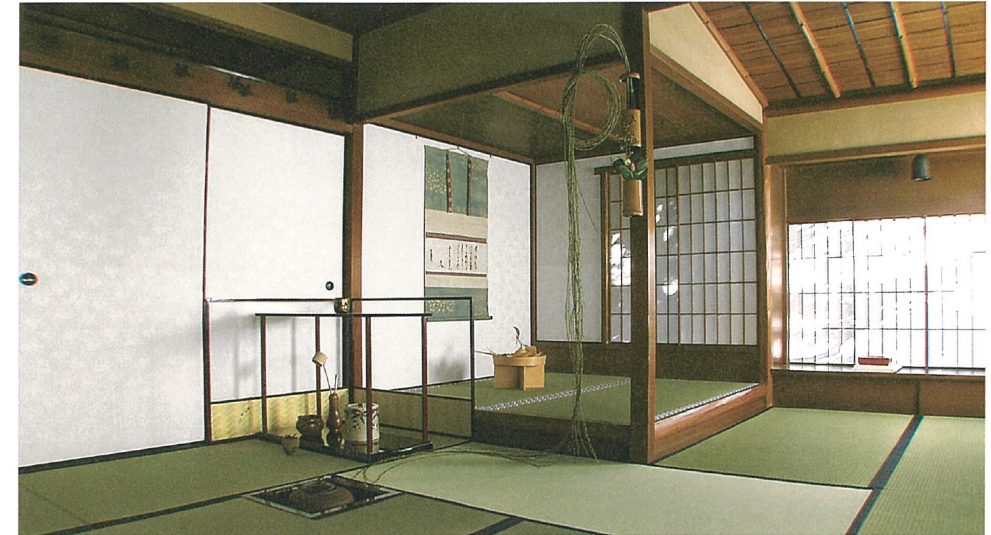
Portrait of Sen no Rikyu
Painted by Hasegawa Tohaku
Calligraphy by Shunoku Soen

Sen no Rikyu established the basics of Chanoyu as it is practiced today. Rikyu, lived from 1522 to 1591, was born in Sakai in Osaka Prefecture. He was active as a tea practitioner during the Azuchi Momoyama period (1573–1603). Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the rulers of Japan at the time, both enjoyed Chanoyu and they employed Rikyu as their tea master. The simple and quiet form of Chanoyu called Wabicha is what Rikyu brought to maturity. The spiritual exchange between the host and guest was greatly valued with Wabicha. After Rikyu passed away, the spirit of Chanoyu continued mainly through Omotesenke, Urasenke and Mushanokojisenke.

Tea Utensils

When tea is prepared, various utensils are used. These include; the tea bowl in which tea is prepared and offered to the guests; the container that holds the powdered tea (Chaki); the tea scoop (Chashaku); the silk cloth for wiping the tea container (Fukusa); the container for fresh water (Mizusashi); the kettle for boiling water (Kama) and the ladle (Hishaku). The host uses the ladle to take water from the fresh water container and hot water from the kettle.

When guests are invited to a tea gathering, a scroll (Kakemono) is hung in the alcove (Tokonama) of the tearoom (Chaseki). All the utensils are handled very carefully, and observing them is an important part of Chanoyu.



Alcove display for New Year's Day in the Zangetsutei tea room



A white Raku tea bowl made by the third generation
Raku craftsman Donyu (alias Nonko)



Natsume tea container with phoenix design in *makie* lacquer
Favored by Sokuchusai. 20th C

Chanoyu Etiquette

In Chanoyu there are various rules to be followed when preparing tea and when consuming tea, when sitting, bowing, standing, walking, and so on. These rituals are called Saho (etiquette). The specific name for preparing tea is called Temae. These aspects of etiquette have been refined during the long history of Chanoyu to enable us to always be considerate of each other and to make the tea as delicious as possible.



Thin tea preparation

Being the Guest and the Host

Taking Sweets

Sweets are consumed before the tea is drunk. There are various kinds of sweets which developed along with Chanoyu in Japan. Sweets are considered to be an element of Japanese culture.



- 1 The main guest (Shokyaku) first places the sweets container, (Kashiki), between himself and the second guest (Jikyaku), and says, "excuse me for taking a sweet first."
- 2 The main guest then places the sweets container in front of himself, and bows to the host after saying, "I will take a sweet."
- 3 The main guest then places the paper, (Kashi) for the sweets in front of himself.
- 4 Using a wooden pick (Kuromoji) the guest proceeds to take a sweet and place it on the paper. At that point the sweet is eaten.

Consuming Tea

After eating the sweets, the main guest receives the tea that the host has prepared for him. When drinking tea, the rules of etiquette should be followed.



- 1 Place the tea bowl between yourself and the second guest saying, "excuse me for drinking the tea first." Both guests will bow.



- 2 Put the tea bowl in front of yourself. Then say, "I will drink the tea." Bow to the host.



- 3 Pick up the tea bowl and place it in the palm of the left hand. Turn it around clockwise to avoid drinking from the front of the bowl. Then drink the tea.



- 4 When you have finished drinking the tea, wipe the rim with your fingers and clean your fingers with the (Kaishi) paper. Turn the tea bowl back counter-clockwise to its original position. Place the tea bowl in front of yourself.

Preparing Tea

Try preparing tea yourself. Judge for yourself by drinking it whether you have made delicious tea or not. To make delicious tea it is important to be careful about the amount of water used, the temperature of the hot water, and so on.

Preparing tea and serving it to guests

Next, serve the tea you have prepared to guests. Do your best to make delicious tea for them!



MEMO



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For further details about OMOTESENKE see the homepage: Japanese Tea Culture: The OMOTESENKE Tradition

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