ENTERTAINMENT: Architecture in the Sukiya Spirit

Prepare the tea so that in summer it is cooling and in winter warming, so that the charcoal brings the water to a boil and the tea is good to the taste—the secret is no more than this.

The great tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522–91) is reputed to have replied to that effect when asked about the essence of the tea ceremony. "But if you really think you can do it," Rikyū continued, "I will become your disciple." The account in which this exchange appears, the *Nambōroku*, was written after Rikyū's death, and it cannot be verified. It nevertheless gets at the heart of his attitude of approaching the ceremony naturally and without becoming obsessed by formality, remembering that it is a deceptive simplicity, one achieved only through long experience, dedication, and discipline.

The tea ceremony (*chanoyū*) was one of the most important upper-class entertainments in the late Muromachi, Momoyama, and Edo periods, and it continues to be practiced by millions today. It had its beginnings in the Nara period when tea was imported from China as part of Buddhist culture. Already by the Heian period the practice of tea drinking had been adopted from the monastery by the aristocracy, who became collectors of expensive Chinese tea utensils. The early Kamakura-period Zen masters Eisai and Dōgen were enthusiastic apologists for tea, and tea drinking thereafter became increasingly imbued with Zen philosophy. That set the stage for the development of the "Way of Tea" (*chadō* or *sadō*) in the Muromachi and Momoyama periods, when it became an artistic, philosophical, and religious system. Collecting and connoisseurship developed concurrently, and wealthy merchants, aristocrats, and warriors, including Hideyoshi himself, spent fortunes to obtain the finest tea bowls and build the most impressive teahouses. Tea taste, as we have already seen, subsequently exerted a powerful influence on the Shoin residence, resulting in the Sukiya style of architecture (see pp. 78–81).

But tea, of course, was not the only source of entertainment and artistic inspiration during and after the Muromachi period. Another was the Nō drama, which like tea, had risen out of humble traditions in the Nara and Heian periods to become a complex and esoteric art, again partly under the influence of Buddhist thought. This transformation was due primarily to the genius of two men, Kannami (flourished late fourteenth century) and his son Zeami (1363–1443), who as actors, playwrights, and theoreticians remade what had been a simple amalgam of playacting, song, and dance into a dramatic art of great richness and profundity. The Nō is performed by an elegantly robed and masked main actor who chants, mimes, and dances a text as poetic and religious as it is dramatic (fig. 243). He is accompanied by one or more subsidiary actors, a chorus, and a four-man orchestra. Like the tea ceremony, the Nō was performed throughout the Edo period and is today the oldest surviving professional theater in the world.

But not all the entertainments of the early modern period were as erudite as the Nō and tea ceremony. The Kabuki drama vied with the puppet theater (Bunraku) for the attention of the commoners of the Edo period, and the two theaters influenced each other to the artistic and dramaturgical improvement of both. Though Kabuki was to some extent also influenced by the Nō, it stresses bombast and display over suggestion and restraint, and it delights in swashbuckling heros and self-sacrificing heroines in byzantine plots full of bloodshed, coincidence, and amorous intrigue. Kabuki actors were the idols of the rising commoner class of the Edo centuries as well as one of the favorite subjects of woodblock artists and popular writers of the period.

No less central to the popular imagination were the courtesans of the pleasure quarters of the great cities. Those women held various ranks based on beauty and artistic accomplishment, and a *tayū* in the city of Edo required huge sums of money and extravagant gifts. Houses in the pleasure quarters, like the Sumiya in Kyōto's Shimabara, could be quite sumptuous and were appointed in a particularly innovative variety of the Sukiya style.

In this chapter we will discuss the architectural adjuncts of the pursuit of pleasure in the early modern period. We will begin with the rustic teahouse and the Sukiya philosophy of restraint, simplicity, and refinement that it embodies. Next we will describe the theater architecture of the Nō, then that of Kabuki, which developed out of the Nō stage but continued to grow in engineering sophistication as the Edo period progressed. The architecture of the pleasure quarter comes next, particularly that of the Sumiya house of assignation in Kyōto's Shimabara, which combines the taste and craftsmanship of the Sukiya style with the flair of the "floating world" of the courtesans. Concluding with a look at the courtly architecture of pleasure, we will show through excerpts from contemporary diaries how traditional court taste was blended with the Sukiya philosophy in gracious pastimes at the Katsura Villa and the Sentō Palace.

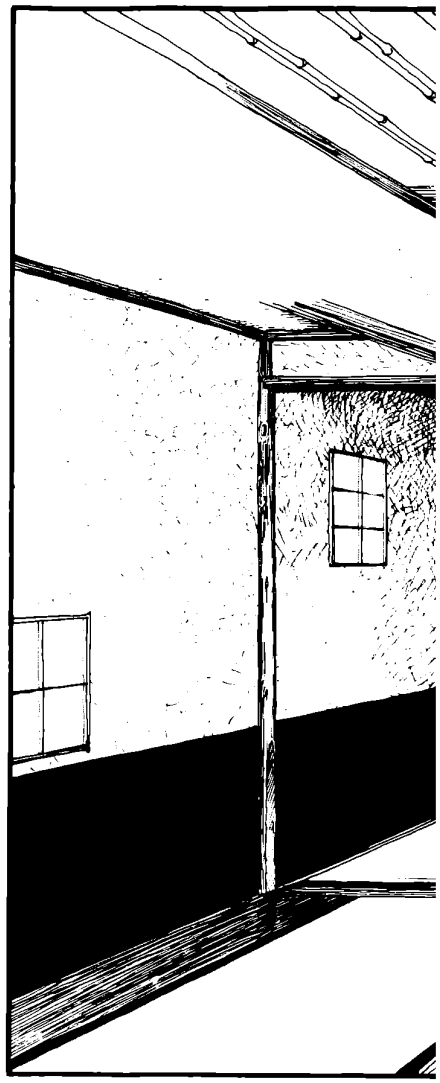
THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE TEA CEREMONY

The Maturation of Tea The tea ceremony began to reach maturity in the early Muromachi period when the shōgun and select members of his aesthetic circle met to admire choice Chinese tea wares and game at guessing the provenance of various types of tea. But its transformation into a true art form with spiritual dimensions is due to the influence of three men. The first was Murata Jukō (or Shukō; 1422–1502), a student of Zen and curator of Chinese art for shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa. He and Yoshimasa would meet at the latter's Silver Pavilion and drink tea in Chinese utensils in the Dōjinsai room of the Tōgūdō (see pp. 30–31).

Tea, and especially the collecting of utensils, was also popular among the wealthy merchants of Sakai City (near present-day Ōsaka). One of these merchants, Takeno Jōō (1502–55), took his interest in tea far beyond acquisition into the realm of philosophical appreciation and, under the influence of Jukō's thought, did much to develop the *wabi* ideal of refined rusticity that became one of the central elements of tea taste.

Wabi tea reached its mature expression under the third of these great tea masters, Sen no Rikyū. He continued the trend toward simplicity and naturalness, often incorporating folk objects into his tea ceremonies. Earlier warriors and aristocrats had made tea in one room, then served it in a large formal Shoin space, this practice being consequently referred to as Shoin Tea. The tiny tea area appended to the Mt. Fuji Room of the Manshuin Lesser Shoin, for example, may on occasion have been used in this way (see fig. 146). Rikyū, by contrast, often prepared and offered tea in the same room. He concurrently shrank the size of the tearoom from the four and half mats at the Dōjinsai (or even six mats or more in other teahouses) down to two mats in some of his designs. This type of extremely small and rustic teahouse is known as a *sōan*, literally "grass cottage." The larger tearooms continued to be used as well, though, for other tea ceremony styles. Despite the central role Rikyū played in the development of sōan tea, the design of only one of the extant sōan teahouses can be even tentatively ascribed to his hand. That is the Taian (figs. 223–25, 227).

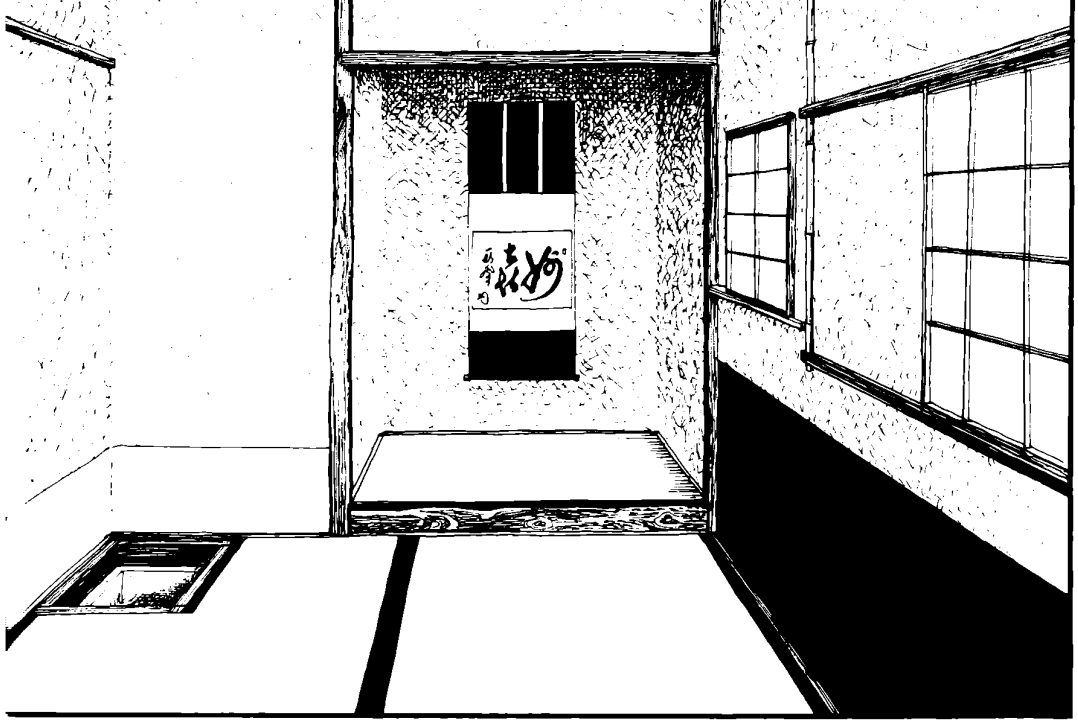
The Taian Located in the town of Yamazaki, south of Kyōto, the Taian is part of the Myōkian temple. Though the provenance of the teahouse is unverified, it seems likely that Rikyū originally built it in his own house in Yamazaki and that it was later transferred to the Myōkian. He probably prepared tea for Hideyoshi there, which gave rise to the belief that Hideyoshi had ordered Rikyū to build it in 1582 while he was engaged in battle nearby with Akechi Mitsuhide (1526–82), Nobunaga's assassin.



223. Taian Teahouse of Myōkian temple

The Taian consists of a two-mat tearoom (*chashitsu*) next to a one-mat anteroom bordered with a wood-floor section (figs. 223). North of the anteroom is a one-mat space called the Katte, where preparations are made for the ceremony. The screens that normally separate the rooms have been removed in the figure for clarity. In the tearoom proper the west mat has a hearth (*ro*) cut into one corner, where the water for the tea is boiled. The other mat to the east is for the guests. This extremely small size is visually mitigated somewhat by the decorative alcove area, and the anteroom can also be used when a larger number of guests are present.

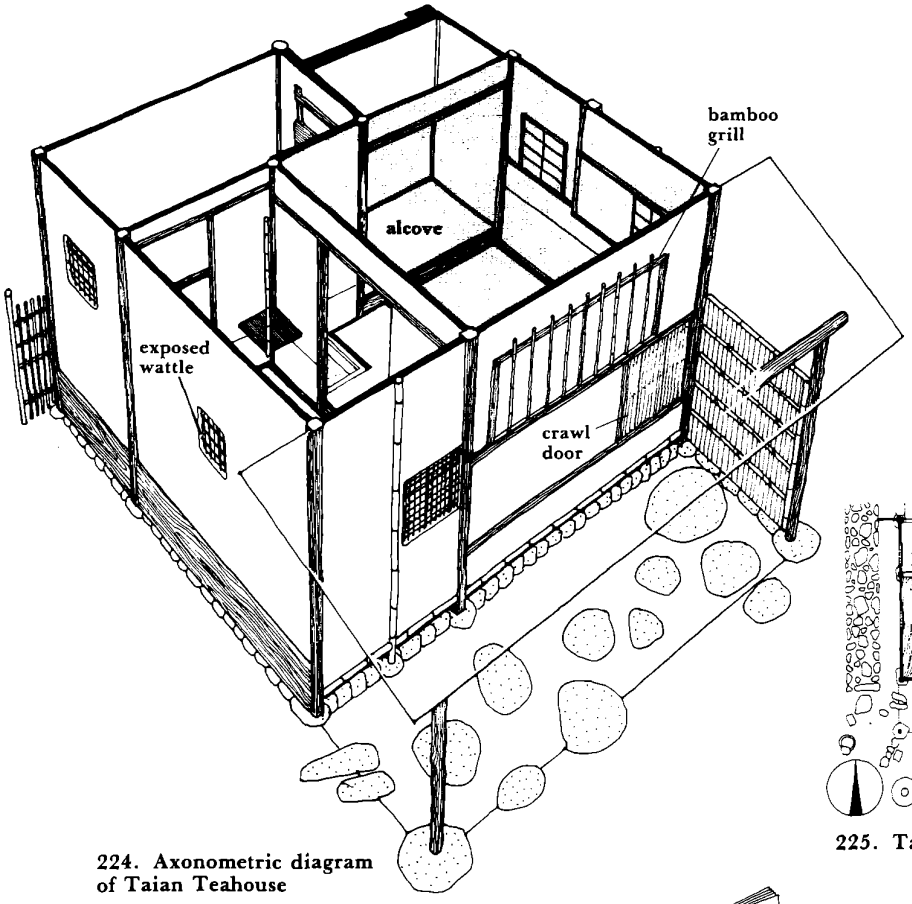
The teahouse is entered via a low door called a *ni-*



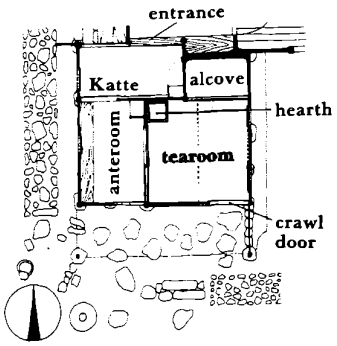
jiriguchi (literally, "crawl door") only seventy-two centimeters tall. The design forces the participants to bend over to enter, which commensurately increases the apparent size of the tearoom inside and also reminds them of the attitude of humility appropriate to *wabi* tea.

Interior Decor The design of the Taian sōan has been worked out in great detail. Even the ceiling is of a complex construction. The sections directly in front of the decorative alcove and over the server's mat are flat and consist of thin shingles reinforced beneath by light-colored bamboo. But the part above the guests' mat is inclined, and this again helps mitigate the feeling of constriction such a small space might otherwise generate. The decorative alcove is a so-called *murodoko*, as its rear posts have been plastered over. That is true also of the post in the corner behind the hearth. The technique is yet another way of lending a more expansive feeling to the space and of making the design more arresting.

Every aspect of the Taian reflects rusticity and yet refinement, revealing a calculated use of natural materials for their inherent decorative qualities. The lattices of the shōji windows, for example, are made not of wood but of split bamboo. The delicate paper is protected on the exterior (fig. 224) either by vertical bamboo grills or by the wattle of the wall interior, left exposed for its rustic visual effect. Windows of the latter type are called *shitajimado*. The positions of the windows have been carefully calculated, as has the height of the transom of the decorative alcove and the alcove's ceiling. The baseboard of the decorative alcove was chosen for its three knots, which again enhances the rusticity of the space.



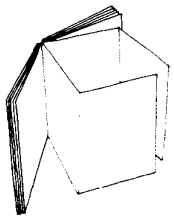
224. Axonometric diagram of Taian Teahouse



225. Taian Teahouse

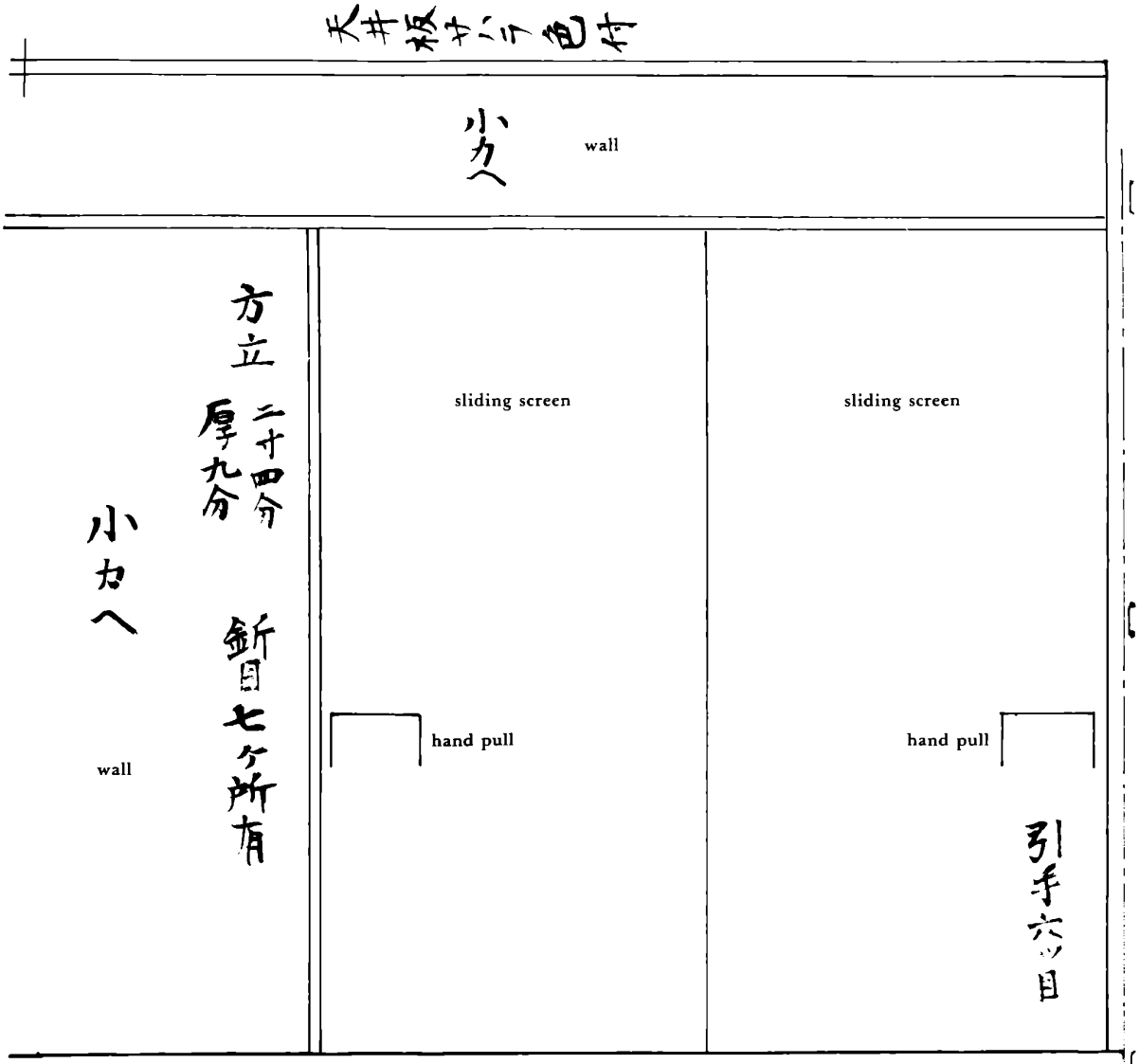
Visualization with Three-Dimensional Models

The smaller the teahouse space, the more carefully must its constituent elements be chosen to achieve just the right blend of naturalness and refinement. One device designers traditionally used for this purpose was a three-dimensional paper model called an *okoshiezu*. It was simple to make, and minute alterations in the placement of windows, doors, and interior partitions could be tested for potential effect. It could also be folded up and easily carried to the building site. In earlier religious and residential structures, the most critical aspect of the design had been the floor plan. A practiced builder could visualize in his own mind the basic elevation, as there were few variables in any one style. But as we have seen, in the teahouse every element of the design from the floor plan to the walls, ceiling, and roof could be freely manipulated, and a change in one element affected all the others. The three-dimensional paper model was a concrete way of visualizing such structures.



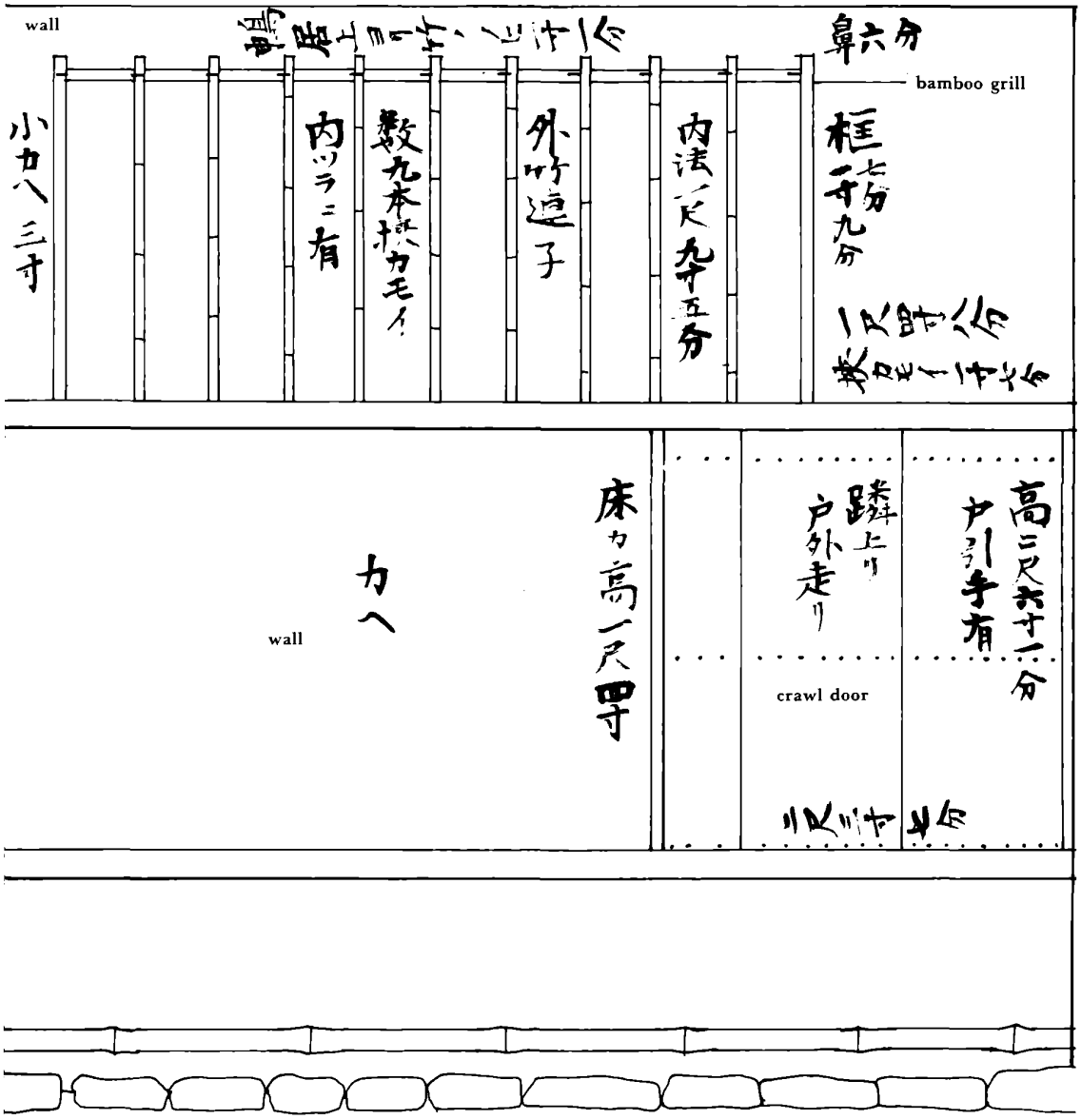
226. Using the three-dimensional model

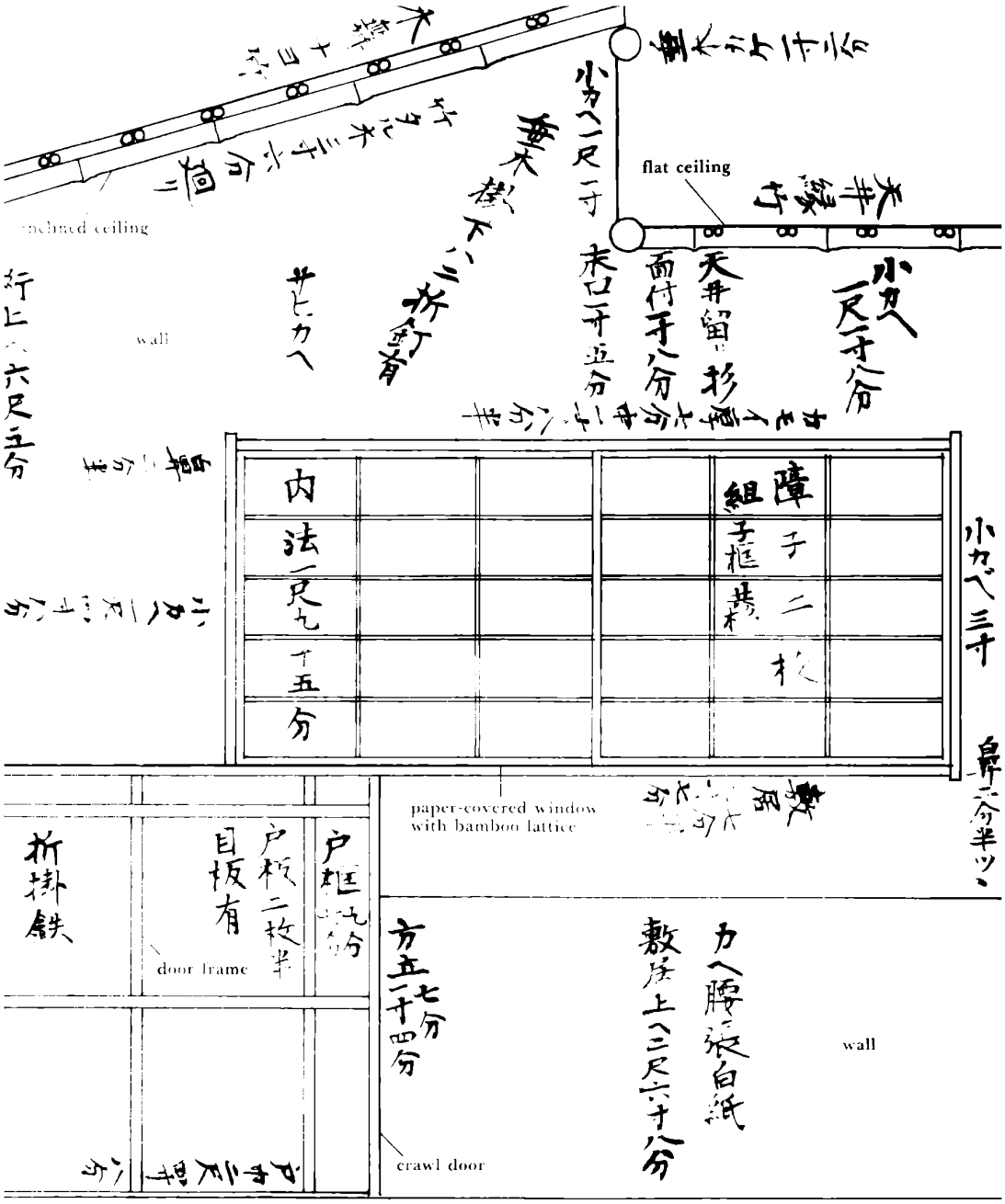
Three-dimensional models (*okoshiezu*) are assembled by gluing each wall to the floor section. It is impossible to provide a floor here, but folding the following pages as in figure 226 will give an idea of the effect. The gray section in figures 224–25 show the wall surfaces in question. Pages 110 and 115 are the south and east exterior walls; 109 is the anteroom side of the wall with sliding screens that divides the anteroom from the tearoom proper to the east; 112 is the tearoom side of that same wall; 111 and 114 are the insides of the exterior walls at the south and east; and 113 is the back wall with the decorative alcove. The alcove, of course, must be imagined as recessed. An even more realistic effect can be obtained by copying the floor in the plan and setting the walls on it, after cutting out the low entrance door.

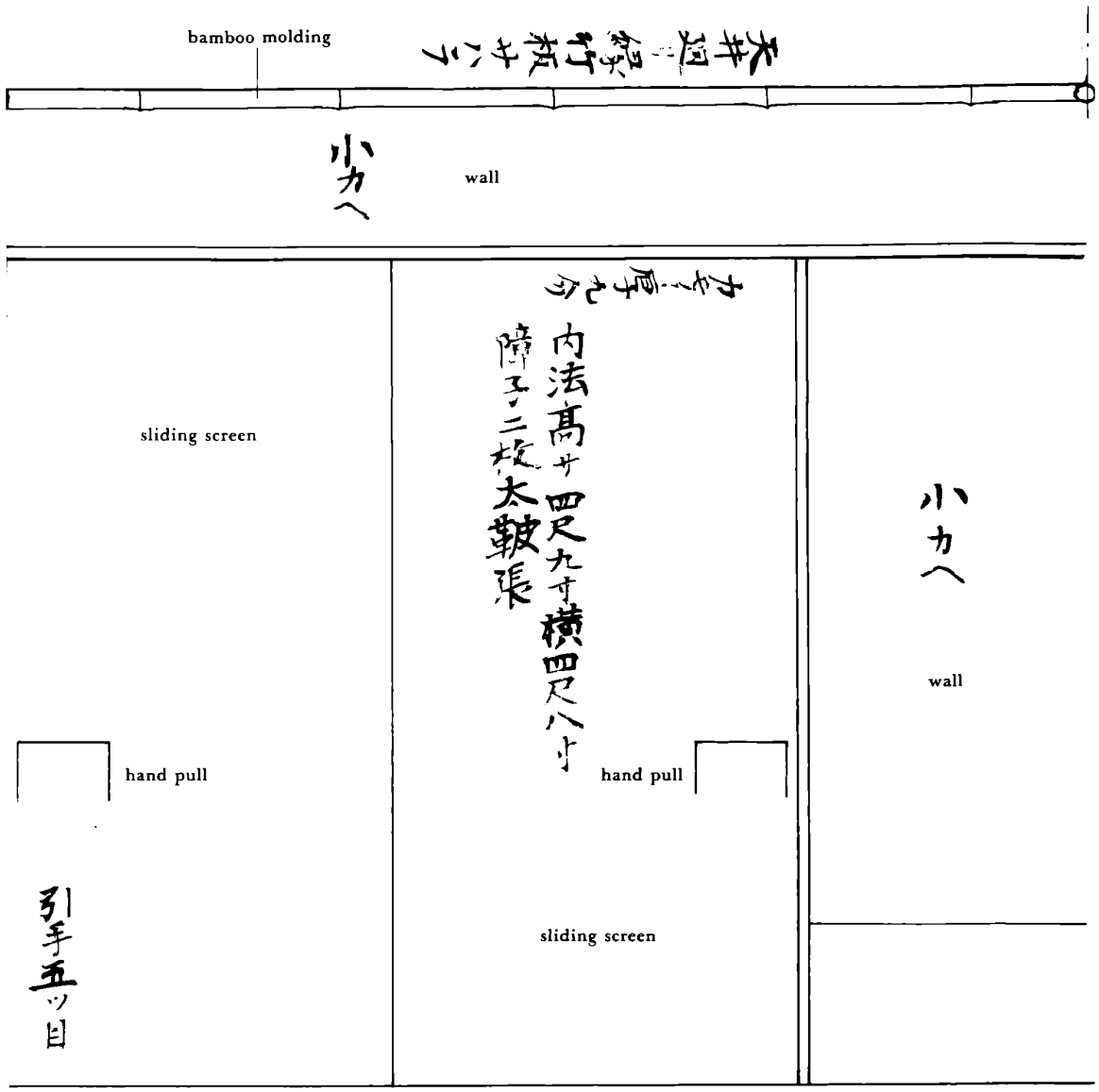


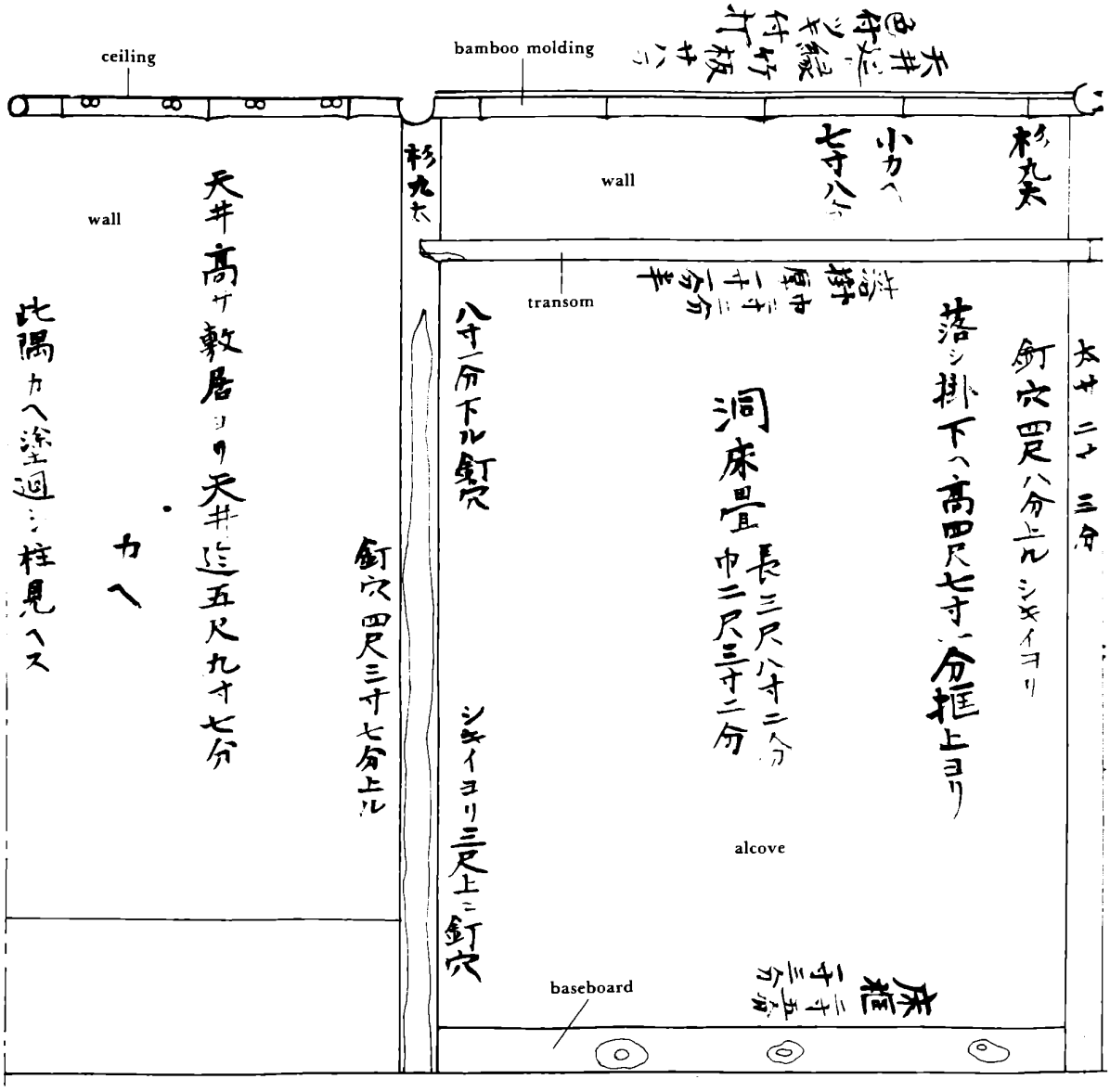
227. Three-dimensional model of the tearoom of Taian Teahouse

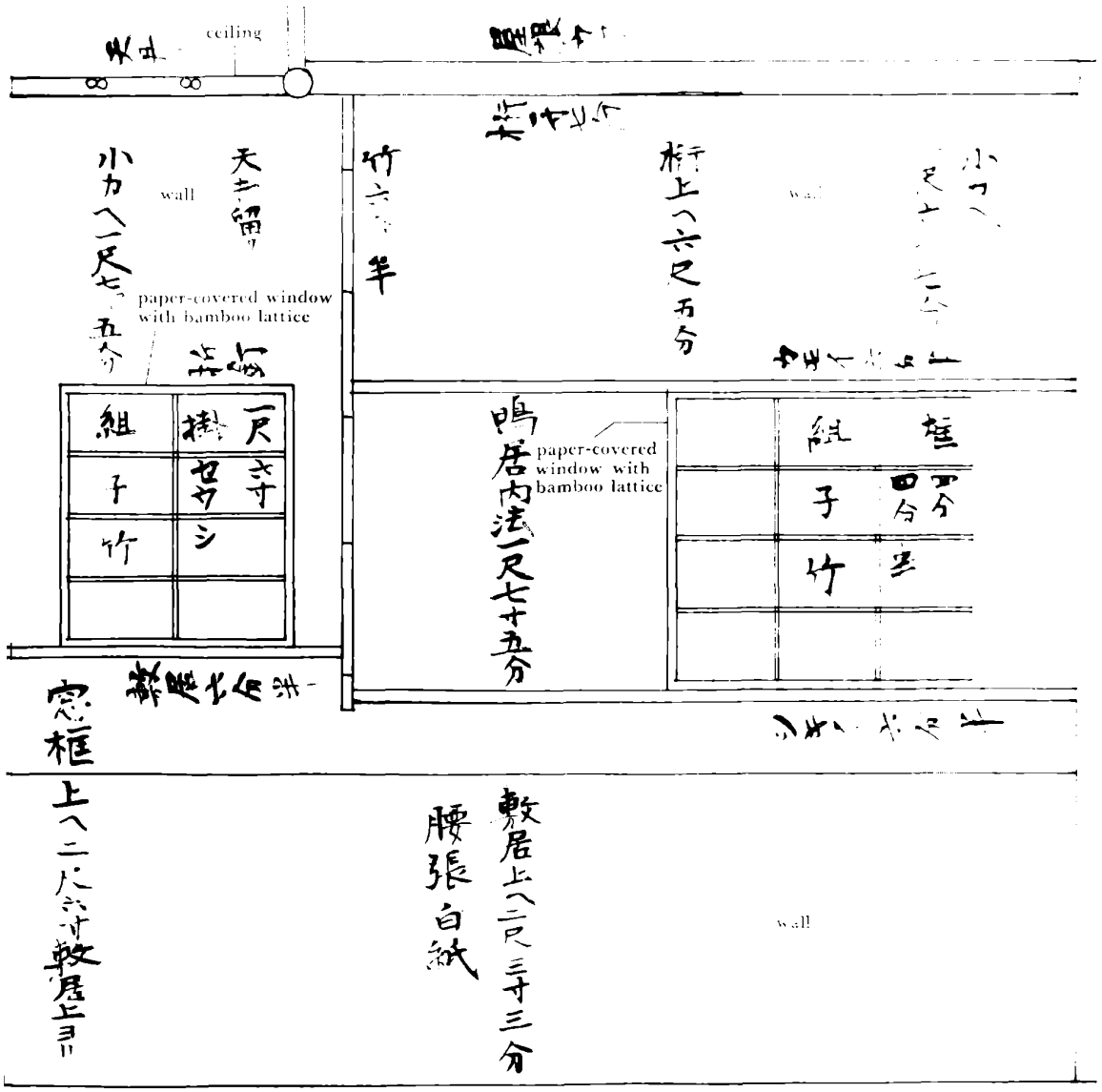
カヘ wall

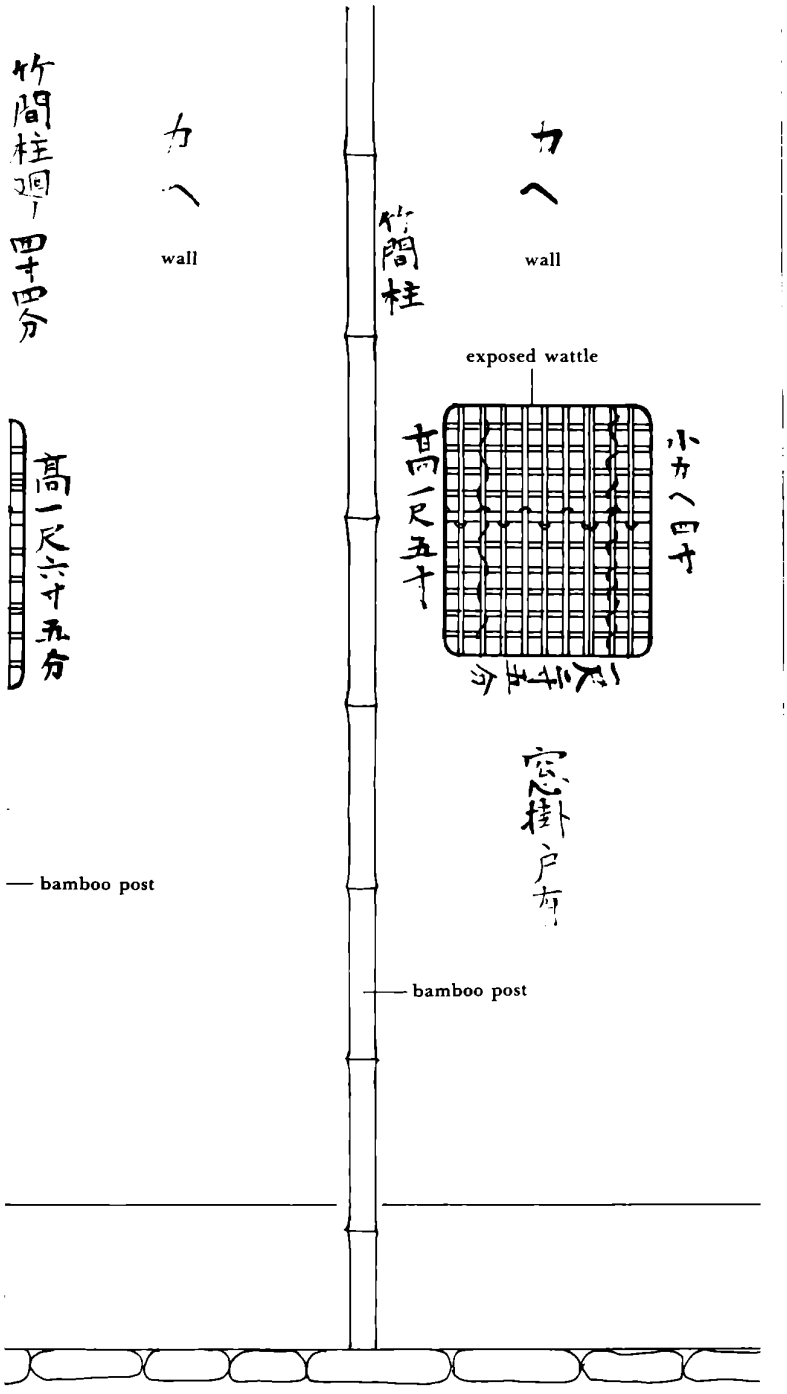



inclined ceiling
flat ceiling
wall
障子二枚
組子框
内法一尺七寸五分
paper-covered window
with bamboo lattice
戸框
戸板二枚半
目板有
door frame
折掛鉄
crawl door
wall

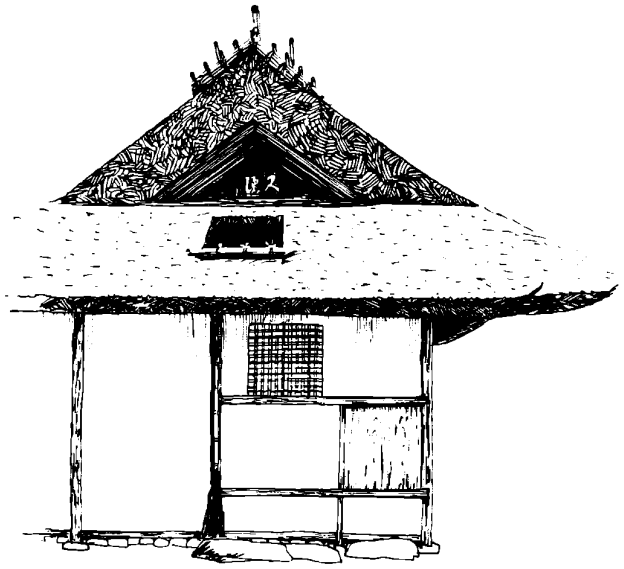

bamboo molding
wall
sliding screen
hand pull
hand pull
wall
sliding screen

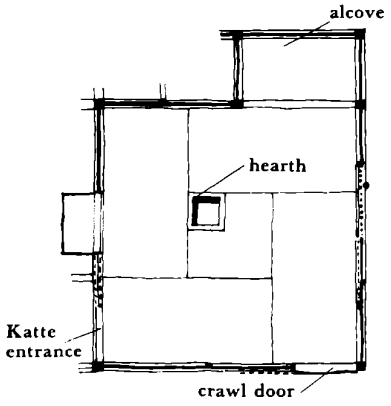

ceiling
bamboo molding
wall
wall
transom
alcove
baseboard


ceiling
wall
paper-covered window with bamboo lattice
paper-covered window with bamboo lattice
wall
wall

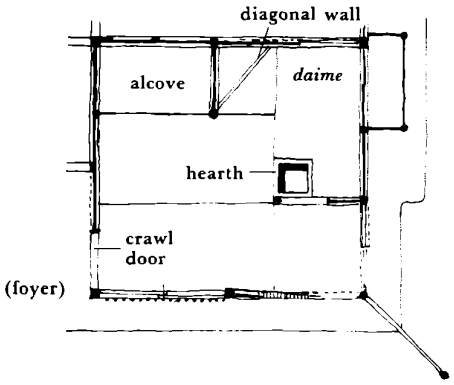

竹間柱廻り四十四分
力へ
wall
高一尺六寸五分
— bamboo post
竹間柱
力へ
wall
exposed wattle
高一尺五寸
小力へ四寸
窓掛戸有
— bamboo post

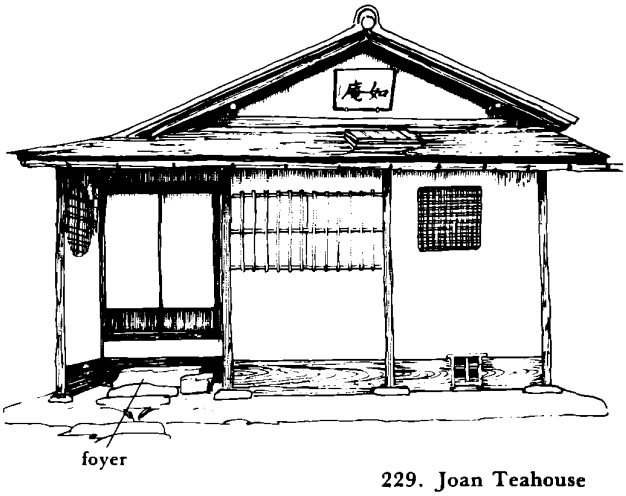
SŌAN TEAHOUSES





228. Yūin Teahouse



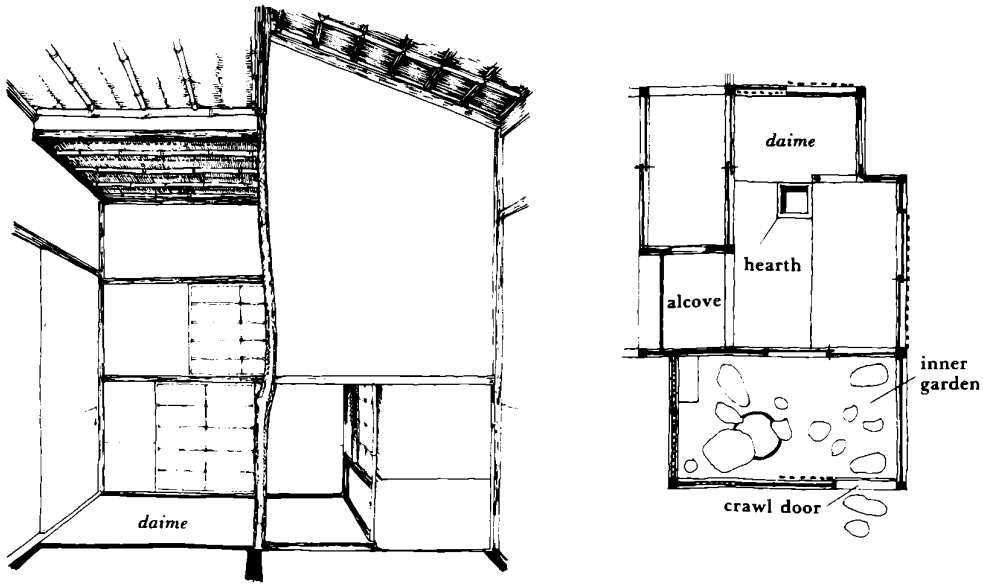


229. Joan Teahouse

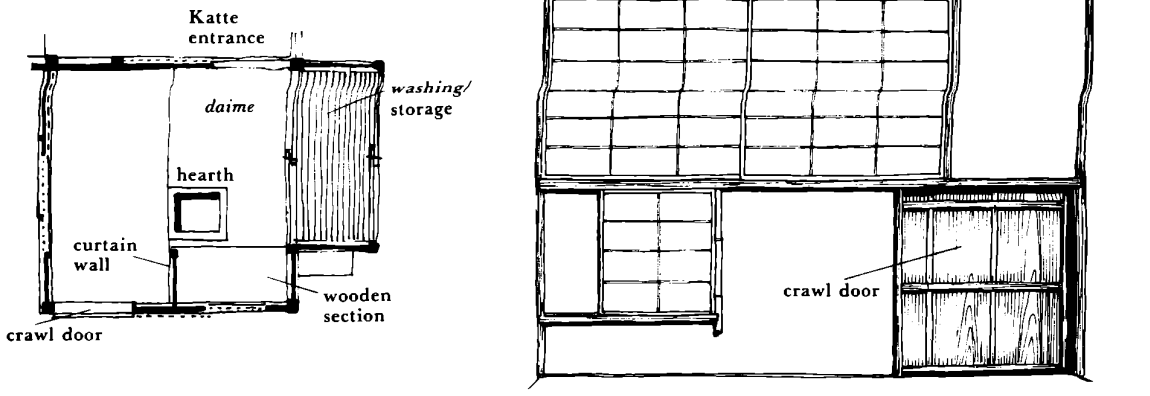
Orchestration of Visual Effects Sōan teahouses are by definition small, between two and four and a half mats in size. Within this confined space, though, an unlimited number of visual effects can be attained. Window placement, for example, is calculated not only for ventilation and visual effect on the walls, but also to create just the right play of light and shade when the tea ceremony is performed. Some teahouses have windows that can be propped open at various angles to vary the quality of seasonal light that falls on the interior. The Yūin Teahouse (Kyōto City; fig. 228) and the Joan Teahouse (Inuyama City; fig. 229) also have hatches on their eaves that can be opened to let in light for the same purpose.

The Yūin Teahouse, four and a half mats in size, has a particularly rustic quality thanks to its miscanthus roof. The bamboo-handled broom hanging from the middle post next to the wattle *shitajimado* window adds to that effect.

Connected to the Yūin is a second teahouse called the Konnichian that contains only a three-quarter-length *daime* mat for the server and one full-length mat for guests (fig. 231, floor plan). Instead of a decorative alcove there is a wooden section set into the floor at tatami level and flanked by a thin cur-



230. Teigyokuken, Shinjuan subtemple, Daitokuji



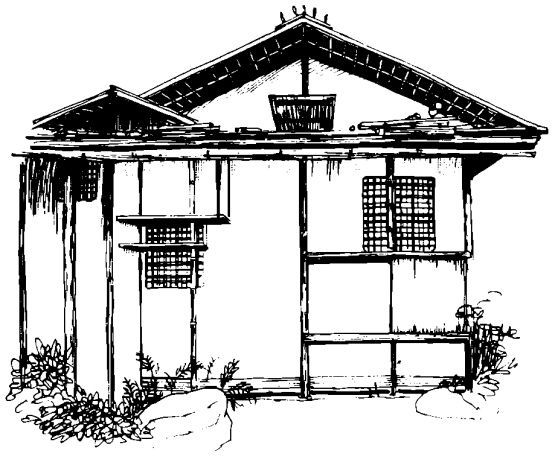
231. Konnichian Teahouse

tain wall (*sodekabe*) supported by a center post. Such a design is perfect for such a small space, for it manages to suggest an alcove space while the curtain wall is thin enough to avoid altering the lines of the windows and low entry door behind. The elevation drawing in figure 231 shows this interior design with the curtain wall removed.

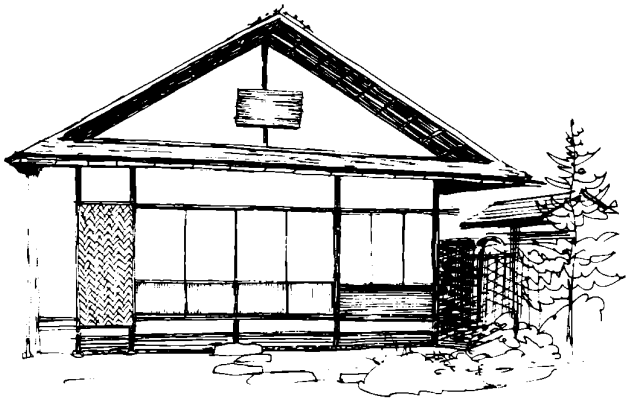
The Joan Teahouse contains a number of interesting touches. It is flanked on two sides by a packed-earth veranda protected by overhanging eaves. One enters the teahouse via a low door at the right of a foyer area that includes a high, flat stone on which to leave footwear before entering (fig. 229, elevation). The sliding screens at the back of the foyer lead to the *mizuya*, a place for preparing the utensils for the tea ceremony, and to the Shoin proper. Inside the teahouse, the decorative alcove is flanked by a unique diagonally angled wall.

The Teigyokuken of the Daitokuji subtemple of Shinjuan (Kyōto City) is well known for the tiny inner garden court it has between the low entry door and the tearoom proper (fig. 230, floor plan). The interior, two mats plus a three-quarter-length daime mat, boasts a very intricate ceiling design as well as an artistically gnarled center post (*nakabashira*) made of Japanese red pine (fig. 230, elevation).

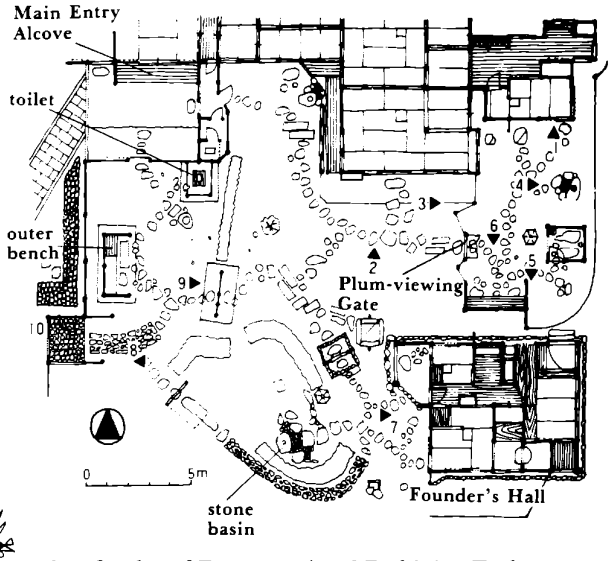
THE TEA GARDEN



232. Fushin'an Teahouse [1]



233. Zangetsutei Teahouse [2]

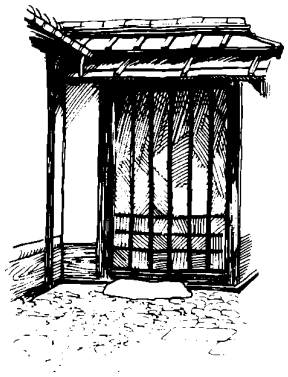


234. Garden of Zangetsutei and Fushin'an Teahouses (bracketed numbers in other captions refer to this plan)

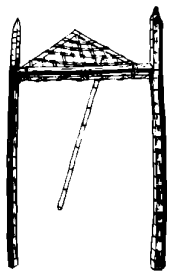
A Space to Compose the Mind for Tea The teahouse is an isolated, spiritual space where the participants in the ceremony can cleanse their minds of mundane concerns. The transition from the world outside to the world of tea is aided by the tea garden, called a *roji*, literally "dewy ground," where guests await their host and then go with him or her to the teahouse itself. It is a world as carefully arranged as the teahouse and has its own conventions. But like teahouses, each garden is a unique experience. The trees that shield the teahouse from direct view, and likewise the steppingstones that lead along the paths, are chosen and arranged to give the impression of unassuming elegance. To generalize, the garden is divided by an inner gate (*chūmon*) or a low gate (*nakakuguri*) into two parts, a waiting area and the inner garden of the teahouse. Bending over to pass through this low gate makes tangible the transition into the world of tea. Inside is a bench where guests pause before entering the teahouse, a low stone basin with water for cleansing the hands and mouth, and a stone lantern for lighting the path to the teahouse during evening gatherings.

A Tea Garden of the Omote Senke School After the retirement of Sen no Rikyū's grandson Sōtan (1578–1658), the family traditions were divided into three schools, each headed by one of Sōtan's sons. These were the Ura Senke, which now owns the Yūin and Konnichian Teahouses (figs. 228, 231), the Mushanokōji Senke, and the Omote Senke. The Zangetsutei and Fushin'an (Kyōto City) pictured above (figs. 232–33) belong to the Omote Senke branch, and their garden is a fine example of the genre (fig. 234; illustrations on this page are correlated by number to this plan).

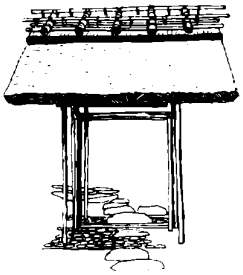
The Zangetsutei is a Shoin-type building with large sitting-room–style tearooms, and the Fushin'an, connected to the east side of the Zangetsutei by a



235. Garden door [10]

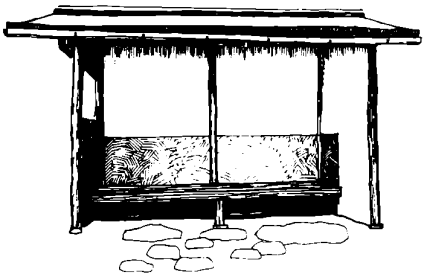


237. Bamboo lattice gate [8]

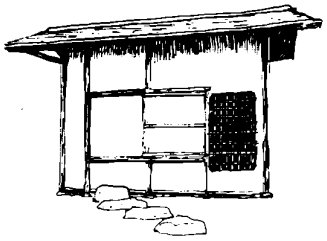


238. Miscanthus gate [7]

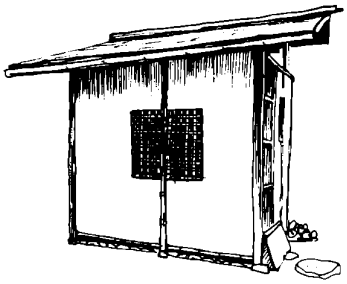
241. Stone basin [4]



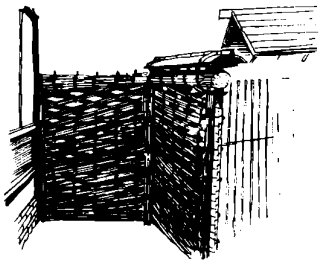
239. Inner bench [6]



236. Low gate [9]



240. Sand toilet [5]



242. Woven lath fence [3]

wood-floored corridor, is a sōan teahouse three mats plus a daime mat in size. South of that complex is the Founder's Hall (Sodō; fig. 234).

Circulation into and through the garden is more complex than the general example just described because three structures are involved. Passage is orchestrated by means of gates, hedges, and stepping-stone pathways. One enters at the west via the "garden gate" (*rojiguchi*; fig. 235). Behind is a bench and toilet (fig. 234). Garden access to the Zangetsutei itself is obtained through the "low gate," fit with a small door in the middle flanked by a wattled window (fig. 236). One can also reach the Founder's Hall by this gate, or by the bamboo lattice gate (*agesudo*) to the south, the triangular lattice of which is propped open when guests are expected (fig. 237). A miscanthus gate (*kayamon*; fig. 238) stands in front of the entrance to the Founder's Hall.

The Plum-viewing Gate, flanked by a fence of woven laths (fig. 242), leads to the Fushin'an. Inside is a low basin (*tsukubai*) carved out of a boulder (fig. 241), an inner bench (fig. 239), and a "sand toilet" (*sunazetchin*; fig. 240), spread with river sand and naturalistic stones. Such toilets today serve only a decorative function. Before entering the low door of the Fushin'an itself, samurai guests would leave their swords on the rack hung from the eaves, for weapons had no place in the world of tea (fig. 232, left side).

Teahouse and garden complexes such as this were built on the grounds of the mansions of wealthy tea enthusiasts in Kyōto and the merchant city of Sakai. The Omote Senke example shows that the attention of the designers was focused as much on the garden setting for the teahouses as on the buildings themselves.