

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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*Basic
interested people*

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39

TO: CITY EDITORS
PHOTO EDITORS

Please call Elizabeth Shaw if you
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further information

A Japanese Shinto priest will officiate at a ridge-pole raising ceremony on Thursday, April 22 at 3 p.m., to celebrate the successful completion of the most difficult and dangerous construction work on the Japanese house now being built in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art. Built in Japan last year and then dismantled and shipped to New York, the Japanese house is being reassembled in the Museum's outdoor exhibition area on 54th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. The house will be completed this spring and will be open to the public beginning June 8.

Mune-Age, as the ridge-pole raising is called, is a traditional Japanese ceremony held to thank the Shinto deities for the successful completion of the heavy construction work, to honor the workmen, to ask protection of the deities against fire and storms, and to request good luck for the house and its occupants.

The framework of the house will be decorated with colorful paper ornaments symbolizing prayer thoughts and the ceremony will be followed by the traditional serving of saki, Japanese rice wine. The Japanese assistants who are working with Junzo Yoshimura, the architect of the house, will wear jackets specially designed and made in Japan. Mr. Mitsuzo Funo of Seabrook, New Jersey, is the Shinto priest who will officiate at the ceremony.

The design of the house is based on 16th and 17th century prototypes. It will be a re-creation, authentic in every detail, of a way of building particularly relevant to modern western architecture. Materials for the house and garden were shipped from Japan and arrived here in March, packed in 636 crates. The house will consist of two large rooms, several galleries and verandas, and attached pavilions for the tea house, kitchen, and bath. In front of the house there will be a large pool; rocks for the garden were specially selected in Japan.

Among the guests who have been invited to witness the ceremony are Mr. Naraichi Fujiyama, Consul of Japan, Mr. Masao Yagi, Acting Consul General of Japan, Ambassador Renzo Swada, permanent observer to the United Nations, Mr. Tokichi Matsuoka, President of the Japanese American Association of New York, and Mr. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, President of the Japan Society.

The exhibition house is sponsored by the America-Japan Society in Tokyo and private Japanese citizens who are presenting the house to the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Arthur Drexler, Curator of the Museum's Department of Architecture, is director of the exhibition, and Miss Natalie Hoyt, contractor, is directing the re-assembly of the house.