**HAA 18j: Japanese Architecture**

Lecture 10: Ginkakuji and Shoin Architecture

**Names and Terms**

Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-1490); Hosokawa warlords; Onin War (1467-1477)

*shoin* (“study”) architecture; *shōji* (paper screens); *hōjō* (abbot’s quarters for Zen temple)

**Buildings Mentioned**

Abbot’s Quarters (Hōjō), Ryōgin’an, a subtemple of Tōfukuji Monastery, 1387, Kyoto

**Ginkakuji (Temple of the Silver Pavilion), 1482-1490**

Ginkakuji is a **Kannon Hall** built by **Ashikaga Yoshimasa** as a part of his **Higashiyama Villa**. The Higashiyama Villa included no *shinden* structures but only semi-private buildings for personal use and small-scale gatherings. Ginkakuji is a two-story building with a double pyramidal roof with cypress-bark shingles and one-step brackets. Despite its name, no silver leaf was ever applied to the structure.

**Tōgudō (“Hall of the Eastern Quest”), 1482-1490**

Aside from Ginkakuji, the Tōgudō is the only other structure to survive from

Yoshimasa’s Higashiyama Villa. It is a one-story building with a cypress bark-shingled

hip-and-gable roof. The Tōgudō is an Amida Hall, and its name (“Hall of the Eastern

Quest”) suggests that the hall and worshippers therein are situated in the East but seeking

salvation in the Amida’s Western Pure Land. Along with its religious function, the

Tōgudō also includes rooms once reserved for Yoshimasa’s private use and hosting. The

building is notable for measuring its dimensions in terms of tatami mats (roughly two by

one meters) instead of bays, and for its spatial arrangements into rooms, both departing

from shinden custom. Also notable are the use of square pillars, as well as sliding-door

panels and shōji (paper screens) as partitions. The four-and-a-half-mat **Dōjinsai (“Room**

**of Mutual Benevolence”)** is perhaps the most famous room in Japanese architectural

history, because of its associations with the early history of the tea ceremony and its

status as the earliest surviving example of shoin architecture. Its built-in desk, alcove,

and staggered shelves combine the display paradigms of the Zen Buddhist altar and

Chinese scholar’s studio, and

**Characteristics of Shoin Architecture**

• tatami (*jō*) becomes basic unit instead of bay

• *tatami* fixed in place for interior flooring

• square pillars instead of round pillars

• spatial arrangement by rooms

• partitioning consists of sliding-door panels on the interior, plaster and *shōji* (paper-sheathed

doors) for the exterior

• some furniture and display components built into rooms, including fitted desks, staggered

shelves, and recessed alcoves (later evolve into *tokonoma*)