

THE GOLDEN AND SILVER PAVILIONS

Kitayama Culture and the Golden Pavilion

Following the first military government (shogunate) founded by Yoritomo in the late twelfth century, a second such administration was established by the Ashikaga family in 1338, and the two centuries and more of its existence are known as the Muromachi period (1338–1573). One of the finest examples of the architecture of the Ashikaga is the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku), built in 1398 by the third Ashikaga shōgun, Yoshimitsu (fig. 32). It was part of a sumptuous villa complex located in Kyōto's Northern Hills (Kitayama), and that area gave its name to the Kitayama culture of Yoshimitsu and his circle. The villa later became Rokuonji temple, and the pavilion is formally known as the Relic Hall (Shariden).

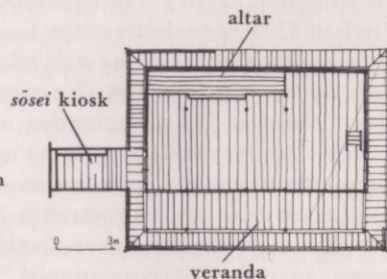
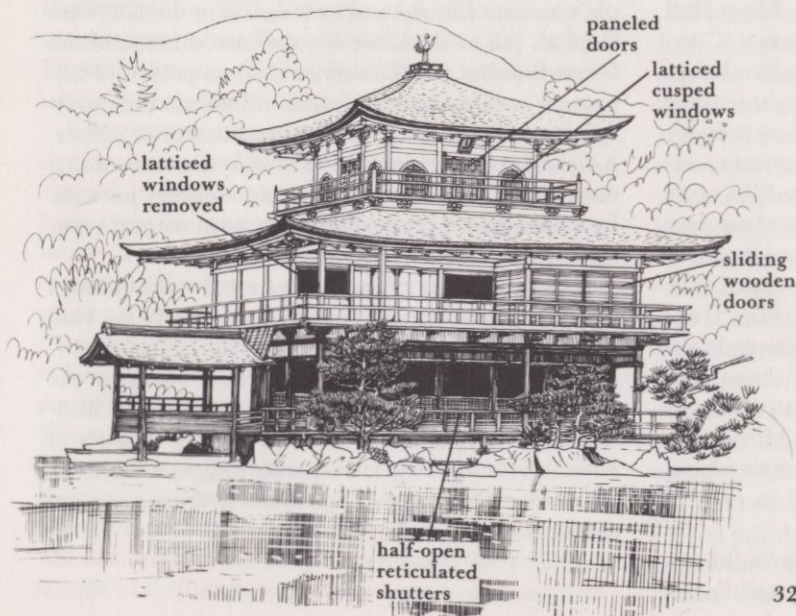
A three-story structure, the Golden Pavilion is built over the villa's spacious pond and casts its reflection in the water before it, to startlingly beautiful effect. The first floor of the building (fig. 33), named the Chamber of Dharma Waters (Hōsuiin), is built in residential style. Above it, designed as a Buddha hall in the Japanese style, the Tower of the Sound of Waves (Chōonkaku) houses an image of the Bodhisattva Kannon. The third story, the Cupola of the Ultimate (Kukyōchō), is in the Zen style of architecture and holds an Amida triad and twenty-five Bodhisattvas.

The Golden Pavilion, the sole survivor of Yoshi-

mitsu's villa complex, was destroyed by arson in 1950. It was rebuilt in 1955, however, and is a near-perfect re-creation of the original.

Higashiyama Culture and the Silver Pavilion In 1484, nearly a century after the construction of the Golden Pavilion, the eighth Ashikaga shōgun, Yoshimasa, began work on his own villa in the Eastern Hills (Higashiyama) of Kyōto. Consciously basing his villa concept on the Kitayama complex of his predecessor, Yoshimasa continued work on his mansion and garden until his death in 1490, at which time it was converted into a temple and renamed Jishōji. Two of its structures remain today, the Silver Pavilion (formally called the Kannon Hall, or Kannonnden; fig. 34) and a building for private worship, the Hall of the Eastern Quest (Tōgudō or Tōgūdō). As is the case with the Golden Pavilion, the first floor of the Silver Pavilion, called the Hall of Emptied Mind (Shinkūden), is in residential style (fig. 35), and the top floor, the second, called as at the Golden Pavilion the Tower of the Sound of Waves (Chōonkaku), is influenced by the Zen style. Though Yoshimasa may have planned to cover his pavilion in silver leaf, there is no evidence that it was ever applied, and the building remains today of unpainted wood.

During the century that separated the Golden and Silver Pavilions, there were developments in residential spaces (to be discussed in Chapter 2) that are reflected in these two structures. This is particularly evident when the lower floors of the two structures are compared. The first story of the Golden Pavilion is based on the Shinden style of domestic architecture that first took shape in the mansions of the Heian-period nobility (see pp. 64–67). Such Shinden structures are planned around a large cen-

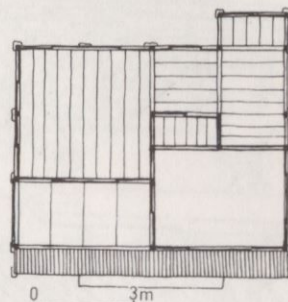


33. First floor, Golden Pavilion

32. Golden Pavilion



34. Silver Pavilion



35. First floor, Silver Pavilion

tral open area surrounded by peripheral rooms and verandas under the eaves. Walls are composed primarily of *shitomido*—large, two-part reticulated shutters. In the illustration of the Golden Pavilion (fig. 32), the upper halves of the *shitomido* have been raised parallel to the floor and hooked to the soffit above to let in light, but the bottom halves (which are removable) have been left in place between the posts. The second floor contains newer *mairado* sliding wooden doors as well as latticed windows. At the Silver Pavilion, though (fig. 34), the *shitomido* have been entirely replaced by sliding paper-covered screens (*shōji*) with high wooden wainscoting, a design which appears to have been developed in the latter part of the fifteenth century. It is not known whether the Silver Pavilion used these wainscoted *shōji* originally or whether it was fit with *shōji* and *mairado* in combination and then, later, redesigned with wainscoted *shōji*. But in either case, the absence of *shitomido* clearly reflects a later design. The plan, too, has abandoned the single open room for a combination of smaller spaces (compare figs. 33, 35), and this configuration continues in use hereafter.

Despite these differences, in overall conception both pavilions are based on that of the Saihōji temple and “moss garden” complex designed in 1339 by Musō Soseki (1275–1351). Working on the site of an older Pure Land temple, Musō constructed a dry landscape garden at the north and added Chinese elements to the original garden and pond to the south. His design revolutionized garden art and is

believed to have been inspired by the famous Sung-dynasty Zen text, *The Blue Cliff Record* (*Bi yan lu*). Its Lapis Lazuli Pavilion (*Ruriden*), which is no longer extant, was the model for both the Golden and the Silver Pavilions, and its Hall of the Western Arrival (*Sairaidō*) served as the inspiration for Yoshimasa’s Hall of the Eastern Quest. Yoshimasa’s garden pond is said to have once been large enough for pleasure boating, but the garden and temple grounds were reduced to their present dimensions in the Edo period (1600–1867).

The Kitayama (1367–1408) and Higashiyama (1443–90) periods, symbolized respectively by the Golden and Silver Pavilions, mark the two cultural high points of the Muromachi era. The culture of the periods was strongly based on Chinese taste, much of which was introduced through the agency of Zen monks. It was informed as well, though, by native ideals, and much of what we think of today as the quintessence of the Japanese artistic experience, for example, the tea ceremony, ink painting, and the Nō drama, reached fruition during these years. It was also the time in which some of Japan’s most famous landscape gardens were made, including not only that at Saihōji but also the rock gardens of Ryōanji and the Daisen’in of Daitokuji and the pond garden of Tenryūji, the last another creation of Musō Soseki.

The basic concept of a multistoried garden pavilion overlooking a pond continued to be influential even after the Muromachi period. One of the finest extant later examples is the Hiunkaku Pavilion in the garden of Nishi Honganji in Kyōto, now thought to have probably been built some time between 1615 and 1624.