

Café Kayanoki

If you are interested in old Japanese farmhouses, I recommend a visit to Café Kayanoki, which is located close to the Joso Fureai-Doro, 5 minutes by car from the City Hall.

The farmhouse was built 135 years ago and has been preserved carefully. The original structure remains and it attracts both those who remember the old days and those who do not. It is used as a café, gallery and place for live performances. You can see a great Kayanoki (thatch tree) in front of the house, which is 400 years old. Café Kayanoki is named after this tree.

The owner, Mr Kosuge, told me that his ancestor was a landowner and had many tenant farmers. The area including the house consists of 1600 *tsubo* (5,280 square metres).

The main entrance leads to the *doma* (earth floor). The *doma* occupies one third to almost half of the house. One part of the *doma* is the kitchen. In old days, people cooked on the *kamado* (old kitchen range), while burning wood. In this kitchen you can see a *kamado*, although it is not used anymore. In another corner of the *doma* stands a great piano.

The Japanese room is called *hiroma*. A *hiroma* is a spacious room floored with *tatami* mats. The *hiroma* part is raised about 50-60cm above the *doma* to avoid the humidity from the ground.

An old Japanese farmhouse has some special features, for example the *daikokuhashira* and the *hari*. The *daikokuhashira* is the central pillar. *Hari* means “crossbeam”. They both support the heavy roof. Big and thick woods, mainly zelkova cedar and pine trees, are used for the *hari* and the *daikokuhashira*, so they last for a long time. In former times, most roofs were thatched roofs, but Mr Kosuge`s roof is covered with tiles, which is quite unusual.

Inside and outside, this building is wonderful. The colours of the wood and the tiles have changed little by little over the years. Also the well-kept Japanese garden is a splendid sight. Café Kayanoki has been featured in some newspapers and interior magazines and has been introduced on some websites.

How about having a cup of coffee or Japanese sweets, while looking at the Japanese garden and imagining the old times?