

## Toyota Municipal Museum of Art: Dojien Teahouse

The Dojien Teahouse is set apart from the main Toyota Municipal Museum of Art building, and a high hedge separates it from the adjacent sculpture terrace. The single-story traditional wooden building with unadorned square windows strikes a sharp contrast with the modernist buildings nearby. Like the other museum structures, the Dojien Teahouse was designed by Taniguchi Yoshio (b. 1937). His intention was to show the common elements of traditional Japanese architecture and modern architecture, such as minimalism, the use of clean lines, and flexible, functional spaces.

The sliding screen doors, tiled roof, and surrounding garden are all typical of a traditional teahouse. The tearoom itself, however, has floor-to-ceiling glass windows to enhance the view of the quiet moss garden. The teahouse is open to museum visitors and serves matcha green tea and traditional seasonal sweets. Tea is served in the *ryurei* style in which visitors sit at tables rather than kneel on tatami mats. It is an inclusive style of tea ceremony, ideal for those unaccustomed to sitting on the floor. The teahouse also has traditional tatami rooms that are available for private use.

In the garden just outside the tearoom is a *tsukubai*, a water basin for rinsing one's hands before a tea ceremony. Next to the *tsukubai* is a *suikinkutsu*, which is a kind of hidden water feature. An upturned pot with a hole at the top is buried near the basin, and when people rinse their hands, water slowly seeps through the soil and drops down into the pot below. The drops create a melodic echo in the buried pot that can be heard above ground.