

## Traditional Japanese Architecture

**CourseNo:** ARCHA4344\_001\_2014\_1

**Instructor Information:**

Kunio Kudo

### ***COURSE OBJECTIVES: Finding the form of tradition***

**Nature, Law and Rules:** The objective of this course is to find the form of Japanese tradition, both macro- and micro-, with many contradictions. Various "at- one-hand and at the other hand " paradoxes (as Ruth Benedict described) show the nature of Japanese complexities. It is the world of "to be AND not to be." It is an anti-Hamlet zone. In the Hamlet's world, you have to constantly decide "to be or not to be" " black or white", otherwise you have to die. While in Japan, you don't have to die with your contradictions or inconsistency. However, this thesis itself may invite the counter- thesis, and you HAVE to die to prove your consistency. Rules there do not come from "words" or " concepts" . They come from Nature, It is the Law before human logos come in. And their evaluations and judgements are often done by aesthetics, i.e., " whether they are beautiful of not beautiful" rather than right or wrong.

### **Continuity, Contradiction, Compactization:**

Buildings, cities and artifacts are the best specimen to trace what kind of cultural forces were performed behind them. Layers of contradictions and complexities in Japanese culture reveal themselves in their built forms. It was formed by elements which had been brought by extremely different people from different regions, in different time period, even including the earliest Sumer civilization, and was developed and evolved in very limited spaces in an isolated archipelago, the far most remote East of the Eurasian continent, without major physical disruption by foreign troops. This continuity and compactization produced profound harmony from organic unity, which thrilled and galvanized Frank Lloyd Wright, Bruno Taut, Corbusier and Mies, as well as Van-Gogh, Lautrec or Degas.

**Small, Simple, Smart:** As the result of continuous evolution in an isolated space, Japan made her land and people and all the built-facts and environment so perfectly organic; small, simple . smart, and clean, green, and lean, all the credos for sustainability.

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION**

The class runs twice a week, two hours each, concluding in seven weeks.

The class consists of Kudo's lectures and student's research and presentation. Lecture topics are wide and varied, including **historical and geographical limits**, three **major cultural heritages**, i.e. Shinto, Buddhism and Zen, **building typologies**; Shinto shrines, Buddhism temples, aristocrate residences (Shinden-zukuri, Shoin-zukuri, sukiya-zukuri), **castles**, **farmer's house (minka)**, **town house(machiya)**, and **tea-house**, **tecton and tectonic**, **scale, module and measurement**.

We will visit an authentic tea ceremony place in New York (**Urasenke Chanoyu Center**)

) built in Kyoto first, then decomposed and recomposed in New York, and exercise the cult practice of tea.

Students (individual or group) are required to pick up a specific theme, topic, curtain building or building type to do substantial research to make presentations in class (occasionally with guest critics ). A special consultation will be scheduled for selecting topics, resources and methods of a research.

The final task of individual students is a ten-page ( or longer ) thesis due by **May 16, 2014 at 5 pm**.

## **SYLLABUS**

### **1.22 Section 1** *COURSE INTRODUCTION*

Presentation of the scope of study, research materials, expected achievement.

#### **Readings:**

[Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings](#): Volume I, 1894-1930 by Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer.

The Japanese Print: An Interpretation 116

The Print and the Renaissance 148

The New Imperial Hotel 162

#### **General Reference:**

Nishi; Hozumi, [What is Japanese Architecture?](#) Translated by H. Mack Horton. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha

International, Ltd., 1985.

Roland Barthes, [The Empire of the Signs](#). Translated by Richard Howard. Illustrated. 128 pp. New York: Hill & Wang.

O-Young Lee, [Smaller is Better: Japan's Mastery of the Miniature](#). Translated by, Robert N. Huey. Kodansha International, 1984.

Kevin Nute, [Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright](#). New York: Routledge, 2000.

### **1.28 Section 2 AN OUTLINE OF JAPANESE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY**

Japanese architectural history to be briefed by the tutor: Until the late 19th century, the Japanese history was a local and least visible event on the globe. It was a slow, gentle, and gradual evolution in an isolated island for two thousands years or more. It is a Galapagos of cultural evolution of built environment, compared with two hundred years in American history of dramatic changes. It will be understood how people, things, society, spaces, ideas, architecture and landscape have been organically woven in this long and slow process.

#### **Readings:**

John Whitney Hall, [Japan, from prehistory to modern times](#). New York, Delacorte Press, 1970.

Robert Treat Paine and Alexander Soper, [The Art and Architecture of Japan, Part II](#), Pelican History of Art Series, Penguin Books, 1981.

[Chronology and Graphic / Heijokyo, Heiankyo & Edo](#)

#### **Further Readings:**

Botond Bogner, Contemporary Japanese Architecture, Chapter 2, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1985.

Mitsuo Inoue, The Space of Japanese Architecture. -John W. Hall, Japan: From Pre-history to Modern Times, Delacorte Press, New York, 1970.

Arthur Drexler, The Architecture of Japan, The Museum of Modern Art, 1954.

Augustin Berquet, Vivre L'Espace au Japon, Presses Universitaires de France, 1982.

**Class PPT:** [Japonisme](#)

### **1.29 Section 3: CULTURAL CONTEXT**

The Japanese and Japanese things often appear to be contradictory. They seem to remain very naïve on the one hand, and very sophisticated on the other hand. Look at Sushi making and serving by a trained chef. So is Cha-no-yu ritual. They are life-long devotion toward perfection called Michi or Doh on some thing which were never be esteemed so high outside Japan. There are many other cases of "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" with Japanese people and culture. Ruth Benedict's study on Japanese started with this apparent contradiction of Japanese. Her classic but still unchallenged "The Chrysanthemum and the Sword" gives us the best perspective to understand the complexity, while Roland Barthes's Empire of Signs exhibits the most sensitive way to read the text of Japanese culture. Reischauer provides a well-balanced and general picture about the Japanese history and society.

#### **Readings:**

Ruth Benedict, [The Chrysanthemum and the Sword](#), New American Library, 1974.

Roland Barthes (translated to English by Richard Howard), [The Empire of Signs](#), Hill and Wang, New York, 1982.

O-Young Lee, [Smaller is Better: Japan's Mastery of the Miniature](#). Translated by, Robert N. Huey. Kodansha International, 1984.

#### **Further Readings:**

Edwin O. Reischauer, The Japanese, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1977.

### **2.4 Section 4: THE SHINTO TRADITION AND SHRINES**

White was the most dominant "color" in Japan before. White paper defines Shinto shrine's sanctuaries, and white salt stands for purification. This purity obsession goes to the stainless personality, spotless organization or zero-defect products notion. These Japanese virtues are rooted in Shinto, Japanese

indigenous religion. But Shinto practice is less visible in daily life today than Buddhism which was imported and implanted in Japanese soil the sixth century. However Shinto suddenly emerges visible when something is born, such as when a New Year comes, a baby is born, a building is built, or wedding. While when a year ends, or someone dies, they go to Buddhist temples. The Japanese's fundamental instincts to organic simplicity such as Japanese joinery by godly craftsmanship can be attributed to the Shinto tradition, later enhanced by the zen movement.

**Readings:**

William Coldrake, [Architecture and Authority in Japan: The Grand Shrines of Ise and Izumo](#), New York: Routledge, 1996.

Gunter Nitschke, "[Shime: Binding/Unbinding](#)", *Architectural Design*, Vol. 44, No. 12, pp. 747-791, 1974.

Kenzo Tange and Noboru Kawazoe, Ise: [The Prototype of Japanese Architecture](#), Asahi Shinbun, 1959.

**Further Readings:**

Yasutada Watanabe, *Shinto Art: Ise and Izumo Shrines*, translated by Robert Rickette, Heibonsha Series of Japanese Art, Weatherhill /Heibonsha, 1974.

**2.5 Section 5: ISE SHRINE**

The Ise-Jingu or Ise Shrine is a Japanese Acropolis, a complex of varied shrine dedicated to Shinto Gods and Goddess located in the deep wood of full of the Sun at central area of the archipelago. Among associated buildings, the Naiku (Inner Shrine) dedicated to Goddess Amaterasu (Sun Light) and Geku (Outer Shrine) for Toyouke harvest deity are great example of the Classic State of building evolution in the Hegelian Dialectic Aesthetics where the Symbolic State, the Classic State and the Expression State appears as a thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The Naiku is an ideal building embodied what Architecture should be in very true Western classic building ethics and aesthetics, a perfect model of Framtonian true tectonic. It is a true building from Building Truth.

**Readings:**

William Coldrake, [Architecture and Authority in Japan: The Grand Shrines of Ise and Izumo](#), New York: Routledge, 1996.

Kenzo Tange and Noboru Kawazoe, "[Ise : the prototype of Japanese Architecture](#)," Asahi Shinbun, 1959.

[Graphics: Ise](#)

[Graphics: Itsukushinia Shrine](#)

**Further Readings:**

Yasutada Watanabe, "Shinto Art: Ise and Izumo Shrines" translated by Robert Ricketts, Heibonsha series of Japanese Art, Volume 3, Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1974.

**Class PPT:**

[Shinto & Ise](#)

**2.11 Section 6: BUDDHIST TRADITION AND TEMPLES**

Traditional Japanese architecture as well as her culture is heavily colored by Buddhism. In the sixth century, Japan imported Buddhism to achieve the Sinoization, a civilization scale conversion of her land and institution and achieved domestic hegemony and held stronger position in the world geopolitics then. Through this process Japan effort her best to import, digest and naturalize Chinese construction system and design. It was done so successful that even the Japanese can not distinguish what is a result of the Japanese indigenous tradition and what is a result of the Chinese heritage.

**Readings:**

Alexander Soper, [The Art and Architecture of Japan, Part II](#), Pelican History of Art Series, Penguin Books, 1981.

Chapter 18: Buddhist Architecture of the Asuka and Nara Periods

William Coaldrake, [Architecture and Authority in Japan: Great Halls of Religion and State](#), New York: Routledge, 1996.

Seiichi Mizuno, *Asuka Buddhist Art : Horyuji*, The Heibonsha Survey of Art Series, Weatherhill/Heibonsha.

Tsuyoshi Kobayashi, *Nara Buddhism Art: Todaiji*, The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art series, Vol. 5, Weatherhill/Heibonsha.

Toshio Fukuyama, *Heian Temples: Byodo-in and Chusonji*, The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art series, Vol. 9, Weatherhill/ Heibonsha.

**2.12 Section 7: ZEN AND RELATED AESTHETICS AND ETHICS**

The Japanese tend to define key concepts by a single noun such as Wabi, Sabi, Yugen, Yiki, or Ma, and fail to explain them further. The Japanese also put a great deal of emphasis on values not held esteem in the West, such as the value of impermanency, perishability, void space, a lonely half deserted scene, or of a frog jumping into an old pond (Basho). So-what-? simplicity of Haiku's way of depiction grinded French linguist Roland Barthe. Apparent effortless pristine graphic representations of daily life trivial to popular scenic to hardcore porn to super natural utterly knocked down European Expressionists and Modernists, including Van Gogh, Gouguin, Doga, and Lautrec who did effort to liberate their arts from salon and academy establishments. Van Gogh cut his ear to struggle to reach to precision of Japanese art. All those are related

to Zen practice in Japan, a threshold between to-be and not-to-be, a realm beyond good or bad / right and wrong. Especially an insane monk named Ikku contributed to this culminated Zen practice in arts including Zeami in Noh, Rikyu in Tea and Basho in Haiku.

#### **Readings:**

Reginald Horace Blyth, [Haiku](#), 1949-1952, in four volumes, Volume 1: Eastern Culture. Volume 2: Spring. Volume 3: Summer-Autumn. Volume 4: Autumn-Winter. The Hokuseido Press.

Faubion Bowers, [Japanese Theatre](#), Vermont, Charles E. Tuttle Company.

Heinrich Dumoulin, [Zen Enlightenment: Origins and Meaning](#), Weatherhill -Faubion Bowers, Japanese Theatre, Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1974.

**Graphics:** [Tai-an Tea Room and Diagrams](#)

Arthur Lindsay Sadler, [Cha-no-yu: the Japanese tea ceremony](#), J.L. Thompson & co., Ltd, 1934.

Daisetz T. Suzuki, [Zen and Japanese Culture](#), Bollinger Series, Princeton Press, 1973.

Yuzan Daidoji, [The Code of the Samurai](#), Translated by A.L. Sadler, Vermont, Charles E. Tuttle Company.

#### **Further Readings:**

Inazo Nitobe, Bushido- The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought, Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1969.

Okakura Kakuzo, The Book of Tea (Cha-no-Hon), Company, 1956, or Dover Publications, 1964.

Seami Motokiyo, "The Art of the Noh," translated by Ryusaku Tsunoda and Donald Keene, Anthology of Japanese Literature, ed. by Donald Keene, Grove Press, 1955.

Kamono Chomei (translated by Donald Keene) "An Account of My Hut," (Hojoki) Anthology of Japanese Literature, ed. by Donald Keene, Grove Press, 1955.

Zeami Motokiyo, "The Art of the Noh," translated by Ryusaku Tsunoda and Donald Keene, Anthology of Japanese Literature, ed. by Donald Keene, Grove Press, 1955.

Kakuzo Okakura, The Book of Tea (Cha-no-Hon), Charles Tuttle Company, 1955, or Dove Publications, 1964.

Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, In Praise of Shadow -Yasunari Kawabata, the Beautiful Japan and Myself (Utsukushi Nihon no watashi ), Nobel prize acceptance speech, translated by Edward G. Seidensticker, Kodansha, Tokyo, 1969.

Arata Isozaki, MA: Space-Time in Japan, Catalogue to the exhibit at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, 1979.

Gunter Nitschke, "MA: The Japanese Sense of Space" Architectural Design, March 1956, pp.117-157.

#### **You Tube:**

Noh

[Clip1](#) [Clip2](#) [Clip3](#) [Clip4](#)

Kyudo

[Clip1](#) [Clip2](#) [Clip3](#) [Clip4](#)

My Teacher

[Clip1](#) [Clip2](#)

### **2.18 Section 8: KATSURA RIKYU (DETACHED PALACE) Part one:**

The Main Compound and Garden The beauty and truth of the Katsura villa was rediscovered and reborn in the international stage of limelight by a German exile architect Bruno Taut in 1933. He appraised and broadcasted this shamble fragile wooden and paper structures and gardens as the best architectures in the Modernism paradigm. It was a pity, however, that Japanese didn't appreciate Taut's vision of true architecture about the buildings they discarded as ancient regime's legacy, with embracing Bauhaus white cube Modernism. Analysis of formal residential style (Shoin-zukuri) and its deviations. Myth of Japanese-ness related to the Taut issues in Japanese Modernism.

#### **Readings:**

**Graphics:** [Gedanken nach dem Besuch in Katsura. Bruno Taut](#)

**Graphics:** [Katsura Imperial Village](#)

#### **Further Readings:**

Bruno Taut, "Houses and peoples of Japan" Tokyo, 1937, -Walter Gropius and Kezo Tange, "Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture", 1960.

Akira Naito. "Katsura: A princely Retreat", (Translated by Charles S. Terry) Kodansha International, 1977.

#### **Class PPT:**

[KATSURA: Stream of Consciousness 1 of 2](#)

[KATSURA: Stream of Consciousness 2 of 2](#)

**2.19 Section 9: KATSURA RIKYU Part II :Shokin- tei, Gepparo and Other Tea Houses,**  
Katura Riku consists of main compound where princes maintained their daily life and a strolling garden with a lake and a necklace of five tea houses where they enjoyed creating meaning of their retreated life.  
Analysis of Sukiya style tea rooms, the Path-Goal route and Roji Garden (Dewy Path)

**2.25 Section 10:Origin of Japanese Space/ Shinden-zukuri , Shoin-zukuri , and Sukiya-zukuri**  
Shinden-zukuri, Shoin-zukuri, and Sukiya-zukuri styles using ancient picture scrolls including the Genji Story. Genji Story, the Tale of Genji or Genji Monogatari is the world renowned romantic saga of Hikaru Prince and his Imperial family written by Murasaki Shikibu in the early 11th century, which is the world's first presentation of stream of consciousness in the human history and regarded as predecessor of James Joyce or Marcel Proust. Along with its psychological description, it shows details of their way of life and environments. That is why it became a treasure for architectural researchers with together related picture scroll's illustrations. The period was the high time of the Heian aristocracy in Kyoto and the time of matured Japanese, independent from China's cultural/ political domination. Since a whole scale switching from Japanese to Chinese civilization in the 6th to 7th century, Japanese building practice was history of absorbing, digesting and appropriating of Chinese buildings. Through the process, Japanese achieved spaces free from structure, efficient and environmentally friendly spaces and tectonics, which is the so called "Japanese house and garden " that would respect and enjoy today. We will research detail stories how it happened and evolved, especially their specific pattern languages of behavior(positions and movements in the space), called MA(間), BA(場), and ZA(座) .

**Sat. 3.9 (Final Date TBD) Section 11/ make-up: TOUR TO THE URASENKE CHANOYU CENTER**  
Observation of authentic Japanese tea rooms which was built in Kyoto by a legend Tea Master Rikyu's school Urasenke , decomposed to building elements and reassembled in New York. It is no-wonder practice, as traditional Japanese construction is principally pre-fabrication. No nails.) Students may have a chance to participate to exercise its original meticulous tea ritual to understand the fact that Style Evokes Truth. The Urasenke Chanoyu Center : 153 East 69th Street, (Between Lexington and 3rd Avenue) Telephone: 212-988-6161

**You Tube:**

[Clip1](#) Japanese Tea Ceremony in Manhattan: *A Living Theory*

[Clip2](#) Japanese Tea Ceremony

[Clip3](#) Japanese Tea in America

**2.26 Section 13: RYONANJI AND OTHER JAPANESE GARDENS**

Garden is an expression of ideal land of each nation. For Japanese aristocrats and intellectuals in the Middle age, China was their land of adoration. Through Chinese paintings, they imagined and imported Chinese landscape in their court yards. First it was the southern faced yard in front of aristocrate Shinden-zukuri mansions, gradually applied in the smaller court yard at side of study and reception for abot (Shoin). Here they elevated their adoration to the level of ideal Zen land, creating landscape with sand and stone (Kare-Sansui or dry garden) or moss only.

**Readings:**

[Daissenji, Kyoto: Graphics](#)

David A. Slawson, [Secret Teaching in the Art of Japanese Garden](#), New York, Kodansha International Ltd., 1961.

**Further Readings:**

Mitchell Brin and Josse Wayembergh, "Japanese Gardens" , McGrawhill.

**3.4 Section 14: WOOD CULTURE, DAIKU AND TOOLS**

Serious Japanese builders used to buy a mountain instead of buying lumbers. The reason was that they believed a life long indigenous collaboration among lumbers was essential to achieve a good building. They preferred harmony among elements rather than a rainbow team of star lumbers. Even an apparently inferior part of an inferior lumber had a role best to play in the society of lumbers. Some bent, some twist, some shrink, some are hard, some are soft. Daiku, a carpenter must find out what the best position of each part of each lumber of each place where they had happen to be produced. Daiku treats lumbers with awe and tools with divine. They wouldn't teach disciples by words. They show what they are on job and on life.

**Readings:**

S. Azby Brown, [The Genius of Japanese Carpentry](#), New York, Kodansha International Ltd., 1989.

Heinrich Engel, [Japanese House: A tradition for Contemporary Architecture](#), Charles Tuttle Company.

Kenneth Framton and Kunio Kudo, [Japanese Building Practice: Woven Form and Japanese Cosmology](#). Van

Nostrand Reinhold, 1997.

Nishi: [Kokenchiku-Nyumon](#)

Sato: [Shaji Kenchiku-no-Koho](#)

**Further Readings:**

William Coaldrake, *The Way of The Carpenter: Tools and Japanese Architecture*.

**3.5 Section 15 : TECTON & TECTONIC**

Traditional Japanese building was a set of prefabrications and of no nails. Buildings elements were pre-cut and coded according to the family secret Kiwari manual to be assembled at job site. Conceptually, Japanese land and space are modulated by Tatami size. Average people to professionals to builders conceive buildings in the identical matrix. It means that making building doesn't require creativity nor invention. It requires further perfection and quality. It is a auto- architect-builder system ever evolving toward perfection. It was a contradiction and conflict the Japanese had and still have to solve in modern times, achieving creation with quality.

**Readings:**

Kenneth Framton and Kunio Kudo, [Japanese Building Practice: Woven Form and Japanese Cosmology](#). Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1997.

Yasuo Nakahara, [Japanese Joinery](#), Vancouver, B.C., Cloudburst Press, 1983,1990.

Nishi: [Kokenchiku-Nyumon](#)

Sato: [Shaji Kenchiku-no-Koho](#)

**Further Readings:**

Heinrich Engel, *Japanese House: A tradition for Contemporary Architecture*, Charles Tuttle Company.

Edward Morse, *Japanese Home and Their Surroundings* , Charles Tuttle Company.

Kiyoshi Seike, *The Art of Japanese Joinery*, Weatherhill, 1977.

**3.11 Section 16: JAPANESE HERITAGE OVERSEA**

**Readings:**

Kevin Nute, [Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright](#). New York: Routledge, 2000.