

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215/842-6353

CONTACT: Ruth Kaplan
Jennie Barbour
(202) 842-6353

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

WHAT: Japanese tea house consecrated at the National Gallery of Art and demonstration of traditional building method

WHEN: Wednesday, August 10, 1988, 2 p.m.

WHERE: East Building, National Gallery of Art, 4th Street Entrance
(4th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW)

Film crews, photographers, and reporters must arrive by 1:30 p.m. for set-up in the ground level exhibition space. Crews will be required to provide their own lighting and should consult with the National Gallery of Art Information Office in advance regarding electrical facilities.

Please contact the National Gallery of Art Information Office no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, August 9, if you plan to attend.

WHO: Yōichiro Nakagawa
Deputy Director of Cultural Promotion, The Asahi Shimbun

Toyoji Nishikawa
President, Marutomi Komu Company
Master Carpenter, Ennan Tea House

Joesph Krakora
External Affairs Officer, National Gallery of Art

WHY: Jōtōshiki, the consecration of the Japanese tea house, is a Shinto ceremony celebrating the raising of a symbolic roof over the framework of the Ennan Tea House under construction at the National Gallery of Art. The construction employs the traditional Japanese method of building houses without nails, Sukiyazukuri, which will be demonstrated. The tea house is part of The Art of the Tea Ceremony in conjunction with the major exhibition Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185-1868, which opens at the gallery on October 30, 1988. The Art of the Tea Ceremony is made possible by The Asahi Shimbun, The Yabunouchi School of Tea, The Nomura Securities Co. Ltd., and All Nippon Airways.

SEE ATTACHED BACKGROUND SHEET FOR DETAILS ON PUBLIC DEDICATION CEREMONY. INTERPRETER WILL BE AVAILABLE.

BACKGROUND SHEET - CONSECRATION OF JAPANESE TEA HOUSE
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE ART OF THE TEA CEREMONY

In conjunction with the exhibition Japan: The Shaping of the Daimyo Culture 1185-1868 at the National Gallery on October 30, 1988, through January 23, 1989, visitors will have the daily opportunity to participate in or observe the traditional tea ceremony performed by members of the Yabunouchi School of Tea in Kyoto. A replica of the Ennan Tea House and Japanese garden in Kyoto is being installed by the Yabunouchi School on the East Building ground floor. The Jōtōshiki ceremony being held on August 10 will consecrate this tea house.

The ceremony at the National Gallery involves the raising of a symbolic paper ornament as a roof over the framework of the Ennan Tea House by Mr. Nishikawa, master carpenter, serving as a priest. He and his crew of eight carpenters dressed in "happi" coats will invite four gallery representatives to join in the celebration that includes hand clapping in unity to symbolize teamwork and the traditional serving of sake.

Jōtōshiki, dating back to ancient times in Japan, is a Shinto ceremony used to bless both residences and tea houses and varies according to different regions in Japan. The ceremony serves the twofold purpose of thanking the natural materials used in the construction of the tea house and praying for the safety of the workers during construction. The Japanese believe all natural materials used to build the tea house gave up previous lives to become part of the tea house and to protect the inhabitants from rain, wind, fire, and earthquakes. The Japanese cypress used in construction came from a mountain in Kyoto and is noted for its small, dense limbs of great strength.

The highly qualified carpenters accompanying Mr. Nishikawa will demonstrate the ancient Sukiyazukuri method of building without the use of nails they have employed in constructing the tea house. The carpentry team are all experts in the Sukiya method.

The name of the Ennan Teahouse -- a combination of the Japanese words en, for swallow and an, for hut or hermitage -- comes from the roofline, which is said to imitate the swift, graceful beauty of a swallow in flight.

#