Chapter 3

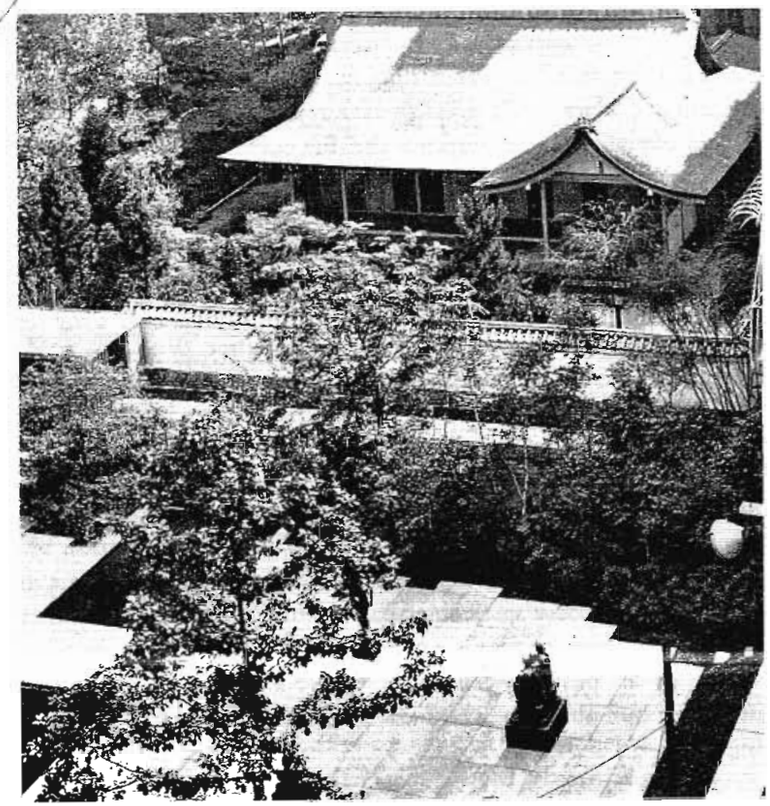
Yayoi and Jōmon

Throughout history, the invasion of foreign lands and collection of cultural fragments as souvenirs has from time to time stimulated a colonialist fashion for exotic imperial taste. One example, a consequence of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, was the great archaeological expedition that inspired the Egyptian revival in Europe. An encounter with Islamic culture in Morocco and Algiers subsequently diffused the harem motif throughout nineteenth-century Europe. Via artifacts from *ukiyo-e* to African sculpture, Western capitalist expansion has invariably been eager to look beyond itself to discover the fountainhead of a new taste.

Japan, occupied by the Allied Forces after World War II, was not exempted. For the rank and file of the occupation army, Japan was a place of new cultural encounters. Indeed, some of my contemporaries—Jasper Johns and Peter Eisenman, for example—have told me their interest in Japan was motivated by memories of having been stationed there as military personnel. *Chō-chin* (paper lanterns), *sensu* (fans), *geta* (wooden clogs), and *yukata* (cotton kimonos), among other items, were all brought back as souvenirs in lieu of trophies of war. Such artifacts as had been exported earlier during the Meiji craze for *japonaiserie* were now being handled strictly by art dealers, so more accessible everyday contemporary items became the new craze. In the 1950s these were lumped together as "Japonica."

Meanwhile, as early as its succinctly entitled exhibition "Modern Architecture—International Exhibition" in 1932, the Museum of Modern Art in New York had been the master promoter of modernism in the United States. Two decades after that now famous show, the museum produced its "House in the Museum Garden"—full-scale prototypes of three residences for enlightened

clients—and exhibited them serially in the museum's courtyard. The first was a house by Marcel Breuer, erstwhile youngest staff member of the Bauhaus. His project not only celebrated the coming of the Bauhaus to America, but also showcased a certain success in the postwar production of new middle-class housing types, as did the second by Gregory Ain. Third and last, the director of the architecture department, Arthur Drexler, commissioned the Japanese architect Junzō Yoshimura (1908–1997) to prepare a full-scale reproduction of the Kōjō-in's Kyaku-den guest house (fig. 3.1).[1]



3.1 Kōjō-in, Kyaku-den [Guest House of Kōjō-in] as replicated at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and published in *Kenchiku Zasshi* [Architecture Journal], January 1954. ["General View of Japanese Exhibition House"—photograph by IMB-Thinil.] It was given the name Shōfū-sō, the House of Pine Breezes.

By this time, European modernism had moved to America and through the influence of the 1932 exhibition had come to be known as the "International Style." However, any unified tendency was absent apart from the signatures of a few recognized masters: in other words, although modernism could be understood as a method, it had not yet become a guiding stylistic principle. In such a context, Japonica might be ennobled to provide an ideal theme to fill the absence of any dominant model of style. What is more, the replica of the temple guest house remiuded some visitors of the Japanese Pavilion at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Yet MoMA's intention was this time to present a masterpiece of formal, elegant *shoin-zukuri* architecture, chosen with more sophisticated taste than that exercised by the Meiji government in 1893, when its didactic copy of the Hō-ō-dō at Byōdō-in is said nevertheless to have inspired Wright. Drexler's undertaking also prompted viewers to look anew at American tradition. Looking back half a century or so and noting how Wright had employed a Japanese model to create his prairie house was a near military coup for Japanese taste. At the same time, Drexler's initiative could now with a single stroke complement the lack of a full-blown modernism.

I would thus like to examine the role of Japanese taste in the context of both American and Japanese postwar modernism, and also attempt to clarify the way Japanese taste was influenced by the cross-contextual exchanges that resulted. Two Japanese-American artists, Isamu Noguchi and Yasuhiro Ishimoto, confined in American camps during the war, visited occupied Japan after the surrender. Both had experienced European modernism at first hand: Noguchi studied sculpture with Brancusi in Paris, and Ishimoto learned photography at the new Bauhaus in Chicago, organized by survivors of the original school discredited by the Nazis. Both began to work with a fresh inclination toward Japan-ness. Noguchi's works of this period—his stage designs for Martha Graham, the well-known table for Herman Miller, and the "*Akari* [light]" produced using the technique of Gifu lanterns—are amongst the best examples of modern design. At the same time, Noguchi would not have found inspiration for these works but for his encounter with Japan-ness. He had been designing gardens since before going to Japan, but after he saw the celebrated

examples in Kyoto, his designs became transformed into similar stone-embodied landscapes; his sculptures began to look like ancient clay *haniwa* symbols; and the light coming through the translucent Japanese paper in *Akari* now epitomized Japonica.

These works no longer depended on a crude simile, as had the emblazonment of the *teikan* style of the 1930s. Out of the experience of modernism inflected by Japan-ness came a form of sophisticated and abstract composition. Here again we must note that an external gaze played the determining role. After the war, Noguchi came to Japan as the embodiment of American modernism, having abstracted Japanese beauty from the vantage point of modernism. Only a few years after Itō had charged that "from the start, nothing called international can be worthwhile," the situation was turned upside down. Now *only* what was called international was deemed to be worthwhile—but again the mechanism of assessment turned on Japan-ness.

Twenty years passed after the Japonica boom, and Isamu Noguchi returned to Japan. This time, he went there to live and work. He built a studio in Muré on Shikoku Island, and made stone sculptures. In his new work he deliberately restricted the amount of carving; he sought, instead, to *let the stone speak*. In later life, he told me, "Facing a natural stone in silence, I begin to hear its voice. My work is just to follow the voice; my role is just to help it a little bit." This attitude is the same as the spirit found in *Sakuteiki* (The Record of Garden Making), an early technical manual of garden design, written in twelfth-century Japan: "The placement of the stone must follow the stone's request."[2] The point is that the subject is the stone itself, whose judgment is unquestioned. The intent of the stone must be learned through experience. Design subjectively oriented (and thus often arbitrary) is left behind. The designer must identify himself with nature's objecthood *directly*, without mediation. This norm of erasing the distance that separates subject and object—of becoming one with nature—is common to various Japanese arts: the techniques of several of the performing arts, the secret teaching of *budō* (swordsmanship), garden design, and many other practices. That Noguchi reached the ideation of traditional art by way of a long detour was to the artist himself the final mark of maturity. Noguchi represented yet another external gaze toward Japan-ness, the gaze of a Japanese-American. Meanwhile, for other Americans, he stood at

the apex of the new Japonica aesthetic. He had been compelled to return to his (half-shared) origin in Japan, where he sought the voice of nature, since for Noguchi the problematic of Japan-ness had never ceased to exercise its spell-like destiny.

But in America, the Japonica boom constructed as a function of the occupation of Japan did not last very long. In fact it was abandoned by American modernists, and Noguchi's personal return to Japan may have been a sign of disappointment. It was after his failed attempt to collaborate with certain other pioneers of American modernism, such as Louis Kahn and Buckminster Fuller, that Noguchi turned back to Japan. And only then did he manage to discover a unique stance in sculpture. I believe that his achievement could only have been possible in this insular nation, and especially in a remote place like Muré. In the late 1980s, in his last years, Noguchi was chosen to represent the United States at the Venice Biennale as creator of the American pavilion. But he was passed over for the Grand Prix that I believe he ought to have won. His loss, I think (and I observed the whole event from my position as his assistant installer), was due to his strategy of pushing the traditional Japanese aspect of utilitarianism too far. Furthermore, the very expression of Japan-ness had by this time become unpopular on the contemporary international art scene.

The work of the second Japanese-American, the photographer Ishimoto, was unrelated to the Japonica taste focused by the gaze of the former U.S. occupiers. Ishimoto's photo-images of the Katsura Imperial Villa appeared in the 1960 book *Katsura* by Kenzō Tange, to which Gropius had provided a foreword (see figs. 25.3, 25.4, 25.5). They were based upon authentic modernist-oriented camera work that violently decomposed and recomposed objects in accordance with its own logic (oddly, along the lines of Kishida, in a certain sense). Inheriting the method of the new Bauhaus, Ishimoto's work expressed the materiality of Neue Sachlichkeit, by which only such images of line and plane as emphasized sheer composition were abstracted from the Katsura complex. In actuality, the really determinant elements of Katsura's architectural and aesthetic environment are large curved roof planes, trees trained into picturesque shapes, and detailed, if restrained, Japanese-style decoration. The camera work bravely eliminates all this, focusing on the surfaces that define architectural space. Floor surfaces (*tatami* or wood as well as bamboo), sliding screens (*byōbu* or *shōji* and

wood panel), walls (of sand and lime plaster), and ceilings of *kasa-buchi* (long split boards) and *tsunashiro* (braided husk)—all these planar elements are articulated by linear motifs: pillars, studs, crossbeams, *nageshi* (lintel joints),[3] window frames, and handrails. Ishimoto focused on abstract compositions derived from these divisions using only his camera frame, so that his shots came to look much like the planar compositions of De Stijl or early twentieth-century constructivism. Inflection by the new photographic techniques of the Bauhaus persuasively, but misleadingly, presents the Mondrian-like method of planar division as a by-product of the architectural elevations themselves. This modernist stance decomposed and suppressed Japanese compositional aesthetic—at a time when the very colors of Japanese ancient temples were washing away and being reduced literally to white planes traversed by black lines. As epitomized in the exceptional popularity of the book *Koji Junrei* (A Pilgrimage to Ancient Temples)[4] about Nara written by the philosopher Tetsurō Watsuji (1889–1960), Japan in the late 1920s and early 1930s had begun to discover its fading past as a premise of beauty. This tendency had gained further momentum since the construction of Sutemi Horiguchi's half-modern, half-traditional Shien-sō (cf. fig. 1.3) and the publication of Hideto Kishida's compilation of photos, *Kako no Kōsei*.

Just as in 1933 Bruno Taut had been invited to Katsura, during the age of Japonica it became the custom to take visiting foreign architects there, especially those who had almost single-handedly created modern architecture, like Walter Gropius. Inspired by his visit, Gropius wrote a foreword to Tange and Ishimoto's *Katsura*, which, unfortunately, was a disappointment: it was largely a reiteration of Taut. Meanwhile, Kenzō Tange seriously wrestled with the interpretation of Ishimoto's somewhat sensational photographs. His authorial passion was due partly to an evolving local climate of restless antagonism toward Japonica.

The painter Taro Okamoto (1911–1996), who had also been exposed to European modernism, returned to Japan from Paris in 1940. He vowed to express the schism inherent in French modern art—between abstract and concrete, or "oppositionalism" to use his term—taking his cue from the surrealists. Intellectually, he sought to rediscover Japan drawing on his proximity to the members of the so-called College of Sociology, that is, the circle of Emmanuel Levinas, Georges Bataille, and Roger Caillois. By way

of this new perspective Okamoto was awakened to the beauty of ancient earthenware of the Jōmon era.[5] A little earlier, in response to the Japonica trend, a reappreciation of ancient Japanese pots and utensils had occurred, above all in the sophisticated sense of beauty of terracotta *haniwa* figures from the ancient Yayoi period. But, in opposition to this tendency, Okamoto's propaganda stressed the dynamic beauty of even older, native Jōmon patterns, which are like roaring flames. And it was the challenge of this aesthetic that gained public attention. In line with Okamoto, Tange shifted his architectural aesthetic away from a serene compositional beauty of transparency (reminiscent of Shintō shrines and Katsura Villa)—Yayoiesque, to him, as exemplified in the main building of his Hiroshima Peace Center (1955). His take on the Jōmonesque may be seen in the assertive design for his Municipal Building of Kurashiki city (1960). Thus synchronized in their beliefs, Tange and Okamoto embarked on a long and lasting collaboration.

This archaeological periodization—Jōmon/Yayoi—first surfaced in the mid-1950s. Unlike today's obsessive search for the roots of Japanese culture, the dichotomy was exploited mainly in quest of a measure of aesthetic judgment and a modality of production on the part of both artist and architect. Okamoto's partisanship of Jōmon-style, as opposed to Yayoi-style, earthenware appears to me a return of sorts to an event in the history of European thought some one hundred years before, which occasioned a shift in both temporal and aesthetic consciousness: namely, Nietzsche's opposition of the Dionysian and the Apollonian modes as recorded in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Both distinctions take the past as a norm, yet neither is much concerned with actual historical order, since both seek instead to construct a strategic stance toward the present. Reading Okamoto's championship of Jōmon in a social context, it might be said that while the beauty of Yayoi was what American modernism brought from Japan to New York as a trophy of the occupation (inspiring the line of architecture that resulted in Junzō Yoshimura's Shōfū-sō [House of Pine Breezes] at MoMA in 1954),[6] the beauty of Jōmon encouraged by Okamoto's European modernist stance secretly nurtured a native dynamism opposing the gaze of the occupier.

In architecture, a corresponding discourse was under construction: Yayoiesque Japonism was deemed *traditional*, or elitist, while Jōmonesque nativism was seen as *populist*. It was believed that

Jōmon somehow expressed the energy of the masses. As a consequence, Japonica—tinged with the colonialist gaze—became a target of criticism. For instance, as we saw, Tange's Memorial Peace Center was the concrete embodiment of Hamaguchi's theory of a Japanese national architectural style. As the first realization of transparent *modernist* space in Japan, it achieved a flowing space by taking Katsura as its model and transposing the traditional compositional proportions—*kiwari*—to its steel and concrete frame. Yet after the positing of the Jōmon-versus-Yayoi duality, Tange's work at Hiroshima came to be seen as an aristocratic, antipopulist Yayoiesque architecture. When the occupation was finally lifted and an anticolonialist movement took wing, the Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy was immediately caught up in the political context of an American imperialism versus the populist struggle against it.

In his essay in *Katsura* (1960), "Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture," Kenzō Tange further elaborated the shift from Yayoiesque to Jōmonesque. In place of Katsura as epitome of a dynastic flavor, he dared to depict the villa as the opposite—as populist. With a logic all too evidently overextended, Tange felt bound to undertake this interpretive shift owing to the immediate political climate. Therefore, his essay barely mentions Katsura's architecture or its garden. Around the same time, the new polar opposition was expanded to embrace a contrast between Jōmonesque/Dionysian/lower-class/pit dwelling (*tateana jūkyo*) and Yayoiesque/Apollonian/aristocratic/platform-type housing (*takayuka-shiki jūkyo*). This extension went beyond the circle of architects and critics, touching even those architectural historians who proceeded from a positivist premise, such as Hirotarō Ōta (1912–). Ōta's *Zusetsu Nihon Jutaku-shi* (Illustrated History of Japanese Housing) (1948), for example, explained the genealogy of dwelling types from pit dwelling to platform house as the product of an overlapping history of class consolidation.[7]

Tange spent most of his 1960 essay elaborating the two opposing cultural lineages, and finally posited Katsura as an example of synthesis based on two contradictory terms by resorting to "dialectics," the trendy rhetorical refuge of the time. Here one must call attention to a singular point about Okamoto: although he ought to have been familiar with Alexandre Kojève's sophisticated contemporary reading of Hegel so influential in France, he extolled only the destructive and irreconcilable. Indeed, in later years, he spoke only of "explosion," with no intimation of a dialectical synthesis. Meanwhile, Tange, who was almost certainly influenced by Okamoto's destructive dynamism, nonetheless lurched toward a synthesis of his own devising even before fully corroborating the notion of "fissure," that is, destruction. His essay on Katsura thus dispensed with the energy of head-on conflict far too quickly, while cleverly encapsulating the discursive Jōmon/Yayoi conflict of the time. In his words:

> The *shoin* of the Katsura Palace belongs fundamentally to the aristocratic Yayoi tradition as it developed from the *shinden-zukuri* to the *shoin-zukuri* style. Accordingly, rhe building is dominated by the principles of aesthetic balance and continuous sequence of patterns in space. And yet there is something which prevents it from becoming a mere formal exercise and gives its space a lively movement and a free harmony. This something is the naïve vitality and ever-renewed potentiality of the Jōmon tradition of the common people.
>
> The Jōmon element is strong in the rock formations and the teahouses of the garden. There, however, the aesthetic canons of the Yayoi tradition act as a sobering force which prevents the dynamic flow, the not-quite-formed forms, the dissonances, from becoming chaotic.
>
> At Katsura, then, the dialectic of tradition and creation is realized.
>
> It was in the period when the Katsura Palace was built that the two traditions, Jōmon and Yayoi, first actually collided. When they did, the cultural formalism of the upper class and the vital energy of the lower class met. From their dynamic union emerged the creativeness seen in Katsura—a dialectic resolution of tradition and antitradition.[8]

Meanwhile, in his preface, Walter Gropius complained a little about the garden of Katsura, favoring as he did the taste for a more orthodox Japan-ness espoused by Taut:

> If we judge by the highest standards, we may also find some weak points in Katsura garden. Though its intimate spaces, its pavements, and its plantings are of enchanting beauty, the overemphasis on

> playful details sometimes impairs the continuity and coherence of the spatial conception as a whole. The importance given to overcrowded rock compositions, mainly around the Shōkintei Teahouse, reminds me of the age-old Japanese leisure game of *bonseki*, consisting of a tray, filled with sand, in which pebbles of different size and color are arranged in artful compositions.[9]

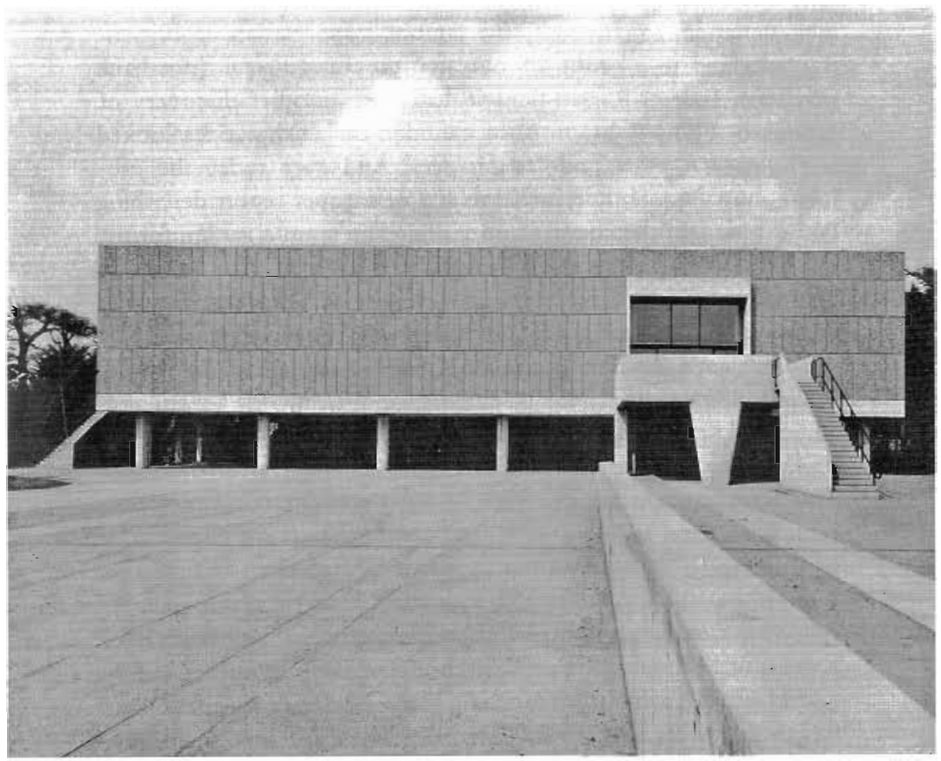
The configuration of stones near the Shōkin-tei Teahouse is admittedly the most vulgar spot in the garden, where the stereotypical landscapes of Japanese tradition are miniaturized and reassembled like the *makura kotoba* (pillow word) technique in ancient poetry. Rhetorical clichés refer to renowned scenic spots throughout Japan such as *Ama-no-hashidate* (Heaven's standing bridge), *Sumiyoshi-no-matsu* (the pine of Sumiyoshi), and *Akashi-no-hama* (the beach of Akashi). This criticism is proof of Gropius's own exquisite taste. He recommended elimination of certain elements including the big *sotetsu* tree in front of the *machiai* (or waiting area of the tea pavilion)—which Taut also disclaimed. These *ishi-gumi* (stone arrangements) are indeed vulgarized examples of a style known today as *Enshū-gonomi*,[10] which reverted to a stereotypical pattern during the later Edo period.

When selecting Ishimoto's photographs of Katsura, Tange had rejected any view that was the least kitschlike, even the curved plane of a roof. In his foreword he clearly states his intention deliberately to select and exclude: "This is a visual record of the living Katsura as it exists in the minds of an architect and a photographer. We who made the record may conceivably be accused of dismembering Katsura, and those who come to know the palace from the pictures given here may well be disappointed to find upon actually visiting it that it is different from what they had expected."[11] It was thus almost inevitable that Gropius should criticize certain aesthetic choices as *bonseki*-like, that is, resembling those miniature landscapes constructed of sand and stones on a tiny tray.

In fact, however, the stepping stones arranged around these clichéd elements exhibit nevertheless an intense dynamism, like the broken poetic meter that goes far beyond mere intended irregularity (*kuzushi*). Ishimoto took many close-up photographs of these stones, and Tange was quick to recognize here the Jōmon element. His appreciation of the *ishi-gumi* in this context was based upon the

new historical assertion that gardeners of the late medieval age—who designed, for instance, the famous stone garden of Ryōan-ji—belonged to a group of outcasts, the *kawara-mono* (riverbank dwellers). Indeed Ryōan-ji itself had been another discovery of Japonism. Philip Johnson once confided to me that as he looked at the garden, tears came to his eyes. And even today the prologue most frequently resorted to is a newspaper report describing Isamu Noguchi's excitement on visiting the temple garden for the first time. This is to say Tange sought to place himself in a position contradictory to that of Taut and Gropius—but without going all the way. His dialectic, or his vocation as a synthesizer, rendered his discourse ambiguous. Many an intellectual discourse of the time in Japan followed the schematic three-stage dialectic—a token, after all, of the Stalinist spell.

While Jōmon dynamism was being thus elevated, there was yet another modernism operating in the background. Le Corbusier's projects in India (in Chandigarh and later on in Ahmedabad) garnered attention in the mid-1950s almost as soon as they were made public, characterized as they were by the use of so-called *béton brut*: rough form-finished concrete, without the normal coating of cement or masonry. In the 1930s, Le Corbusier had used a kind of wall where rough stones were often piled up beneath a white stucco superstructure. In the postwar *béton brut* aesthetic, structure itself was deliberately left uncovered. One might see all this as having been necessitated by conditions in India (notably, a lack of technical proficiency). However, at the same time, a sense of reminding the beholder of an image of cities left in ruins by World War II can scarcely be avoided. Lives lived out in bombarded and destroyed cities (as seen in the neorealist films of the Italian director Roberto Rossellini) and the state of objects distorted almost beyond recognition were implied. I would claim, in *béton brut*. A similar sensibility could be remarked in London in the mid-1950s, when the "angry young men" in theater and the Independent Group (the forerunners of pop art) began to be active. The corresponding tendency among such English architects as Alison and Peter Smithson was called new brutalism. They left underlying elements—not only the structural framing, but also pipes and sashes—just as they were, without covering. Their designs permitted any and all objects and elements to exist in a state of pure immediacy. It was a matter of course that when this



3.2 The National Museum of Western Art by Le Corbusier (1957–1959, since modified), at Ueno, Tokyo.

postwar European modernism arrived in Japan via Le Corbusier's Indian work, it was welcomed as a tactic to confront and counter American Japonism. Brutalism quickly merged into the recent context of Jōmon appreciation. Liveliness, brutality, roughness, and the exposure of inner workings, or guts—such elements easily overlapped and accorded with the aesthetic derived from Jōmon earthenware.

When Le Corbusier visited Japan to oversee the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo (1957; fig. 3.2), he, too, was invited to Katsura. He is famous for having made detailed drawings and notes, rather than for any verbal pronouncements. According to what remains, it appears he made some sketches of the *azuma-ya* (a hipped-roof arbor used as a place of repose) called *Manji-tei* (swastika arbor), built on an elevation behind the Shōkin-tei Teahouse—but noted only the fact that the stool-like seats were swastika-shaped. By a strange coincidence, he determined the basic plan of his museum as a swastika, but this was based upon the spiral matrix of a museum type he had evolved three decades earlier. He commented that the interiors of the teahouse and *sukiya* pavilions all had too many lines, making the architecture busy. The Japanese architectural public concluded that Le Corbusier was therefore uninterested in Japan-ness. Some even said that he did not have the sensibility to comprehend it. The fact was that by the 1930s Le Corbusier had already begun to depart from the sophisticated, minimalist composition of Japan-ness in the direction of a new brute materiality, voluptuous freshness, and free-form composition. Thus his apparent lack of interest in Katsura. In any case, this oppositional stance was seen in Japan as deeply related to the formation of the new Jōmonesque perspective. Behind the then-flourishing and fashionable discourse on culture of the masses, i.e., "mass theory [*minshū-ron*]," was the shadow of new brutalism. The taste of the time favored this heavy architecture with its raw concrete surfaces and implied rhetoric of strength and dynamism. The Japanese architectural designs soon to win international acclaim were created out of the experience of this turn, and yet once again around Japan-ness.

All in all, during the period it is possible to theorize two kinds of Japan-ness. On the one hand, the sophisticated, tranquil transparency of Yayoiesque/Apollonian/aristocratic/platform housing—corresponding to Japanese taste in general, or to Japonica-based American modernism. On the other, the dynamic opacity of the Jōmonesque/Dionysian/populist/pit dwelling, which coincided with the Japanese version of brutalist European modernism. The former ethos was inseparable from the period of occupation by the Allied Forces led by the United States and was a quasi-military achievement. The latter was related to a stance opposing the terms of peace as determined at San Francisco and the new Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, which countenanced a form of indirect American rule. Tange's *Katsura* adroitly kept step with this shifting political ground, notwithstanding the fact that even the architect's hasty dialectical synthesis retained and exposed his natural affinity with the Yayoi trend. Meanwhile, Okamoto persisted in

his Jōmonesque dynamism, speaking to a destructive and explosive aesthetic. In collaboration, each played his part: Tange's stable framework, and Okamoto's bombastic energy. These twin discourses of the period reflected the real and conflicting forces within a Japan under foreign pressure: occupied Japan wedged beneath the American defense umbrella in the new world structure of polarized conflict and cold war; and the youthful opposition to it, deployed under the name Zen-gaku-ren (National Federation of Students Self-Government Associations).[12] The Jōmon discourses were not irrelevant to the movement that culminated in the Zen-gaku-ren's anti-Japan-U.S. Security Treaty demonstration at the National Diet Building in 1960, supported as it was by widespread anti-American sentiment across our nation. This act of protest burst like an Okamoto explosion, yet a half-century-long conservative rule has succeeded it. As part of this latter-day context, the focus of the discourse on Japan-ness was again transformed.

Nature and Artifice

We have already seen how in Japan Bruno Taut took up and promoted Katsura and Ise as exemplars of Japan-ness. Both villa and shrine were, incidentally or otherwise, imperial edifices, that is, patently *tennō*-esque. As late as the 1950s, while discourses on Katsura grew along the lines of the Jōmon-Yayoi opposition, Ise Jingū was still set aside, excluded from architectural debate, and isolated on a shelf of ethical nonjudgment. Ise was identified exclusively with the esoteric national rituals of the imperial household. This limited contextualization was maintained in no small part by the state's suppression of details of what went on there. All activities, including the precise dismantling and rebuilding the shrine underwent every twenty years, called *shikinen-zōkan*,[1] were shrouded in secrecy.

Ise Jingū is rather simple in terms of its architecture. It was believed, up until the 1950s, that there had been no major changes or developments since the first ritualized rebuilding of the shrine late in the seventh century. At that time, the conventions of historical inquiry into architecture were, so to speak, under the influence of Darwinism, and thus an architecture without stylistic development was deemed worthless, so that Ise as an obscured site of secret ritual rejected any architectural interpretation or judgment. Neither was it taken up as part of the Jōmon/Yayoi debare. According to its look—rough and thick—the shrine and its precinct appeared Jōmonesque/Dionysian, although in formal terms it belonged to the platform-style housing reserved for aristocrats (i.e., the *shinden-zukuri*) and in actuality it was the property of the imperial household. Hence, modification of the standards of judgment was overdue. Returning to Hamaguchi's "Problem of Style in Japanese National Architecture," Ise would belong to his

category of the *spatial* and *performative*—to the Japanese architectonic will—rather than the *material* and *constructive* characteristics of the Western architectonic will. As such, any reassessment of Ise would mandate a shift of attention from the building itself (its form and structure) to its formation and origins, including the environment (i.e., climate). All this was foreshadowed by Taut's appreciation of Ise. He wrote not only how Ise would in future become a destination of architectural pilgrimage, like the Acropolis, but also that "[the Parthenon] is the greatest and most aesthetically sublime building in stone as the Ise shrine is in wood."[2]

Taut gave attention and authority to the sacred atmosphere of the Ise shrine, while at the same time referring to its material construction. He was well aware of the environment surrounding the shrine—a dense forest, where aged and huge Japanese cedars loom over the diminutive buildings. Taut's motives of appreciation at Ise went beyond the beauty of composition and the logic of proportion he experienced as a pleasure to the eye at Katsura, and were linked to his recognition of the Athenian Acropolis as an absolute standard of cultural value. The Acropolis had long afforded the very image of architecture itself for Western architects. Without hesitation, he made the leap from the Acropolis as the building of all buildings to the imperial shrine at Ise as a genuine or true object (*honmono*). Concerning its sacredness, Taut seems to have needed no further explanation and never offered a distinction in kind between buildings and surroundings. It was Sutemi Horiguchi's *Kenchiku ni okeru Nihontekina-mono* (Japan-ness in Architecture)[3] of 1934 that appears to have shifted the focus of appreciation of Ise from its architecture to the sacred atmosphere of the precinct. This is nearly contemporary with Taut's Ise account and seems almost a response:

> The expression as an architectural ensemble, built within a thousand-year-old forest and surrounded by a sacred hedge [*mizugaki*] and imperial fence [*tamagaki*], has long echoed the feeling of the twelfth-century monk/poet, Saigyō: "I know not what lies within, but I am in tears with gratitude."[4]

In the context of the 1930s, Horiguchi sought to elaborate the unmediated "gratitude" that had come to form the basis of Ise appreciation. Though he had been a pioneer of modernism in the 1920s, later in life his position gradually shifted. As he later confessed, he had when young visited the Acropolis and seen fragments of the columns of the Parthenon scattered about. He felt that "one who had grown up at the farthest end of the East could in no way compete with [the ancients] brought up in that rich world." Thus, Horiguchi determined to study Japanese medieval residential architecture (*sukiya-zukuri*) as epitomized in the sixteenth-century teahouse, or at Katsura Imperial Villa, and to design accordingly, in order to "follow a path suitable and familiar to [him]."[5] Here one may glimpse an empirical if veiled critique of Taut's shortcut leap from the timber-framed Ise to the marble Acropolis. Horiguchi is no doubt seeking a way to detach Ise from the power of the Parthenon's materiality. He had by this time come to believe that the evocation in Saigyō's *waka* of an intuitive sympathy for the power of nature went beyond the mere constructivism of Western architecture. Such an appreciation entailed a shift of focus from the buildings themselves to the larger environment—namely, *shin-iki* (the sacred atmosphere).

The more "positivist" historian of architecture, Hirotarō Ōta, likewise sought to shift the Tautian assessment of Ise in the direction of a more Saigyōesque appreciation. He undertook to rewrite Japanese architectural history from a modernist perspective and came to be known for his idea that different social classes produce their own housing types: pit dwellings and then the *minka* (farmer's vernacular dwelling) for the general populace as against platform housing and much later *shinden-zukuri* and *shoin-zukuri* for the aristocracy. He remarked in the late 1960s:

> What, of Ise Jingū, so much impressed Saigyō, who sang: "I know not what lies within, but I am in tears with gratitude"? It has long been questioned whether these lines were really Saigyō's or not. Yet they came to be so widely known because they sound a feeling shared by Japanese. Was it the beauty of architecture such as caused Taut to set Ise as an equal to the Parthenon that impressed Saigyō? Perhaps not. It was more likely the deep forest of Japanese cedar and the precinct of raw wood that serenely surrounds the shrine—it was the harmony between the environment and the architecture that impressed him.[6]

During the thirty years bracketing the defeat in 1945, that is, roughly between 1930 to 1960, the appreciation of Ise gradually shifted from Taut's comparison with the Western standard of the Acropolis to a sympathy with the Saigyōesque awe of nature. Here again Hamaguchi's distinction between Western architecture—*material* and *constructive*—and Japanese—*spatial* and *performative*—comes to the fore. Taut's approach was definitely materialist and constructivist, while Saigyō's sensitivity toward nature was the opposite.

In the epoch-making changes of the time—the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, the defeat, the occupation, and the anti-U.S.-Japan Security Treaty struggle—the problematic of Japan-ness was continuously at issue, as part of a search for Japan's own uniqueness. I believe that the Japanese reception of modern architecture went hand in hand with, or even paralleled, this process. It was overwhelmingly apparent to the isolated, insular nation that the modern West existed outside, and that in order to survive Japan had ever and again to confront this Western impetus. I repeat—the momentum for the problematic of Japan-ness belonged to the gaze from without, whose object was Japan as Other. As the Japanese processed Western modernity in their own fashion, they somehow also looked for Japan as the Other within themselves. Such was the discourse of Japan-ness and the design approach that resulted. In the postwar era it was Kenzō Tange, as noted by Hamaguchi, who intuitively—if not quite rationally—understood this complex relationship.

At the time of the Jōmon/Yayoi debate, Tange published a long essay, "Gendai Kenchiku no Sozō to Nihon Kenchiku no Dentō [Contemporary Architectural Creation and Japanese Architectural Tradition]" (1956).[7] As his title indicates, Tange felt able dialectically to synthesize the modern (creation of the new) and the national (conservation of tradition) in a way that continued the "Overcoming Modernity" debate of 1942. What was new was the putative consciousness of class conflict: Yayoiesque = Apollonian = aristocrat = platform housing versus Jōmonesque = Dionysian = popular = pit dwelling. True to form, Tange upheld both issues.

> If the space that Gothic architecture achieved, the space that confronted nature with a new technology, is a space that humans nonetheless wrested from Nature, the space of Japanese architecture is a space that is given by Nature. . . . [Japanese architecture] is not that which is based upon a human will to three-dimensionality, but a leaning toward or sinking into Nature. . . . The Nature apparent in the context of Japanese architecture is appreciated in the above manner, and is not Nature grasped by the act of transforming reality.[8]

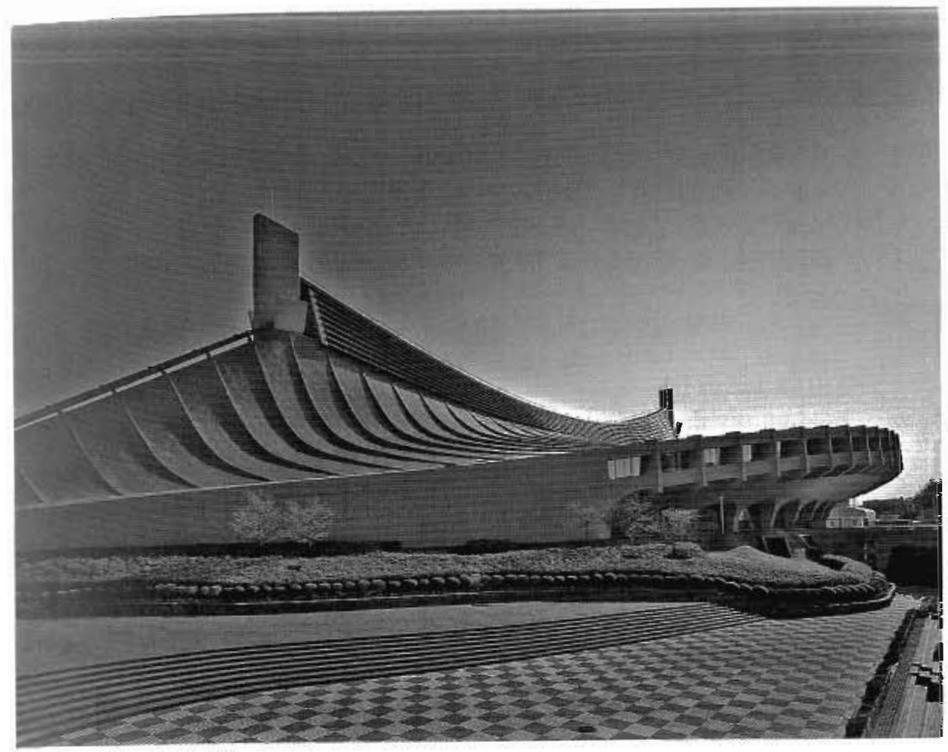
Here we must recall Masao Maruyama's earlier paradigms: *jinen* (nature) and *sakui* (artifice or invention). Maruyama's "nature" had been filtered through the Chinese rationalist thinking of the Chu Hsi School,[9] as assimilated and recast by Japan in the late Edo period, while Tange's was closer to the sense conveyed by the Western term, as translated into Japanese (Nature = *shizen*) in the Meiji period. The latter interpretation being more substantive, Tange also believed in a contemporary architectural "creation" where human agents, confronting Nature, subjectively create, in accordance with modern Western notions of subjectivity. On such premises he identifies "the space that humans wrested from Nature" with Western architectural space (for some reason, he always used the example of Gothic architecture), and by contrast, "the space that is given by Nature" with Japanese space. His phraseology suggests a view of Japanese architectural space as nonsubjective, passive, and vulnerable, in which context he posits himself, the architect, as a creative subject. Thus, his attack on the Yayoiesque and aristocratic element as conservative also assumes a measure of self-criticism. Up until the mid-1950s, Tange's only realized works had been the Memorial Peace Center at Hiroshima, its main building clearly modeled on Katsura, and his own residence in the Tokyo suburbs (1953), indisputably a present-day version of *shinden-zukuri*. Yet here a back-formation of subjectivity took place, implying self-critique. Within the Jōmon/Yayoi debate, he now had to shift to the side of Dionysian and populist Jōmon by associating himself with modern Western subjectivity and a concept of creation as "artifice." This, first and foremost, expressed a will to abandon Japonica as American-contrived modernism; he was compelled rather suddenly to shift to the new brutalism, as a European alternative. In this process, Tange emphasized the creative subject as a human agent confronting a benign (but no longer all-encompassing) Nature.

It needs to be stressed that the *jinen* and *sakui* Maruyama had salvaged from the Tokugawa era were thoroughly different from "nature" and "design" as these appear in the context of the 1950s, especially with respect to the notion of the subject. One of the significant figures in Maruyama's book was Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), a neo-Confucianist philosopher of the mid-Edo period, who had attempted to undermine the preeminence of Nature (*jinen*) in the Chu Hsi School by supplying the role of "sage" as a transcendent subject. Yet another well-known figure, Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), a scholar of *kokugaku* (the study of national classics) and *Kojiki* (the mythical story of the birth of Japan), had proceeded to take a different line of argument against the domination of Nature—that found in *kokugaku*—and so posed another version of the transcendent subject. Maruyama explains:

> Therefore in order to maintain the primacy of innate naturalness over human invention, while avoiding any ideal absolutization of Nature itself, there was no alternative but to posit a superhuman, absolute personality behind innate nature, as its foundation. Thus Norinaga introduced the theory of "*Nature as the invention of the Gods.*"[10]

Both Sorai's sage and Norinaga's gods were, in different terms, transcendent subjects. Such invocations of transcendence were a logical sine qua non: only a superhuman could have constructed the cosmos. Thus the question of the transcendental was not easily overcome. Meanwhile, in the discourse of the 1950s, it was commonplace to short-circuit the whole issue. Subjectivity was blended into Nature, while as a limiting case the human being was nonetheless entitled to act as the agent of creative artifice.

In broad terms, therefore, one might interpret the pursuit of Japan-ness spelled out in the "Overcoming Modernity" debate as Japanese tradition *qua* Nature overcoming Western modernity *qua* artifice. But at this point Tange attempted to sabotage the equivalence. In his creation versus tradition essay quoted above, he was clearly on the side of modernist *sakui* and even declares his intention to destroy Japanese tradition once and for all. On this premise, and by openly espousing the new brutalism, Tange completed his Yoyogi aquatic stadia (1964; fig. 4.1) for the Tokyo Olympics,



4.1 National Olympic Stadium complex, Yoyogi, Tokyo, by Kenzō Tange (1961–1964).

a state undertaking that in every way signals the postwar era in Japan. This work embodies Dionysian dynamism, and furthermore, the gigantic suspended roof structure is so Japanese as to remind us of the great hall of Tōdai-ji in Nara. The National Olympic Stadium complex, then, would seem to prove the paradox that the destruction of tradition, which Okamoto had spoken of in somewhat ironic terms, was the most positive way of rehabilitating the traditional. It was a landmark creation of substantial uniqueness, no longer relying on a subexotic Japonica, nor even upon identifiable brutalist themes borrowed from Le Corbusier at Chandigarh. Tange's iconic work marks the high point in the Japanese reception of modernist practice as regards the problematic of Japan-ness.

The very fact of being a state-sponsored project speaks to the nature of this problematic. All of Tange's major projects and works—the Greater East Asia Memorial Building, the Atomic Bomb Memorial Park, Hiroshima, and now the Yoyogi Olympic complex (1964)—had addressed themes that enabled the nation of Japan to express its will in a sequence of political climates. And the appraisal of Tange as the architect most adept at satisfying and expressing the will of the nation still persists. One should probably also interpret Tange's desire to produce Expo '70 in Osaka as his intention to discharge this perceived responsibility as state architect. But, as it turns out, no trace of the Japan-ness problematic was visible in this exposition. For by this time the state was losing hold of any theme on behalf of which to express itself. The postwar economic recovery had succeeded, and the rehabilitated nation-state could be called a techno-giant. This nation-state brought into being by the Meiji Restoration came at last to be represented in its economy and technology, no longer by its traditions or culture. Expo '70 was the thematic turning point at which the Japan-ness problematic began to metamorphose drastically, or more succinctly, merely to decompose.

Hence, beginning in 1970, Kenzō Tange, after following a straight party line of Japan-ness as subscribed to by the nation, had suddenly to work without a theme. Japan no longer required an architect who represented the state. Therefore, like the popes who dismissed Michelangelo for a period of time, or deserted Francesco Borromini on a whim, the Japanese state abandoned Tange. He went, so to say, into exile, being invited by royalty to work in the newly rich oil-producing countries, like Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini coaxed to France as a guest of the nation to design the Louvre palace in Paris. After completing not a few literal palaces, and the like, in more than twenty countries, Tange returned to Japan, this time to work as a thoroughly commercial architect.

Twenty years before his exile, Tange had chosen to stand on the side of artifice—"the space that humans wrested from Nature"—as opposed to "the space that is given by Nature." He is still remembered for introducing (or *re*introducing) the architect as a modern subject in the role of protagonist in a supposedly *jinen*-dominant Japan. That is, the human as universal subject—a mythical yet real protagonist as opposed to Sorai's sage or Norinaga's gods, these having been hitherto the only protomodern transcendent subjects.

I worked in Tange's studio for ten years after the mid-1950s, and was a partner for ten years after that. During that time, I was deeply fascinated to hear his clear advocacy of the modern subject as the originator of imagination. Historically, this subject was a stranger who had come from the West at the onset of our reception of modernity. To become this modern subject in Japan was to view Japan—one's own origin—by taking up the role of a stranger; it was to understand the Japanese self as Other. Even Chūta Itō, who was able to see that the buildings of Ise Jingū must have originated in some more southerly climate, had spoken from the stance of the modern West, despite his later fanatical nationalism. In the case of Tange, the architect besought the locus of artifice (intention), while somewhere in himself he had always been strongly drawn to "nature" in the sense of Saigyō. This was evident in his essay on Ise, written after *Katsura*, in the mid-1960s, for by that time he had begun to shift his point of view from the material/constructivist theory of the architectonic back to the spatial/performative theory of environment.

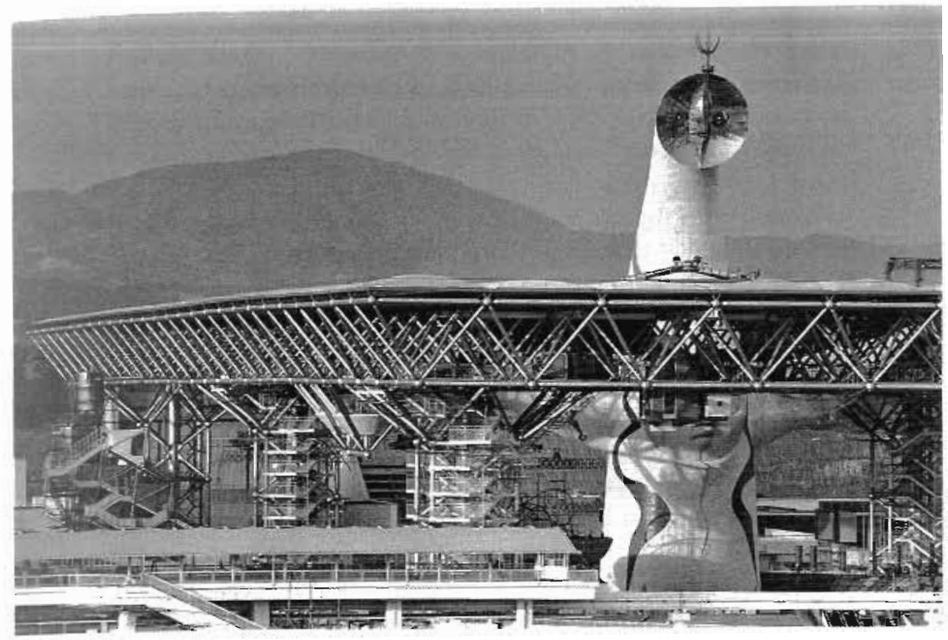
> The ancient Japanese sought their symbols and divine images in nature—in rocks, trees, and water. This way of looking at nature is still at the very core of the spiritual make-up of Japanese today.
>
> Ise came into being through the sublimation of symbols into a basic form. The final achievement of the quintessential form represented by Ise also meant the completion of the corpus of Japanese religious mythology and approximately coincided with the end of the process of melding the Japanese people into a whole. The vigorous conceptual ability of the ancient Japanese who fashioned the form of Ise was sustained by the energies released during the nation-building process. The form of Ise partakes of the primordial essence of the Japanese people. To probe this form and the way it came into being is to go to the very foundations of Japanese culture.[11]

Buildings themselves were no longer even spoken of. Tange gradually transposes the grounds for appreciating Ise to anthropology,

deploying recent achievements in historiography and archaeology. He wrote, "Out of it, out of nature's darkness, the rigorous conceptual ability of the ancient Japanese gradually fashioned various symbols of the spirit culminating in the creation of the form of Ise. Here primeval darkness and eternal light, the vital and the aesthetic, are in balance, and a world of harmony with nature unfolds."[12] Previously, from the point of view of a will to artifice (intention), he had been critical of Japanese architecture as passive before Nature; in this appreciation of Ise, he still followed the modernist ideal, yet now grasped its architecture as a world in harmony with nature, tending toward an appreciation of the Saigyō-esque gratitude and awe. Simply put, his loyalties were split.

In fact the proof of this divide, such as it appeared at the time, was the advent of a *new* Japan-ness at Expo '70. As the producer of the entire event, Tange also had to oversee the design of the central space, Omatsuri Hiroba (Festival Plaza), rather than the less centrally placed Japanese pavilion. Taro Okamoto joined the team as thematic director with the result that Okamoto's giant sculpture, *Taiyō no Tō* (Tower of the Sun), penetrated the big roof of the modernist space frame (fig. 4.2) covering the plaza. This was a clash of differences—modern versus anti-modern. I designed the devices for staging grand events in Festival Plaza, and was one of the supporters of having a huge roof. But alas, when at last I saw Okamoto's tower (looking like a giant phallus) penetrating the soft membrane of the roof, I thought to myself that the battle for modernity had finally been lost. The primordial—which Tange had poetically cast as "primeval darkness and eternal light"—ended up as bombastic kitsch, in all too candid a manner. The smiling mask affixed to the tower felt somewhat eerily like a presiding alien—upsetting enough by itself. But, what was worse, you had to acknowledge the fact that Japan-ness was so omnipresent and in such a sad way. In the thirty years since, the predicament has come clear: the big roof was demolished, and only the vulgar Tower of the Sun remains—in fearful witness to the final celebration of the state, Japan.

Thus far I have attempted to sketch the history of Japan-ness, which the island nation of Japan constructed in the process of assimilating modern architecture in the roughly thirty years from the 1930s to the end of the 1960s. Thereafter, until the late 1980s, the world was polarized beneath a sublime nuclear umbrella. Be-



4.2 Festival Plaza by Kenzō Tange, with *Taiyō no Tō* (Tower of the Sun) by Tarō Okamoto, at Expo '70 in Osaka. Photograph by Shinchōsha Press, Tokyo.

tween the defeat of the worldwide "cultural revolution" (1968) and the destruction of the Berlin Wall (1989), the epoch customarily known as postmodern, demarcation of the traditional line separating interior and exterior in this insular nation has been altogether transformed. Throughout the period, the gaze of Japan-ness has been redirected from within to without. I also participated in this process of reorientation.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, cultural space around the world has been redesignated as a series of archipelagos, as it were, with multiple centers. Inevitably, the insular Japan has become one of these mutually heterogeneous configurations. That is to say that the very border that once gave substance to Japan-ness has been decomposing. Now it must be observed that the problematic of cultural identity exists in a new form: mutual exchanges across oceans, the *intermundia* (of Epicurus, or of Marx), and the space-in-between communities—all that was previously deemed void. The autonomy of such island groupings is no longer assured by a

dialectic of internal and external gaze, let alone any physical boundary. There is no more need to flaunt our cultural identity (whether Japan-ness, or Englishness, or Germanness, or Frenchness, or something else). Within the cultural space organized between our newly delineated archipelagos, the problematic of nationhood has at last been rendered obsolete. Now it is events occurring over the sea or in space—no longer merely those happening on land—that are likely to be problematized.

Ka (Hypothesis) and *Hi* (Spirit)

The theme of the eighth of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM 8), which took place in 1951, was "Heart of the City: Towards the Humanization of Urban Life." The invitation was a call for strategies enabling modern architects to contribute to reconstruction of cities bombed during the war. From Japan, Kunio Maekawa and Kenzō Tange traveled to Hoddesdon, England, presenting Tange's scheme for the Hiroshima Peace Center. Reflecting and responding to the climate of the time, the project and its theme garnered tremendous support.

In traditional Western cities, the plaza has often provided a core. Notably, in the first half of the twentieth century morphological analysis of the town was conducted by the Austrian Camillo Sitte, among others. Those architects who gathered at CIAM in 1951 were about to undertake a reconstruction of the traditional urban plan. Le Corbusier's proposed radical restructuring of Paris and Hilberseimer's proposal for Berlin, both of the 1920s, prophesied that the concentric structure of the city center familiar since late medieval times was no longer functional. Moreover, during the 1930s and 40s, the significance of the city center had shifted from an intimate space framing and nurturing everyday life, and full of nostalgia, to the focus of political events, such as rallies and demonstrations. Recalling only a few such events, there had been the Nazis' mass rally at Nuremberg, the Rockefeller Center Plaza parade to celebrate the Allied victory in World War II, and the annual May Day celebration in Red Square in Moscow—and, much closer to our time, the Tiananmen Square declaration in Beijing. The masses gathered in plazas and squares were no longer acquaintances meeting in the intimate center of a traditional community but multitudes of David Riesman's "lonely crowd."[1]