

Shinshoji Temple: Shuroken

The Shuroken tea house is a perfect example of the blend of old and new buildings to be found at Shinshoji Temple. Designed by architect and expert on tea house design Nakamura Masao, the Shuroken is a detailed recreation of the Zangetsutei drawing room and the Fushin'an teahouse in Kyoto, both destroyed by fire in 1788. Working from old drawings and descriptions, Nakamura faithfully recreated both structures in the Shuroken.

Both the Zangetsutei and Fushin'an were prominent examples of buildings of the Omotesenke school of Japanese tea ceremony, and were closely associated with tea master Sen no Rikyu (1522–1591). Like the Shuroken, the Fushin'an was a *soan* (thatched hut) style teahouse, designed to bring calm and a sense of peace to all who entered, using muted colors and plain, unadorned materials. The Zangetsutei was itself a replica of the Irotsuke Kokonoma Shoin, the drawing room at Rikyu's own residence, where he served the feudal lord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598).

In fact, Hideyoshi's influence extends all the way through history into the design of the small raised platform in one corner of the Shuroken. Rikyu's drawing room had a smaller platform for Hideyoshi to sit on when he visited, but after he complained it was too small, Rikyu enlarged the platform to the size of two tatami mats, and the Shuroken follows this updated design.

The Shuroken is open to visitors and hosts paid Japanese matcha tea ceremonies daily.