**HAA 18j: Japanese Architecture**

Lecture 14: The Tai’an Teahouse

**Names/Terms/Sites Mentioned**

*sukiya* (elegantly rustic style of residential architecture)

*chanoyu* (Japanese tea ceremony)

*tokonoma* alcove

*matcha* (powdered green tea)

Raku ware (ceramic bowls used in tea ceremony from Momoyama period onward)

*wabi* (beauty in imperfection)

*sabi* (beauty in loneliness)

**Japanese Tea Ceremony (*Chanoyu*)**

The practice of drinking powdered green tea originated in Chinese monasteries and became widespread in Japan among Zen Buddhist communities from the 13th century. During the 14th century this practice was embraced among warriors and the cultural elite, and Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-90) brought **warrior tea** to its ultimate form of refinement. By the end of the 15th century, **merchant tea** or **grass hut tea** had developed among merchants based in the port city of Sakai, emphasizing aesthetic concepts borrowed from classical poetry such as *sabi* (beauty in loneliness) and *wabi* (beauty in imperfection). **Sen no Rikyū** (1522-91) became the most influential tea master of the grass hut mode, and his style of tea practice is often referred to as **rustic tea** (*wabicha*). Rikyū further reduced the size of the traditional four-and-a-half-mat tea room down to a two-mat space, and personally oversaw the production of ceramics and other items for use in the tea ceremony, encouraging the development of famous tea wares such as **Raku ceramics**. During the Edo period a number of lineages of tea practice emerged from among Rikyū’s descendants and disciples, including the Omotosenke, Urasenke, and Mushakōjisenke lineages.

**Tai'an (“Waiting Hut”) Teahouse**

The earliest surviving example of a two-mat tearoom. Now at Myōki’an Temple in the city of Yamazaki outside of Kyoto, the Tai’an Teahouse was designed by **Sen no Rikyū** sometime around **1582** for his Kyoto residence, and later moved to its current site. Tai’an incorporates many aspects of vernacular architecture to convey an impression of elegant rusticity, and includes a special type of garden often simply referred to today as a tea garden (in Japanese *roji*, literally “dewey path”).