

Chanoyu in everyday life

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The state of emergency that was declared in April has been lifted for the whole of Japan. After being restricted in many ways and shadowed by days of uncertainty and discomfort I would first like to simply rejoice in the fact that the situation has taken a turn for the better.

However, our daily lives have not by any means returned to what they were. There is a large and invisible wall between people called 'social distancing'. There are also various restrictions on people gathering together. For the time being, we will have to continue living with the threat of the coronavirus.

During these last few months, we have been hearing expressions such as 'telework' and 'remote drinking party' more often. I feel that our ways of working and connecting with each other have become more diverse. Perhaps they will be recognized and widely accepted as necessary tools for society from now on. However, I think that there are definitely things that cannot be obtained or cultivated online.

It is precisely through close contact and the sharing of things that *chanoyu* deepens the bonds between host and guests and between the guests themselves. In the space called a tea room the host and guests sit close together, sharing the same time and place, and communicate spiritually through drinking a bowl of tea.

Through the spread of the Internet and social networking systems people can easily connect with others at any time. I think that it is precisely because this is how things are at the present time, that we realize more than ever the importance of the spirit of *chanoyu*, which makes each encounter with others something precious.

However, under present conditions, when we have to live with the anxiety of possible infection, it is frankly difficult to pursue such encounters. For *keiko* (practices) and *chakai* (tea gatherings) the most important thing is that those who attend should feel safety and it is only natural that we should be concerned about this.

For all of the Domon members and those who enjoy *chanoyu* every day, the days of being unable to attend practice and tea gatherings may continue for some time. However it is precisely at such a time that I would like you to remember to keep the spirit of tea alive within you every day, having sympathy for and supporting each other.

I hope that you will remain healthy in mind and body.

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