

Tea Ceremony at The Children's Museum

The Japanese House at The Children's Museum includes a complete tea room or chashitsu on its second floor. Ordinarily, this space is not available to the public. This spring, for the first time, Tea ceremony activities are being offered to school groups coming to the Japanese House for exploration sessions and, in some cases, for Focus Field Trips as well.

A simplified introduction to tea ceremony for older students is useful in two ways: for gaining insight into Japanese fine arts and as a way of understanding social values such as harmony, equality, simplicity, economy and courtesy.

We feel it is important to emphasize that we are not presenting a full-fledged tea ceremony but rather a very simplified introduction to an art which requires many year of study.

Professional tea ceremonies are occasionally performed in the Boston area and qualified teachers are available. For further information, please contact the Japan Program.

Tea Ceremony Terms

CHANOYU The Tea Ceremony

MATCHA Powdered green tea used in the Tea Ceremony

KAKEMONO Hanging scroll which is hung in the alcove of the tea room

TOKONOMA The alcove in the tea room where scrolls are hung and flower arrangements are displayed.

SEIZA The way of kneeling that is appropriate for the tea room

CHAWAN The tea bowl

CHASEN The bamboo whisk that is used to whip the tea

OKAESHI The small pieces of paper used as napkins to hold sweets

OKASHI Sweets served with the tea to cut its bitterness

AISATSU This is the specific tea ceremony word used to mean bowing that takes place in the tea room

ITADAKIMASU This is what one says before eating or drinking anything in Japan.



JAPAN
BEING A GUEST AT A TEA CEREMONY

Sit in seiza position (kneeling) with knees lined up with other guests and hands folded in lap (left on top).

Eating Sweets

1. Guests take out paper okaishi, fold over onto itself and place in front of them.
2. First guest next to host picks up sweets tray in both hands and places it between himself and the next guest
3. First and second guest bow to each other (hands on tatami with eyes averted).
4. First guest picks up tray with both hands and puts in front of himself. Bows to host.
5. First guest takes sweet closest to him and places it in paper okaishi. Passes tray to next guest.
6. Next guest repeats procedure with third guest, deleting bow to host and so on down the line.
7. Last guest places tray to left of himself after taking sweet.
8. May begin eating sweet immediately once it is taken onto paper and tray is passed.

Drinking Tea

1. Host passes tea bowl to first guest with design facing guest.
2. First guest picks up bowl in right hand, places on palm of left hand, puts bowl down between himself and next guest with right hand and they bow to each other.
3. First guest takes bowl in right hand, puts on palm of left hand turns the bowl two times clockwise so as not to drink out of design side, then raises the bowl in a symbolic gesture of gratitude and finishes the tea in three and a half sips, slurping the last sip.
4. Turn the bowl so that the design is facing the host and return it in the right hand.
5. The host can then make separate bowls for each guest and the procedure is repeated, or if there is a large number of people, one bowl can be passed down the line. The guests are then to wipe the place where they drank with the paper used for the sweet.

Values learned in the tea ceremony: harmony, humility, equality,