

清静庵

ニューオータニ・ガーデンタワー

Tea Ceremony Room
SEISEI-AN

7th floor, Garden Tower

Tea Ceremony Experience

¥1,000 per person + tax
(One bowl of *matcha* and one Japanese sweet)

Available 11am-4pm, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays

*Not available when a private event is held in the tea room

The Art of Tea Ceremony

Japanese tea ceremony, one of the traditional arts of Japan, may perhaps be best characterized by concepts such as: strong feeling of respect for other people, deep sense of gratitude, and total equanimity that is undisturbed by outside influences.

Deep respect and sincere gratitude toward others are fundamental precepts of the tea ceremony, and the host is keenly conscious of this even in the simple process of preparing a bowl of tea for his or her guest. Thus, when we are serving in the role as guests, we need to appreciate the feeling of the host, by responding with our own feeling of gratitude and respect.

For example, when a bowl of tea is served to the guest by the host, the front of the bowl is always turned toward the guest, to show the respect that the host has for him. After picking up the bowl, the guest turns the bowl a quarter circle, before sipping the tea. This act symbolically conveys to the host the guest's feeling of humility for the honor. Before returning the bowl, the guest turns the front of the bowl toward the host, to express both his gratitude and respect.

Wordlessly, these symbolic nuances reinforce the mutual understanding between the host and the guest, and intensify their respect and gratitude toward each other. The enhancement of mutuality can be considered as the spirit and essence of the tea ceremony.

The relaxation inherent in the tea ceremony is not limited to any age or generation. Long ago, even in the midst of a prolonged battle campaign, historical records show that the Japanese samurai sometimes took a brief respite and eased their overwrought minds with a simple tea ceremony.



Today, many Japanese still find that the tea ceremony can provide them with time for reflection even in the fast-moving pace of modern society.

Fortunately, Japan is geographically blessed with four distinct seasons, so the tea ceremony is enjoyed in keeping with the changing seasonal moods that directly affect the environment in which the ritual is performed.

Formal tea ceremony facilities, whether in homes or elsewhere, are carefully provided with selected furnishings and accessories by the host for the benefit of the guests. Keen attention is paid to such details as the stone water basin for the tea garden, the design on the hanging scroll, the seasonal flowers displayed in the vase and the tea bowls to be used.

The tea ceremony serves as a tacit means of communication between people. Natural elements are used in their natural forms, providing renewed meanings to the participants. The materials are selected to reawaken the awareness and consciousness of all that are present. In short, each and every detail must complement the environment, and unless this unified mood is created, the tea ceremony is incomplete.

With the world around us constantly changing, the ability to overcome the ensuing hardships becomes increasingly relevant. More than ever, we need to develop the composure that allows us to remain calm in the face of rapidly occurring challenges.

"Cha-no-yu" is the act of serving a bowl of tea – but it is a carefully prepared bowl, made with the delicate essence of traditional Japanese hospitality.

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