

# Unit 8 O-MO-TE-NA-SHI Japanese Culture

## ✓ REVIEW

Put the following Japanese into English.

1. 日本では、禅が日本文化の底流をなす真髄であるといわれています。
2. 茶道は、禅の教えに基づいています。
3. 茶道は、特別に建てられた茶室で行われます。
4. 床の間とよばれるアルコーブがあり、そこに掛け軸か、生け花か、あるいは両方ともを飾ります。

## 茶道

### Tea Ceremony (2)



## CONVERSATION 1

Key words:

- embarrassed きまり悪い思いをする
- garment 衣服

1. Listen to the conversation twice without looking at the text.
2. Now repeat after the teacher, looking at the text.



A: If I were to be invited to a formal tea ceremony, I would feel nervous.

B: Don't worry. All you need is some basic understanding of tea ceremony and just imitate what other guests are doing.

A: So, what should I know beforehand?

B: You wouldn't feel embarrassed as long as you know some unwritten dress code rules. Just ask what kind of clothing is required, Western or Japanese. In the former case, take clean white socks with you and wear them before the ceremony starts. In the latter case, take clean white tabi, traditional Japanese ankle-high socks with a separation between the big toe and other toes.

A: Anything else?

B: You need to take off watches, rings, and other accessories. And leave the cell phone behind.

A: Do I need to take anything else with me?

B: Take along some kaishi paper, used as a mat to put sweets on, or to wipe the edge of the tea bowl after drinking the tea. And don't forget a kuromoji-yoji, which is a handmade toothpick used as knife and fork when eating sweets.

3. Read the conversation until you memorize it.

4. Role play

Your teacher plays the role of A and you play the role of B.



## CONVERSATION 2

A: Is that all?

B: One more thing. There are two seating positions that any first-time participant should avoid. First, the main guest of honor, shokyaku, sits nearest to the 'tokonoma' alcove. And then, the last guest, makkyaku, sits nearest to the guest entrance. The roles of the former is to converse with the host, discussing the ( ) merits of the hanging scroll, and the flower arrangement displayed in the tokonoma and quite often to discuss the merits of the tea ( ). Makkyaku also plays an important role in making sure that the ceremony goes without a hitch. So, I think you should tell other guests that you are a first-timer so that they take care of you and make sure you do not sit in the wrong position.

A: I see. Then all I do is to do what other people do, right?

B: Yes. All you need to do is to observe what other people around you are doing, and follow their lead. It doesn't matter if you make some mistakes. You'll see that guests relax and enjoy the atmosphere of simplicity created by the sounds of the boiling water in the iron tea kettle, the scent of ( ) and tea, and the beauty of the tea house and its seasonally ( ) decorations. All you need to do is just enjoy the tea ceremony!

3. Now repeat after the teacher, looking at the completed text.



### CONVERSATION 3



1. Read and learn the following key words, which appear in the text your teacher is going to read.

#### Key words:

- dominant 主要な
- asymmetry 非対称
- patina さび
- quintessential 典型的な
- aesthetic 美意識
- transitory つかの間の ; はかない
- Hellenic ギリシャの

2. Listen and answer the questions.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is wabi?
2. What is sabi?
3. What underlies these wabi-sabi principles?

The two dominant principles of Japanese art and culture are wabi and sabi. Wabi is the kind of beauty that is caused by just the right kind of imperfection, such as an asymmetrical pottery item. Sabi is beauty that comes with age. Wabi and sabi imply solitude. It is the Japanese art of finding beauty in imperfection and rustic simplicity, and of accepting the natural cycle of growth, decay, and death. Underlying these principles is the notion of life's transitory nature, which is linked to Zen Buddhist thought. As Robyn Griggs Lawrence said in *Natural Home* (September-October 2001), Wabi and sabi, which acknowledge human beings' transient nature, contrast clearly with Western values of perfection and permanence.

## PRACTICE SENTENCES

**Put the following Japanese into English.**

1. 足袋とは、伝統的な日本のかかとまでの履物で、親指とほかの指が分かれています。
2. わび・さびとは、典型的な日本人の美意識です。

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