

\$16.99 U.S.

The Japanese Bath

BRUCE SMITH
YOSHIKO YAMAMOTO

In the West, a bath is a place one goes to cleanse the body. In Japan, one goes there to cleanse the soul. Bathing in Japan is about much more than cleanliness, though cleanliness is certainly important. It is about family and community—the washing of each other's backs before bathing. It is also about being alone and contemplative, taking time to watch the moon rise above the garden.

The idea of taking time and care with one's bath in Japan is as important as taking time and care with the cooking and serving of a meal. There is also a ritual to taking a Japanese bath, a prescribed order of rinsing, washing, and soaking that is passed down from one generation to the next.

The Japanese Bath delves into the aesthetic of bathing Japanese style—the innate beauty of the steps surrounding the process along with sixty full-color illustrations of the light and airy baths themselves. A Zen meditation, the Japanese bath cleanses the soul, and one emerges refreshed, renewed, and serene.



The Japanese Bath

BRUCE SMITH
YOSHIKO YAMAMOTO

The Japanese Bath

BRUCE SMITH
YOSHIKO YAMAMOTO



Time to watch the moon rise over the garden—the aesthetic of the Japanese bath exquisitely captured in photography and text

Home Reference



Lovers of history and historical writing, Yoshiko Yamamoto and Bruce Smith write on the Arts & Crafts movement, bungalows, crafts, food, and Japanese aesthetics. Together they have written *The Beautiful Necessity: Decorating with Arts & Crafts*, and *Arts & Crafts Ideals: Wisdom from the Arts & Crafts Movement*. Smith has also authored *Greene and Greene: Masterworks*. They own the Arts & Crafts Press, in Port Orchard, Washington, where they print letterpress note cards and prints.



Contents

- 6 Acknowledgments
- 9 Introduction
- 11 Bathing
- 13 Entry
- 21 The Datsuiba
- 23 The Outside within the Inside
- 31 Created Scenery
- 40 Color
- 43 With Darkness and Without
- 45 Yuagari (after bath) and
Yusuzumi (enjoying the cool of the evening)
- 46 Without Silence
- 51 Bathing Japanese Style
- 55 With and Without Clothing
- 59 The Time of the Day
- 71 Materials
- 73 About Wood
- 83 The Tools of Bathing
- 89 Bathing Together
- 90 Glossary
- 92 Resources



Evening time in the rustic *rotenburo*, the outdoor bath at Hoei-so Inn in Hakone, Japan.

Bathing

It is just on the edge of evening. You have been surrounded by the push and bustle of people all day, and, finally, just now, you have returned home. Stopping to listen, you hear the late-afternoon breeze in the tall pine tree outside. You sit quietly on the back porch, peel and eat a tangerine, then walk a short while in your garden. Back inside, your clothing comes off easily and you put on a lightweight yukata. Walking to the bathhouse through the corridor overlooking the garden, you reach down to check the water temperature in the bath, then look up to see out the window and through the trees that the sun is just settling down between the distant hills. You hang the yukata on a hook and sit on a wooden stool in the washing area; you are now at the right height to look directly out into the trees. With the wooden bucket, you scoop water from the tub and pour it over yourself, rinsing off all the noise and bother of the day. You do this twice more, making sure that when you step into the bath, you will not carry with you any dirt or refuse. You lower yourself into the bath as the last sliver of the sun drops below the hills, then stay there ten, maybe fifteen, minutes, watching the colors change, grow in intensity, then settle back into a warm softness. Stepping again into the washing area, you scrub your body, starting with your hair, your ears, your neck, working your way down to your toes. After rinsing carefully, once again you sit back into the bath. It is growing dark now and suddenly seems quieter. Just barely you can hear the sound of the breeze.

A yukimi doro is set appropriately next to the entrance of Nansōkyū, Mizusaka Prefecture, Japan.



Some Hints on Using Stone Lanterns

Stone lanterns, originally used as symbolic offerings in Buddhist and Shinto traditions, were later incorporated by tea masters for their tea gardens to illuminate the pathways



A tateburo of Kono-buro in Okazaki Prefecture, Japan.

formal tall lantern that requires a bigger space next to a shrub or under a tree, oigata doro (ground-type low lantern), which is made of only the top parts of the lantern and is often used at the turn of a pathway to light the steps, and yukimi doro (snow-viewing lantern), often used next to a pond or a small stream. These lanterns not only create a focal point in the view but also help humanize the feeling of the garden.



Kagoji doro



Oigata doro



Yukimi doro

Making a Bath

You have waited until the time was right to begin work on building your bathing area. It was too important to rush. You have lived in your home now for several years and almost



The bath house at the Tsuzugawa Zen Center in northern California.

unconsciously have chosen the location where you want to bathe—it is not the room with the toilet and sink next to your bedroom on the second floor—the view there looking out to the mountains is wonderful, but you have found yourself, several times a week, settling more comfortably into the back corner of the open deck behind your house, sipping a cup of tea alone or talking quietly with your spouse. The branches of an orange tree hang over the deck, and it is just

three steps to the pathway that leads down to the gurgling creek. You choose wood to build your bath, knowing that it will not last as long as more-modern materials, but you like the way it feels after years of use. Already you have planted a small grove of black bamboo in the one direction that looks out to a neighbor's property—your bath space will remain private to you and your family. You are going to extend the roof of the house over the bath, a gabled extension held up by post-and-beam construction that will protect the bath from falling leaves, though you have a slight regret: you will not feel the rain falling on you when you bathe. Windbreaks will open wide on two sides, but you will leave the third side without such open to face the orange tree. You want the garden to intrude upon the bath with the smell of citrus and possibly even some nasturtiums that will grow up and over the windowsill.



Water can flow from the Post Column under bath onto the tiled floor.

A step away from the bath, you will have an area to wash. The plumber has said he can drain the soapy water from the washing area into your septic system, but you decide to have the bathtubs go into a separate gray-water system that can be used for the garden. This is good, as you plan to change the water every day or two: in your household there are four who will be bathing nightly. You will have a shelf for towels and hooks to hang yukatas. The only large decision yet to make is the way you will heat the bathwater. Will it be by wood in a convection system or by an on-demand propane system? Either will work and each is with its own advantages. These are not decisions you want to rush.