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RULES OF CHADO

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NOTE:

You may find an odd sentence or missing information every now and again in the files. Hopefully not too frequently. This is because the files were originally written on a machine using CP/M and had to be converted to dos format. Many of the 5.25 disks were very old and had bad sectors - thus missing info.Beginning of file.....

INTRODUCTION

Because the rules of chado are binding upon both host and guests, these notes have been prepared so that you are aware of the code of conduct which is traditionally employed. They are provided in the hope that they will enable you to enjoy the evening to the full, and will be repeated by the host at the appropriate time.....so there is no need to worry, provided a visitor acts in the spirit of harmony and mutual respect, he or she is considered to be an honoured guest.

ENTERING

Before knocking at the door, please note whether water has been sprinkled, or a container of water placed at the porch. If it has not, please wait. If it has, please knock, and you will be greeted. Ideally, you should come at 7.30 p.m., fifteen minutes before the ceremony begins. Please remove your shoes and leave them in the hall. Anything else not required during the ceremony (hats, coats etc) should be left in the room at the end of the corridor. This room also serves as a smoking room during the intermission.

When asked to enter the 'Dojo', which serves as the tea room on this occasion, please bow (standing bow) towards the tokonoma (the alcove containing ornaments). You will see 'safu' placed around the room, and on each of these will be an envelope in which the utensils brought by you in 'zenrei' and required for the ceremony, have been placed. Your name will have been written on the envelope. Please bow to the safu, remove the envelope, and holding it, sit down, kneeling with your legs on either side of the safu. If you do not require a safu, pick it up and place it in front of you (it will then be removed). Place the envelope on the floor to your left. Please remain silent.

BOWING WHEN SEATED

Once you are seated all bows are performed from that position. When approached, spoken to or given food or drink by a principal guest or the host, or when addressing one of these, you should bow 'shinrai' (the hands as in 'zarai', but the back and head bowed slightly less), and when addressing or responding to another guest the 'sorai' bow should be used (fingertips only touch the floor, and the back and head are bowed fractionally).

THE USE OF UTENSILS

The items brought for the ceremony are used as follows:
One cotton cloth is used to wipe a bowl, or the edge of a bowl, when you have used it.
The silk cloth is used to pat around your mouth between drinks or courses.
The second cotton cloth (or paper napkin) is used as a pad to support the bowl which you are using, and as insulation.
The short skewer is used for picking up dry and moist sweetmeats.
The longer skewer is used for picking up small savouries.

THE KAISEKI MEAL

Because of the varied tastes of the guests, and so as not to cause offence to anyone, the Kaiseki meal prepared for this occasion has been varied slightly from the traditional fare. Please allow the principal guest(s) who have served you to start before you each time.

We begin with a bowl of hot water to drink in order to clear the palate. When you have finished, please wipe the bowl and place it to your right side, then pat your mouth dry.

When all the guests have finished, you are at liberty to chat. The conversation during the ceremony is usually about the meal, the occasion, the utensils, or the decorations. Questions on these matters are welcomed by the host, but 'gossip' should be avoided since it is considered an insult to the occasion.

The meal proper begins with a bowl of miso soup with 'ocean and mountain' garnish. (You drink direct from the bowl, first turning it twice in a clockwise direction, ninety degrees each time). This soup, and its garnish, are entirely vegan. You will also receive a puffed rice cake to eat with the soup. You should hold it on the flat of your hand, holding the open napkin underneath with the other hand to catch any pieces which might escape. The topping is all edible, and is again a vegan form of ocean and mountain food, designed to complement the soup garnish.

When putting the soup bowl down in order to eat the rice cake, the bowl should be placed on the floor to your right. When you have finished, as a signal, please place the bowl on the floor in front of you. When everyone has finished, it will be collected.

You are next presented with specially prepared vol au vont cases containing seafood. For those guests who do not eat shellfish, rice crackers with soya spread will be presented. It is for these savories that the longer skewers are used. When you have finished, place the longer skewer in front of you.

When everyone has finished their savouries, the long skewers and platters etc will be removed, after which silence should be observed whilst the kettle is put on for tea. Warm saki is then poured by the host for each guest (water will be poured for those guests who do not drink alcohol), using the small bowls

originally used for the hot water. When everybody has been served, on a signal from the host, everybody lifts their bowl and after turning it a half circle in two quarter turns (clockwise), drinks in unison, taking only one small sip, then placing the bowl on the floor to the left. Small sweetmeats are also offered at this time, one being a red bean jelly cube, and the other a marzipan ball with glace cherry topping, on a green marzipan base. It is traditional to take only one of the cubes, but two of the glace cherry topped sweets may be taken, each being skewered with the shorter skewer and placed on the napkin.

When the principal guest(s) have resumed eating and drinking, speaking may begin again; the sweetmeats are eaten, and the sake drunk. When you have finished the sake, the rim of the cup should be wiped before it is put down in front of you.

INTERMISSION

A short intermission follows (fifteen minutes). During this period, those who wish to smoke should withdraw to the outer room. Traditionally, this time is used to view and comment on the decorations in the room, contents of the tokonoma, screens, utensils, artifacts, etc. A gong or bell is struck when it is time to continue with the taking of tea. Guests having a gift to present, either to 'show a true face', or to mark the occasion, should bring them into the dojo at this stage of the proceedings and place them behind the safu before sitting, since this is the beginning of the final and most important stage of the ceremony.

TAKING TEA

Thick (strong) tea is taken without general conversation, although polite comments or pleasantaries are often exchanged quietly between guests and the host, or between the principal guest(s) and others.

When all the guests have taken their places, the host begins to prepare the 'thick' tea. Using the ladle, he pours a little hot water into the ceremonial bowl, pours it out, and wipes the bowl with a special cloth. This is known as 'purifying the bowl'.

He then scoops some powdered tea into the bowl, arranging it into a small mound

in the centre. This is repeated as many times as is required, according to the number of guests present. Hot water is then ladled onto the tea, which is then kneaded into a paste with the whisk. More water is then added until the bowl contains the right amount of liquid.

The utensils are then wiped, and the bowl is slid along the floor to the principal guest, who (after bowing) picks it up, bows with it in his hands (a clean cloth/pad must be used), and makes an apology to the other guests (for taking tea before them). He (or she) then turns the bowl as previously, and sips from it. The edge of the bowl is then wiped, turned, and passed to the next guest, who turns it, sips the tea, wipes it and passes it on, until all the guests have drunk from it.

Traditionally, each guest takes three and a half sips of thick tea, but there are usually only three guests at a tea ceremony, and a maximum of five. Since we are honoured by having so many guests this evening, and wish to use our most special ceremonial bowl, you are asked to take only one sip before passing the bowl to the next guest.

The last guest to drink returns the bowl to the host, bowing when doing so. Conversation may then resume.

Dry sweets are offered next, and up to three of these may be taken, being placed on the silk napkin to the left, to await the serving of thin (weak) tea. These sweets are vegetarian, but not vegan.

The small tea bowls will have been removed and washed by this time, and will be in the possession of the host. It is traditional for one small bowl to be used, this being filled, the tea drunk by the first guest, and the bowl cleaned and refilled for the next guest...etc. However, this would be impracticable with so many guests as are present on this occasion. For this reason, a bowl of thin tea will be prepared for each guest in his or her own bowl.

When your bowl is slid to you, you should pick it up in the right hand and place the left hand (with pad) underneath it. When the principal guest(s) begin, the tea should be drunk, and the dry sweets eaten. When you have finished, please put away the small bowl. This marks the completion of tea drinking.

PRESENTING GIFTS

If the host has a gift to present to a guest, it is presented now. Similarly, if any gifts are to be exchanged or presented by guests, this is the part of the ceremony when it should occur. If he has a gift to present, the host bows towards the guest for whom it is intended, who should then rise and approach the host, sitting again in the kneeling posture. The gift is then presented.

When the host has presented his gift(s), guests should present theirs to each other if this is their intention, but it is the presenter who rises and goes to the potential recipient, taking the gift with him or her. If a gift is to be made to the host, it is left until the guests have exchanged gifts between them, if this is their intention, since the receipt of gifts by the host marks the end of the ceremony.

CHADO

The 'Way of Tea' is intended to be a microcosm of life. For this reason it is the function of the host to attempt to symbolise a particular aspect of life through the food and drink provided in the ceremony. On this occasion the intention has been to provide each of the five tastes, namely, bitter, sweet, sour, spicy, and salty.

The 'Chado' ceremony which you have graciously consented to attend this evening is performed in the manner known as 'Wabi Cha', which means 'tea of simple taste', and is conducted according to the principles of Ch'an Tao Chia. The type of Chado ceremony to which it conforms is known as 'Kaiseki', or 'warm stone'. This type of ceremony is named after the practice of early Taoists and Zenji, who, frequently being hungry on retiring for the night, would take with them to bed, a warm stone wrapped in cloth, which was used in much the same way as a hot water bottle, to relieve the pangs of hunger. The meal provided in this evening's ceremony is intended to fulfil this function of relieving the feeling of hunger.

The philosophy of chado is to engender mutual respect, harmony and tranquility.

It is hoped that this evening's ceremony will go some way towards furthering that philosophy.

THE OCCASION

This evening's ceremony takes place on the fifty-second birthday of Shih-tien Roshi, who is your host, and has been arranged in order to celebrate the official opening of The Centre for the Study and Practice of Ch'an Tao Chia, otherwise known as 'Shih- Tien Gakkai' (The 'Stony Ground' School). It is therefore intended to be a happy as well as a formal occasion.

Traditionally, the thick tea used in the tea ceremony provides the bitter taste referred to earlier, but in order to give consideration to the Western palate, and because it is hoped that you will remember this evening as a happy rather than a bitter occasion, one of the principal guests went to considerable trouble to obtain a Japanese mountain tea which does not have such a bitter 'after-taste' as exists with some teas used in Chado. The thin tea is also a mountain tea, but comes from mainland China. By incorporating both Chinese and Japanese tea in this ceremony, it is intended to have symbolized the fact that Ch'an Tao Chia owes a debt to the masters from both of these nations. The music played during the intermission was specially recorded by another principal guest, and many of the artifacts and utensils used were provided by past and present students. Our thanks are conveyed to all these good people, as they are to you for honouring us by your attendance at this gathering

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