Outline of Japanese residential architecture

Syncretism and Integration of House and Natural Environment

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Plan of the lecture

1. Brief history of residential architecture
2. Organizing principles of dwelling space
3. ‘The lily man’-film by Tomoyasu Murata
House built for summer
Brief history of residential architecture

• Remarks on the ideal house

‘Homes should be built for summer. In the winter one can live anywhere, but dwellings unsuited to the hot months are unendurable.’

• Yoshida Kenko (1283-1350) – ‘Essays on Idleness’ (Tsurezuregusa) – collection of short anecdotes and observations he wrote when he left the world of the imperial court to become a Buddhist priest.

Reference to houses near Kyoto (ancient capital)
An apology for the integration of house and natural environment – a central theme in Japanese architecture
Kamo no Chomei (1155-1216)

Tale of the Ten-Foot-Square Hut

(\textit{Hojoki}) 1212

The impermanence of all things and the permanence of change (Buddhism)

• ‘The river flows on without cease, yet its waters are never the same’

• Chomei abandoned his home in the capital for a tiny hut deep in the mountains, called \textit{hojo} (the name taken from the dwelling of an Indian Buddhist sage and later used to indicate the abbot’s quarters in Zen monasteries).
Brief history of residential architecture

• 1. Dwellings of aristocracy
• 2. Commoners’ dwellings

The theme of simplicity and modesty-
• Purification of the heart from the impurities of the outside world (Buddhist spirit)

The theme of lavish decoration and visual entertainment (theatrical space for display of status) (Confucian respect of social hierarchy)
Sugimoto house, Kyoto
Brief history of residential architectural styles

1. Houses of Jomon and Yayoi period
2. *Shinden* style of Heian aristocracy
3. Medieval Samurai houses
4. *Shoin* style of Muromachi period
5. *Sukiya* style as a relaxed variation of Shoin
6. *Minka* – dwellings of the common people
1. Houses of Jomon and Yayoi period

- Jomon (10,000 years ago) A pit dwelling – a rectangular or circular pit layout, covered with a steep thatched roof
- Yayoi period (200BC-250AD)- pit dwelling and an elevated storehouse
1. Houses of Jomon and Yayoi period

- Yayoi period dwellings-
- *Haniwa* pottery houses excavated from ancient burial mounds (Gunma prefecture, 250AD)
- Drawings of dwellings on a bronze mirror in Samida burial mound (Nara)

Elevated buildings used for storages, but also shrines and chieftain’s residences—close connections between custodianship of food, divine sanction and temporal power.
2. *Shinden* style of Heian aristocracy
2. *Shinden* style

- *Shinden* – the central structure of the complex (hall for sleeping) - residence of the master, guests reception

South-oriented complex with a pond – an island reached by bridges

Hallways (*watadono*) leading to subsidiary spaces (*tainoya*) for other family members and servants

Fishing/ fountain pavillions - *tsuridono, izumidono*

Surrounded by thick earth walls, with main gate *Seimon* and a rear gate - *Uramon*
2. **Shinden** style in picture scrolls (*emakimono*) - veranda, interior and partitions
2. *Shinden* style in picture scrolls (*emakimono*)-

Main picture scrolls (length-10m. and more)

- The Tale of Genji Picture Scroll (*Genji monogatari emaki*)
- The Pillow Book Picture Scroll (*Makura no soshi emaki*)
- Picture scroll of Annual Rites and Ceremonies

Development of a highly aesthetic sophistication in Heian:

- color combination of garments

- interior decoration: veranda (*sunoko-en*), floors of wooden planks with movable mats of woven straw with silk borders for sitting, sliding doors (*yarido*), bamboo blinds (*sudare*), curtains (*kabeshiro*), folding screens (*byobu*), one-piece screens (*tsuitate*), curtain stands (*kicho*), charcoal boxes (*hibachi*), etc.
2. *Shinden* style in picture scrolls (*emakimono*)-sunoko-en, fusuma
2. *Shinden* style in picture scrolls (*emakimono*)—movable paritions, hanging tapestries
2. *Shinden* style in picture scrolls (*emakimono*)-
3. Medieval Samurai houses

- The most powerful medieval warriors patterned their homes and many customs after those of the descendants of the Heian period aristocrats. They adopted *Shinden* style for their mansions together with the added garden complex.

**Major changes in the medieval period:**
- 1. Spatial division according to function
- 2. More fixed partitions between public and private spaces
- 3. More separate structures for different purposes
Nijo castle

Tozamurai, Shikidai, Ohiroma, Kuroshoin, Shiroshoin
4. *Shoin* style of Muromachi period

- *Shoin style* developed in Muromachi (1338-1573) out of the Shinden mode

*Shoin*—writing hall

*Shoin* style features were found in the *kaisho* (meeting place) of *shinden* complexes and *hojo* (abbot’s quarters) of Zen monasteries

Main characteristics:

- *Tokonoma* (decorative alcove)
- *Chigaidana* (staggered shelves)
- *Tsukeshoin* (built-in desk)
- *Chodaigamae* (decorative doors)
4. *Shoin* style of Muromachi period
4. *Shoin* style of Muromachi period

- *Tatami* mats over the entire floor
- Square posts, coffered ceilings, *fusuma* and *shoji*
- Low table and hanging scroll- *tokonoma*
- Gradually –purely decorative use to indicate the formal quality of the room
4. *Shoin* style and its design system

Modular design to attain spatial harmony

- *Shomei* - 1608 model book for design proportions (*kiwarijutsu*)

A collection of secret books of builder’s illustrations belonging to Heinouchi family - carpenters of Tokugawa shogunate

- \( L \) - the distance from the center of a post to the center of the next

*Tokonoma* width - 2L

Posts width - \( \frac{1}{10}L \)
4. *Shoin* style and its design system

- The ideal carpenter- master of paper design, visual estimation and practical building skills, a good carver and a painter as well.
5. **Sukiya style as a relaxed yet elegant variation of Shoin**

- Intimacy and caprice
- Related to tea ceremony
- Mental discipline,
  Physical control,
  Aesthetic sensibility

- Canon of rustic simplicity based on the humble tea cottage
- **Katsura Detached Palace**- 1616-1641 built by prince Hachijonomiya Toshihito and his son Toshitada to be used for days or weeks at a time for a complete relaxation amidst nature. Princes and their guests would admire cherry blossoms or crimson leaves at their elegant retreat while preparing tea and enjoying exquisite cuisine or while floating in boats on the spacious pond.
- The quintessence of Japanese taste
5. Sukiya style

- *Sukiya*- abode of refinement

Main features:

1. Understatement and Irregularity
2. Elegant details
3. Eccentric reinterpretations of formal Shoin plan
5. Sukiya style

• Rustic simplicity
5. Sukiya style

- Combination of a large variety of wood and bamboo in their natural shapes
5. Sukiya style
Geometrical patterns
5. Sukiya style
Organic layout of gardens and ponds
5. Sukiya style

Natural free forms versus manmade orthogonal layouts
5. Sukiya style

Organic connection between building and place
5. Sukiya style
Rustic simplicity and highly sophisticated details
5. Sukiya style

The architecture of the tea house

- **Wabi**- ideal of refined rusticity

WABi- An aesthetic and moral principle advocating the enjoyment of a quiet, leisurely life free from worldly concerns. Originating in the medieval hermitic tradition, it emphasizes a simple, austere type of beauty and a serene, transcendental frame of mind.
5. Sukiya style
The architecture of the tea house

These connotations of *wabi* were cultivated especially by masters of the tea ceremony, such as Sen no Rikyu, who sought to elevate their art by associating it with the spirit of Zen and stressed the importance of seeking richness in poverty and beauty in simplicity.
5. Sukiya style
The architecture of the tea house

The following poem by Fujiwara no Sadaie (1162–1241) has been cited as suggesting the essence of wabi:

As I look afar
I see neither cherry blossoms
Nor tinted leaves:
Only a modest hut on the coast
In the dusk of autumn nightfall.
5. Sukiya style
The architecture of the tea house

Sabi points toward a medieval aesthetic combining elements of old age, loneliness, resignation, and tranquillity.

Sublime implications of ageing
5. Sukiya style
The architecture of the tea house - Sabi

- Basho is said to have found *sabi* in this haiku of his disciple *Mukai Kyorai*:

Two blossom-watchmen
With their white heads together
Having a chat.
5. Sukiya style
The architecture of the tea house

- Designing the tea house
- Visualization with three-dimensional models
5. Sukiya style

Roji—A space to compose the mind for tea
Fushin-an (Omotesenke), Kyoto
6. *Minka* – dwellings of the common people

- Minka – ‘houses of the people’:
  - Houses of village headman and rich merchants
  - Huts of the poorer farmers
  - Houses of Shinto priests
- All houses not belonging to members of the highest social elite in Japan
  - Large minka – Shoin style elements, *(zashiki* for reception of shogun officials), *doma* (earth-floored area), elevated *tatami* mat area.
6. *Minka* – dwellings of the common people

- *Machiya* - the merchant house (Kyoto)
- Working and living functions combined into the house
  
  Limited house frontage (*maguchi*)
  
  Prolonged depth (*okuyuki*)

- ‘*unagi-no-nedoko*’ (eel’s den)
6. *Minka* — dwellings of the common people
6. *Minka* – dwellings of the common people
2. Organizing principles of dwelling space

A. Environment adaptation
   A-1. Geomancy principles- fusui
   A-2. Interior/exterior space
   A-3. Seasonal partitions

B. Gender roles
   B-1. Male and female spatial domains

C. Social stratification
   C-1. Facade, gate design codes according to status
   C-2. Visitors’ spatial domains are clearly defined
   C-3. Spatial height hierarchy
Vernacular houses in Japan
Nishijin, Kyoto

A) Geomancy
Japanese divination system fusui
Kasou- house physiognomy
24 rules for placement of housing domains
House entrance location should avoid northwest – wind blowing direction
Toilet location should avoid southwest – strong sunshine
2. Shin, gyo and so patterns of bow in tea ceremony - Urasenke School of Tea in Kyoto
(Urasenke Chasenpu Handbook One - Soshitsu Sen XV)
基本的配置の一例に図の配置を変更し、例題の配置を例示します。

京都木生流いけばな教科書

京都木生流いけばな教科書

6. Shin, zyo and so patterns for Ikebana - Heaven-earth-man (ten-chi-jin) compositions of Kyoto Mishoryu School of Ikebana
3. Shin, go, and co patterns for tokonoma in Japanese architecture
   A) Shin-go-shin pattern in Nijo castle
   B) Shin-go-go pattern in Rokkaku- Kyakuden
   C) Shin-go-chi pattern in Inouen

4. Shin, go, and co patterns for tokonoma in Nijo castle (Source: Toyo Bunko)
34. Nijo Jinya layout hypothetical spatial division
54. Gates of Daimyo mansions in Edo ("A Short History of Japanese Architecture" by A.I. Sadler)
この図は、東京の歴史や地理に関するものである。東京の中心部に位置する「江戸」を含む町名や区名を示しており、特に江戸時代からの歴史的背景を詳しく説明している。図の右側には地図と解説文が並べられている。

図の左側には、江戸時代から現代までの東京の街の変化が示されている。特に、都市計画や建築様式の変化が重要である。図の中央部には、主要な交通路や河川が記載されている。

図の下部には、東京の観光スポットや文化財に関する情報が示されている。特に、歴史的建造物や自然環境の重要性が強調されている。

全体的に、この図は東京の地理と歴史の理解を深めるために重要である。
江戸初期の京都 — 『兼永後万治前洛中絵図』に見る町の構成 —
B) Interior/exterior spatial hierarchy

Spatial Partitions:
Wooden shutters *amado*
Sliding panels *shoji*, doors *fusuma*

Intermediate spaces:
*engawa, tooriniwa, tsuboniwa, watari-roka*
C) Gender roles

Omote/oku concepts

Hare (southeast area)/ke (north-western area)

- Daidokoro-tooriniwa
- Oku-no-ma
- Mise-no-ma, zashiki, omote genkan
Vernacular houses in Japan
Nishijin, Kyoto

- **D) Social Stratification**
  Formal/semiformal/informal (*shin-gyo-so*) artistic/social concepts in tea ceremony, ikebana, calligraphy, architecture
  - **Soto/ uchi** – inside/outside social scopes
  - **Tatemae/ honne** – formal public behavior/ inner true feelings

- **Mise-no-ma** - customers, clients
- **Daidokoro-tooriniwa** – family informal visitors
- **Zashiki, omote genkan** – formal visitors of the house head
Concluding remarks

- Japanese houses are carefully sited within the environment by using a refined system of environmental assessment about house location, orientation and design - *fusui*.

- There is a spatial differentiation between male and female parts where women are mostly associated with inner and rear dwelling spaces, while men are associated with front and street facing spaces.

- Dwelling space is stratified to accommodate contacts with visitors according to their rank or gender - intimacy and hierarchy are expressed by horizontal and vertical linear gradation. The house style depends on the status of the inhabitants - a status-related codification of housing design.
Dwelling space

• Framework (filter), detaching and blending humans with nature

• Kyoto machiya house can be regarded as a flexible space compound where rooms and open spaces are intertwined in an intricate manner, fusing the borders of buildings and gardens into one semi-open, semi-closed housing space, that can be easily integrated with its natural environment.
Contemporary machiya
Tezuka Sky house
Sunlight
Big window
Wall-less
Juubaku
Waro Kishi
Thank you very much!
Dwelling space as a filter, detaching and blending human and nature

- Dwelling is a means to understand nature
- Dwelling as a mimicry of nature
- Dwelling space as a mediator between man and nature
- Dwelling space as a framework of nature and man
- A stage set for man, nature as a decor
- Space changes with seasons as human feelings