narrow passageway within the grounds of a large residence. First used to describe the pathway leading to the teahouse, it apparently came to be called roji. Sen-no-Rikyu defined roji as “the outside path in the mundane world”, in other words, a boundary separating the world of cha-no-yu (tea ceremony) from the world of the mundane. At some ryokans there are teahouses in the gardens, allowing you to appreciate the structural beauty of the roji which is evocative of wabi-sabi (see wabi-sabi).

**Tsukubai**

This refers to the very low stone washtub for washing one’s hands (also known as tea-ai or cho-ai) in a chaniwa (tea garden). The name tsukubai derives from the practice in tea ceremony of bending oneself so low, almost crawling on the ground, to wash one’s hands and rinse one’s mouth. There is a wooden ladle (hishaku) for scooping up the water inside, but you must not touch it directly with your lips. The tsukubai is often located close to the teahouse or in the garden of a Japanese ryokan.

**Geta (traditional wooden clogs)**

Two pieces of supporting wood are attached to each of the wooden boards to produce these traditional Japanese clogs for outdoor use. Each clog board has three holes through which the cloth thong called hanao is threaded, and you wear the geta either in bare feet or wearing tabi socks, with your feet firmly fixed by grasping the hanao between your big toe and your second toe. The zori and setta are of similar design, but zori are made by weaving plant fibers such as straw, rushes and bamboo sheaths, whereas the setta, apparently conceived by Sen-no-Rikyu, originally had tatami-omote coverings on the top with animal skin fixed on the sole with iron nails. Today, zori and setta are made of all kinds of materials. Such footwear is provided at Japanese ryokans for when you take a short walk or stroll in the garden in your yukata.

**Tabi**

These Japanese socks are designed in the shape of your feet, to be worn with wa-uku - traditional Japanese clothing such as kimono. The big toe is separated from the other toes, so that you can wear geta, zori or setta (see geta). They open at the seam above the heel where there is a row of metal hooks for fastening the tabi.

**Wagasa**

Japanese-style umbrellas, to be used when wearing kimono, are made by covering a bamboo framework with greased washi (traditional Japanese paper). There are many types of wagasa such as bangasa and janome-gasa. The large-sized bangasa is for the common people. The word janome-gasa derives from the round ring resembling the eye of a large snake when the umbrella is opened up, and is slender and graceful compared with the bangasa. Some ryokans place these Japanese style umbrellas ready for use by the guests on rainy days.

**Toko-no-ma (Alcove)**

A traditional style of Japanese architecture, this is an alcove with a slightly raised floor built in one of the walls of the tatami-mat room (zashiki). The front wall is decorated with shoga (or kake-jiku, hanging scrolls), and an ornamental article or a flower vase is placed on the floor of the alcove. Although modern standards specify a width of 1 ken (about 1.8 meters) and depth of a ken (about 0.9 meter), it used to be wider and not so deep. You will find toko-no-ma in the majority of Japanese-style zashiki rooms, and the kake-jiku and flowers conveying the season form a fine interior decoration.

**Kake-jiku (hanging scrolls)**

Mounted shoga (works and paintings of calligraphy) which can be hung on the wall. The kake-jiku was first devised for the preservation of shoga. The hanging scrolls are changed in accordance with the season or traditional events, and are stored rolled-up.

**Ranma (transom)**

A ranma, installed between the upper part of a wall or a partition and the ceiling, is a transom for allowing daylight to stream in, for ventilation, and also for interior decoration, and comes in latticework or openwork. It is interesting to observe the motifs symbolic of the traditional Japanese architectural style used since the Heian Period. A ranma is often used so as not to cut off the adjoining room or the outside light. It plays an important role in the tatami-mat rooms of Japanese ryokans, and comes in a wide variety of styles such as osa-ranma (transom with closely spaced vertical bars), take-no-fushi ranma (transom having posts that are carved with knuckles resembling bamboo joints), ita-ranma (transom having thin boards with openwork designs), shoji-ranma (small sliding window-type transom covered with Japanese paper), chokoku-ranma (sculptured transom), and so on.