A Study on Contemporary Japanese Architectural Design Ephemeral Space and Fragmented Urbanity

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論文 Article

A Study on Contemporary Japanese Architectural Design

Ephemeral Space and Fragmented Urbanity

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INTRODUCTION

I tried, in this research, to unfold some of the hidden concepts of Japanese architectural design and urban environment in order to comprehend the causes of these architectural varieties and tendencies.

In Chapter 1, I started, as a reference point, by studying foreign reviews, done by Western critics, concerning contemporary Japanese architecture. The source was articles written by these critics in three of the most famous architectural magazines, offering a variety of levels of analysis concerning the subject. Also, they represent a western point of view, being American or European. The actual state of Japanese architecture revealed some variety and multiplicity of concepts emanating from a traditional embedded behavior and a response to the changing urban environment.

In Chapter 2, I studied the actual state of Japanese urban environment, with all its fragmentation leading to confusion at first view. In order to do this, I drew some parallel concepts with the traditional Japanese understanding of urban space, which is still relevant today in many of its aspects. The main idea was to discover the hidden order behind the chaotic appearance of contemporary Japanese architecture, which responds to the city structure and environment.

In Chapter 3, the study of traditional rites (the *shimenawa* and the *Hakata Gion Yamakasa* festival in Fukuoka) revealed some certainties about the Japanese conceptualization of space. This helped us to understand more the hidden order, which is embedded in the social structure and the communities' activities. This behavior shapes the perception of space and human environment in Japan and, therefore, the expression of architecture.

The comparative study between the traditional concepts and the actual state clears, to a certain extent, some of the ambiguity surrounding the understanding of contemporary Japanese design. This study might help to extract meaning-generating conditions shaping the built environment of the future in Japan.

Much research has been done concerning Japanese architecture, the Japanese City (mainly Tokyo) and also the festivals. Links between architecture and the city seem to be a natural outcome and to consume a considerable number of papers. The association between the city and the festivals is a logical one due to the obvious physical influence, as these festivals are held in the city. As for the comparison and similarity of architecture with the festivals and traditional rites, this doesn't seem so evident. The relation being not physically visible, it is a conceptual and spatial relation. Very little research has been done concerning this subject.

The title, Ephemeral Space and Fragmented Urbanity, expresses the ambiguity of the identity of Japanese contemporary architectural design. Ephemeral space, or temporal space, is not seen in its materialistic built meaning. It is a feeling, specific to each architect, generated by various methods of design. It is also a general tendency in responding to the actual state of the city and its inhabitants. Fragmented urbanity reflects the feeling of chaos and disorder generated at first encounter with the Japanese urban environment. Throughout this research, an attempt to reveal a hidden order behind this chaos was made, and the prevailing feeling for the temporal, or the ephemeral, was conceptualized.

Throughout the paper, the quotations are of two kinds: "...", which quote an author or a borrowed expression, and '...', which is a stress on certain expressions of my own.

CHAPTER 1. CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE: WESTERN ANALYSIS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

This chapter will focus on the Western analysis and criticism of contemporary Japanese architecture. Many Western critics and architectural researchers have been trying to discover the hidden Japanese concepts of space. It is interesting for us, in this thesis, to analyze the approach made to understand a culture (Japanese) from a different (Western) perspective and state of mind. In order to do this, a general view of the evolution of contemporary Japanese architecture, as conditions affecting Western critics, will be made. Then we will be able to analyze these critics and their own evolution. Most of the articles discussed contemporary Japanese architecture at the time of their publication. Although some of them discussed traditional architecture, most of the time a comparison was made to focus on the contemporary one. Therefore, as we read about traditional Japanese architecture, it is in the intent of putting the contemporary architecture in perspective. In this research, by Japanese architecture we mean 'contemporary' Japanese architecture.

1.2. Procedure

1. I have chosen three of the main architectural magazines that are involved in architectural criticism, and reviewed the articles concerning Japanese architecture. The choice was made taking into consideration:

a. The geographical and cultural differences in the West itself (Europe and the United States). Standards, points of interest and approaches could be different between America and Europe.

b. The popularity and distribution of the magazines themselves. They are purchased in both academic and professional circles, which gives a wide perspective and a somewhat global point of view.

These magazines are: *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (France), *Architectural Design* (U.K.), and *Architectural Record* (U.S.A.)

2. A thorough analysis of all the articles was made in order to chart the evolution of Western criticism and its interest in Japanese architecture and its development.
3. Graphs were drawn relating the evolution of these interests and Japanese architecture's own evolution.
4. The analysis and conclusion will be based on the observation of these graphs and the contents of the articles, especially what is related to Japanese concepts of space.

2. ANALYSIS

After reviewing the articles concerning Japanese architecture in the three magazines, four types of graphs were drawn in order to organize the contents serving our purpose:

A) Description of the first type of graphs (Fig. 1.1,1.2,1.3):

- x-axis: the chronological order of the articles.
- Left y-axis: the number of pages of each article.
- Right y-axis: the categories of the articles.

The categories were classified as:

1. News: simple mentioning of architectural works, sometimes not exceeding a few lines.
2. Description: containing simple descriptions of projects and architectural works without deep analysis.
3. Analysis: discussing concepts and methods of design of architects and/or projects. Usually it goes deeper in the concept of the project, sources of ideas and analysis of the outcome.
4. Space Concepts: related to Japanese concepts of space as a theme by itself. Since it is my main concern, I created this category in order to trace the critics' interest in searching for the Japanese concepts as a theme, going beyond projects and architects.

These categories show how deep an article has gone into discussing Japanese architecture, and they were scaled regardless of the number of pages of each article. Aiming at the Japanese concepts of space, we could trace the articles from the most superficial to the most detailed.

B) Description of the third type of graphs (Fig. 1.4), a comparative analysis:

- x-axis: the chronological order of the articles, taken in years.
- y-axis: the number of articles for each year, for all three magazine.

C) Description of the fourth type of graphs (Fig. 1.5), a comparative analysis:

- x-axis: the chronological order of the articles.
- Left y-axis: the number of pages of each article.
- Right y-axis: the categories of the articles.

The trend lines of the evolution of the number of pages of articles concerning Japanese architecture were drawn. Also, the trend lines of the Category level evolution of these articles through time were drawn. A compilation of Fig. 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

- The magazines, *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, Architectural Design, and Architectural Record*, will be referred to as A.A., A.D. and A.R., respectively.

- Some authors are mentioned in the Notes section at the end of the chapters. These critics contributed in an effective way to the development of Western criticism, or had some interesting analysis concerning Japanese architectural concepts of space.

- Japanese concepts of space are taken from mainly two sources: a) the traditional architecture and b) the architect's feeling and own perception of space.

Therefore, in analyzing Japanese concepts of space, it is necessary to take into consideration the

personal thoughts of the architects who are, inevitably, influenced by their Japanese culture and tradition.

2.1. *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* Magazine [1]

2.1.a. Observations

Examining the articles and the graphs, the following observations were made:

- The ratio of issues discussing Japanese architecture to the total issues of the magazine is 9%.
- There is not much stress on foreign architects working in Japan. Most of the articles (95%) are about Japanese architects.
- Since the beginnings, special issues and leading articles have accessed Japanese architecture through analyzing the works and concepts of different architects individually, except a few articles.
- The deepest analyses are written during the 80's and the 90's (Fig. 1.1, Category 4). Perhaps it is due to the increasing diversity of architectural visions in Japan.
- In Fig. 1.1, the trend lines of the 'Category' data are ascending continuously. This shows that interest in Japanese architecture is still expanding.
- In this magazine, a number of leading articles were written by Japanese architects and critics. [2]

2.1.b. Discussion

- A.A. started early in a special issue (May 1956, pp.1-107) to explore the subject of Japanese aesthetics. A thorough informative analysis of temples' architecture, the Japanese garden, the tea house, etc. made a breakthrough in the understanding of Japan. Although there was no serious attempt to discover the concepts of space, I feel that from there on, most of the critics would try to refer to these discovered values in judging Japanese modern and contemporary architecture.
- Problems facing Japanese architecture, due to blind importation from the West, were elaborated in a special issue (Oct.-Nov. 1961, pp.1-15). According to the article, Japanese traditional houses have had a big influence on Western house design. But Japan wanted to adopt again the basic concepts of international dwellings, which don't correspond to its own way of living. So the Japanese life had a contradiction: exterior life in the Western way, and family life in the traditional way. We could see "hybrid results" (p.1).
- During the big glory of Expo'70, a special issue (Oct.-Nov. 1970, pp.98-112) featured an article harshly criticizing the Expo. We could see that the critics were getting more involved in evaluating Japanese architecture in a growing concern. According to the article, there was lack of respect to two important values: esthetics and ethics. One of the factors leading to the disrespect of public interest was the rise of an economic nationalism. This conditioned the urban space where the Japanese people are "floating" (p.112).
- In June 1985 (pp.63-76), a leading article titled "Looking for the lost space" recognizes that three architects, among others, are trying to re-organize and deconstruct the Western modernism in Japan: Itsuko Hasegawa, Osamu Ishiyama and Shin Takamatsu. For Hasegawa, abstraction of space and transparency between interior and exterior are evoked. For Ishiyama, there is a tendency towards ethnocentrism, a drawback to the origins of all those "de-rooted" Japanese (p.63). For Takamatsu, interior space is compressed to the point of suffocation. All these architects have preference for metallic materials. These kinds of spaces might mean an uncertainty of our time-space. This is why these architects are looking for "the lost space" (p.63).
- Again, in a special issue (April 1987, pp.3-55), a stress is made on the destruction of Western order. It is fusing through the cleavages, folds and raisings of metallic and fragmented surfaces, detachment in the unreal floating space of modernist signs. The ephemeral surface of the city with its fragmentation, its coexisting opposites, is drawing the new shapes of post-modernity. Seven architects are discussed from this point of view: Maki, Isozaki, Kurokawa, Takamatsu, Fujii, Ando and Hara. The latest works of Maki accomplish in architecture "a revolution comparable to that of Proust in the novel, or Klee in painting" (p.6). He brings to the surface a new form of reality: scattered, elliptical, with weak links and floating events. Isozaki's work shows the same obsession with cones, cubes and cylinders as that of Le Corbusier or Louis Kahn. But while for the great modern masters the Platonic shapes reflect thought oriented towards order, for Isozaki, these same figures are empty, devoid of internal substance. It is an ironical parody that presents itself as a dialogue between East and West. Kisho Kurokawa's work presents a coherency: "gray space" (p.23). His buildings are the result of a contemporary transposing of the baroque-style aesthetic of the *sukiya* (the tearoom). With Takamatsu, there is a vague space, indefinite and chaotic, from which sense is generated. Hiromi Fujii's works were structured around the theme of the effacing of conventional meanings in architecture. Ando's architecture lies in the way it enables static worlds to intermingle in superposition that leads the spectator to a mental space without limits. Hara's architecture effaces the limits between reality and fiction, solid bodies and unreal images, opaque forms and transparent reflections. All these architectures, the authors [3] call them the "floating architectures" (p.53).

We notice how, in analyzing Japanese architecture, this magazine tried in the beginnings to set norms and standards for Japanese architecture. These norms were inspired from Japanese traditional cultural values. And any Western influence was considered a 'bad influence'. But lately, when Japanese architects seem to use Western symbols and metaphors, the critics try to unfold the Japanese specific capacity to use these symbols freely in their architecture. This is a concept that is still subject to debate. The elements of design themselves become less important. What is more important is the freedom to use and integrate them in a Japanese context. They all become a language of signs, going beyond the limits of an architect's own culture.

And this is appreciated as a Japanese specific way of thought. It is what makes contemporary Japanese architecture a 'floating architecture of signs and symbols'.

2.2. *Architectural Design* Magazine [4]

2.2.a. Observations

Examining the articles and the graphs, the following observations were made:

- The ratio of issues discussing Japanese architecture to the total issues of the magazine is 41%.
- There is not much stress on foreign architects working in Japan. Most of the articles (94%) are about Japanese architects.
- Until the 80's, special issues and leading articles had treated Japanese architecture as a whole. But at the start of the 80's, special issues and leading articles were about individual architects and their concepts. This shows a shift from group thinking during the Modern and the Metabolist periods to more diversity and personal virtuosity.
- The deepest analyses were made during the mid 60's and during the 80's and the 90's (Fig. 1.2, Category 4). The mid 60's were the 'discovery' era, when some scholars devoted themselves to discover the Japanese concepts of space. And the other period is due to the diversity of architectural visions in Japan.
- In Fig. 1.2, we notice that the trend lines of the 'Number of Pages' and 'Category' are ascending continuously. This shows a purely academic interest in the topic discussed, regardless of the economic situation in Japan.

2.2.b. Discussion

- A.D., in a special issue (April 1958, pp.131-157), developed an early comprehensive study of Japanese aesthetics in architecture. The author [5] differentiates between two Japans: the old and the new. The old Japanese architecture, with its qualities of restraint, simplicity and elegance, the decorative use of structural elements, flexibility of plans and sections, sensitive landscaping and the close relation of indoor and outdoor areas has had a stronger influence on the development of the Modern movement in Europe and America. He describes what was happening in Japan at the time of the article, by comparison, as "crude, vulgar and amateurish" (p.136).
- In the special issue of February 1961 (pp.55-81), the editors [6] confirm that the revival of architecture in Japan can be regarded as the direct result of Le Corbusier's work in India. It is a very strong 'Modernistic point of view' that relates all values to its own scale.
- In the special issue (October 1964, pp.479-526) Gunter Nitschke [7] explains the Tokyo bay planning; the technical approach (Olympic planning) and the Metabolist approach (Dream planning). About the Metabolist approach, the author explains that the giant towers, the walls growing up into space, the virtually floating bridges, are symbols of a conscious shaking-off of the age-old bonds to the earth, of a liberation from Nature.
- In May 1965 (pp.216-256), Gunter Nitschke goes deeper in the Japanese concepts of space and compares them with their counterparts in the West. He notices that the young Japanese of today (at that date) sees in his own tradition a spirit of resignation. *Mono-no-aware*, "the emotion of things", or the *Suki* or *Sabi*, and *Furyu*, the "floating with the wind" (p.221). All these represent an unwillingness to fight against destiny, nature or one's situation. The Japanese, having an introspective tradition, have been greatly attracted by the extrovert culture of the West. "Sadly, though, they have accepted too eagerly the science and technology of the West and have embraced with it the affirmative, aggressive Western attitude to nature" (p.221). It is a clear distinction between Japanese architecture and the adopted Western Modern architecture.
- "*Ma*, the Japanese sense of place" (March 1966, pp.116-156). In a whole special issue about this Japanese concept of space, Gunter Nitscke explains Japanese space making in old and new architecture. In modern Japan (then) there had been three phases of design. Phase one (Form): blind, purely plastic imitation of architectural language of the West, resulting in doomed and isolated structures. Phase two (Space): emphasis on both the spaces enclosed and those created between their various parts, rather on the forms of the parts themselves. Phase three (Place Making): place is something dynamic and liable to change, taking full advantage of all modern technical improvements to increase the range of the traditional concepts of architecture. It is a clear return to the roots.
- In another special issue (December 1974, pp.748-791), Gunter Nitschke goes further back and deeper into Japanese culture. He proves that primitive man marked his land using bundles of grass which, in time, became deified. Their creation, use and subsequent destruction developed into the Shinto and Buddhist festivals of Japan today. He wrote an extensive study relating the making of the bundles of grass to the making of traditional architecture.
- Botond Bognar [8] writes in a special issue (May-June 1988, pp.5-80) [9] about "The Japanese Avant-Garde of the 80's". He notes that Japanese architects, through critical interventions, are predisposed to address critical issues on the international level. In Japanese architecture, scattered elements, incongruous motifs and materials, fractional and membranous surfaces, disjunctive forms and labyrinthine spaces are encountered as liberated and "floating signs" (p.6) or symbols. But they are holding together for they are constituted along an "integration without synthesis" (p.6), where neither opposition nor reconciliation occurs. This Avant-Garde Japanese architecture is questioning the prevailing Western mode of understanding, definition and meaning of space, form and architecture.

- In the same issue, Lynne Breslin [10] notes that Japanese architecture is maintaining autonomy in the face of universalizing anonymity. "Beauty in Japanese architecture and art were bound to the "elemental"." (p.27) Kazuo Shinohara's interest in "savagery" (p.28), Hiroshi Hara's "bricolage" and "modality" (p.29), Toyo Ito's "primitivism" (p.30), and Yasumitsu Matsunaga's "re-evaluation of nature" (p.31) are all consistent with the tradition of Japanese architecture in adherence to the organic, according to the writer.
- In the second issue of this series, Japanese architecture II (March-April 1992, pp.6-97), Botond Bognar argues that Japanese architects are attempting to create a meaningful relationship between reality and fiction by taking upon the simulated world of the city. The reality of society being "simulated and schizophrenic", it is the "dawn of a New Age, the age of post-urban/post-ideal society, but not a post-ideological one" (p.20).
- In the same issue, Andreas Papadakis and Kenneth Powell note that "Japanese architecture is inviting, fascinating, diverse, free in spirit, responsive to nature, and rich in emotion" (p.7). To them, the age of ephemeral building has dawned, which is the source of freedom and a "shift away from the monumentalism of the recent past" (p.7). It is a step back to the 'floating world of Japan.'
- In the third issue of this series, Japanese architecture III (Jan.-Feb. 1994, pp.6-95), Maggie Toy [11] writes about two factors contributing to the style of Japanese architecture today: the economical influence, and the cultural influence. The first is caused by the rise of land price, which calls for a need to rebuild and change. The second is caused by the renewal of the Ise shrine, which is still present in Japanese mentality. Both influences call for renewal, the essence of today's Japanese architecture.

This magazine relied mainly on Western scholars who had lived in Japan. The method is different because the critics, in general, are not 'visitors'. They possess a somewhat 'inside view'. This is why we find a lot of articles concerned with the traditional concepts of space. These concepts are based on the authors' findings in Japan. But then, we notice that the analyses moved gradually away from tradition to deal with the variety of contemporary architecture. And trying to understand this variety was a difficult task by itself. It is being related to economical and social considerations: it is all based on simulation, metaphors, consumption and fashion. We again come across the world of signs and symbols that is Japan today, presented at its highest peak in Tokyo.

2.3. *Architectural Record* Magazine [12]

2.3.a. Observations

Examining the articles and the graphs, the following observations were made:
- The ratio of issues discussing Japanese architecture to the total issues of the magazine is 20%.
- Although the articles are mainly about Japanese architects, we notice a big stress on Western architects working in Japan (35%). This trend is clear in the early beginnings, before 1958, and lately, after 1988. The first period is perhaps due to the dominance of Western architecture in the mind of both Western and Japanese architects. The second period is perhaps due to the good economical situation in Japan, which attracted Western architects and investors. And the magazine shows a great interest in the opportunities that Japan can offer to these Western architects.
- A great importance is given to 'Japanese architects' rather than to 'Japanese architecture' as a theme. Special issues and leading articles always discussed the works and concepts of famous architects. This might be also due to the general policy of the magazine.
- Analysis (Fig. 1.3, Category level 3) was mostly made during the early 60's, and also between late 70's and early 90's. This is due perhaps to the rise of some famous architects and the diversity of their concepts after the Modernist uniformity period.
- The highest number of pages (Fig. 1.3) in the articles can be seen during the mid 80's. Economical prosperity in Japan gave way to a diversity of theories and many architects became 'famous' worldwide.
- We can easily relate this diversity of theories to Japanese economic curves. This shows that there is a close relationship between economic prosperity and abundance of concepts in architectural design.

2.3.b. Discussion

- Since January 1936 (pp.10-36), this magazine stressed on viewing the works of American architects, especially Antonin Raymond, in Japan. No considerable effort was made in order to understand, and thus analyze Japanese architecture. Reviews from Japanese periodicals (mainly *Kenchiku Bunka*) brought some news of Japanese architecture.
- In February 1958 (pp.157-164), an article about the work of Minoru Yamasaki (a native-born American of direct Japanese descent) was an attempt to explain the 'Japanese look and style'. It was a descriptive look at a new subject: Japanese style in architecture. We notice that an American-Japanese architect opened the path to Japanese architecture.
- A.R. started a serious analysis about Japanese architecture with a leading article about Kenzo Tange (July 1958, pp.127-138), noticing that Tange and his fellow architects are trying to combine what remains vital in their architectural tradition. According to the analysis, Japanese architectural tradition has influenced Modern architecture in America and Europe. The articulated wooden post and lintel finds similarity in the expressed steel cage of skyscrapers. Non-bearing walls and flexible spatial organization, indoor and outdoor relationship all influenced the West in different ways. It is an early appreciation of the values of Japanese architecture, and a receptive attitude.

- In a special issue (April 1961, pp.129-144), the author [13] mentions that Japanese architects are designing buildings completely reconciled to the Modern principles of the West, yet completely Japanese. They are "derivative perhaps, but imitative never" (p.129). The Japanese view is "to reject and rebel against the heritage while also trying to love and frankly accept it" (p.144). It is an early beginning of understanding the diversity and contradictions of Japanese architecture.
- In a special issue (September 1970, pp.109-128), a hard criticism is written, criticizing the "hideous cities and towns" (p.109). The author [14] expresses that the Japanese have to make an effort to find a more consistent identity and "save themselves" (p.109). Nevertheless, a few promising projects are exposed. It is a purely Modern Western evaluation.
- In an article about Kisho Kurokawa (February 1973, pp.109-114), Paolo Riani [15] explains the capsule's concept. The over-optimistic Japanese technology is unlike utopian architecture. It permits a direct passage from the idea to the realization. He describes Metabolism as the "hurricane and the crisis" (p.110).
- Fumihiko Maki's architecture (August 1976, pp.69-80) was analyzed. *Shibui* is essential in his architecture. According to William Marlin [16], Maki is fusing perceptions of the East and the West. Perhaps the affinity to this notion is influenced by the fact that Maki studied and taught in America. Important aspects of the integration of Maki's design with its social context are mentioned: "social contextualism", which is "a developmental relationship between human actions and architectural spaces" (p.80).
- Kisho Kurokawa (August 1979, pp.67-72) and the Metabolist approach were discussed. According to the author [17], Metabolism aimed at asserting the process of biology using and surpassing the technological truths of Western architecture. It meant to clear the way from the Western ideals, for a new way of rethinking architecture.
- Arata Isozaki (October 1983 pp.124-136, and May 1984 pp.170-182) was analyzed by Martin Filler [18]. He recognizes successively Isozaki the Brutalist, the Surrealist, the Technocrat, the Neo-Rationalist, the Neo-Classicist, and finally Isozaki the Postmodernist. And during all the successive periods, Isozaki has had continuity associated with a traditional serial development of forms and ideas. And his various buildings share the same qualities: "clarity of conception, a willingness to experiment, an acute sense of knowing just how far to go with architectural play, and a kind of tough elegance" (p.170).
- Kisho Kurokawa is discussed (March 1985, pp.116-134) by Douglas Brenner. According to the author, Kurokawa decided that "Modernist architecture, the International style was an obsession with the static art object, and a narrowly Western frame of reference that made it anything but international in scope" (p.116). And the Metabolists refit Modernism geometry to patterns from biology and Japanese tradition. And still looking for biology, Kurokawa adopted the principle of symbiosis, or what he calls Metamorphosis. It is expressed through the multivalent, ambiguous, sometimes conflicting symbols that compose the texture of present-day culture, Oriental and Occidental.
- Tadao Ando's design (November 1985, 117-125) is discussed by Douglas Brenner. Ando refuses to accept the present heterogeneity and chaos of the city as context. Building on the basis of geometrical order, he wants to create an interior space, organizing buildings around "interior streets" (p.117).
- From September 1988, we then notice the stress, as in the early beginnings, on the works of foreign architects in Japan like Ambasz, Foster, Graves, Holl, Jerde, Kaplan, and Pelli. A cycle starting again. It is perhaps related to economical considerations. The upheaval of Japanese economy gave a boost to construction. And foreign architects, especially Americans, rushed to have a role in this upheaval. A good reference to the policy of the magazine is the article about "The market for American architectural services in Japan comes of age".[19]

This American magazine's practical method tried to analyze personal achievements of famous Japanese architects and Western architects working in Japan. An appreciation of personal achievements is perceived here. From an American point of view, there is an early perception of the variety of concepts in Japan.

3. SYNTHESIS

Understanding the reasons behind the Western interest in Japanese architecture in its different stages is a starting point. The second step was charting the evolution of this criticism in the magazines discussed earlier, and concerning Japanese concepts of space. By doing this, we hope to recognize the actual state of these concepts.

During the pre-war period and shortly after the war, we can see a dominant interest in Western architects working in Japan. And in the case of A.R. magazine, the oldest, it showed exclusive interest in the works of these foreign architects. To our observation, one reason is the fact that, during that period, famous architects were commissioned to design and build in Japan, and they had a great influence on the new generation of Japanese architects. The other reason is that the Modern vision, as we know, intended to exceed the Western world, for it was supposed to be universal. Modern Western architecture, in its turn, set values and references translating the Modernist model in an exclusive way. And any other model was not worth the trouble of research and discovery.

In Figs. 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, shortly after the war, we find that some critics who started to discover, and thus introduce, the aesthetics and values of Japanese architecture. We can see the rise of some special issues discussing the subject. Appreciation of a 'different

architecture' started to be seen. It is worth mentioning the article "How other peoples dwell and build".[20] We notice how Japanese architecture was called "other people's" architecture. It was starting to be worth the trouble of research and discovery. To our observation, the reason is the fact that during that period, the Japanese architect considered it his job to create architecture owing allegiance primarily to the aesthetic and technological discoveries of European and American artists and scientists. Although it is a concept different from its own, Japan embraced the Modern principles and started to explore them after the war.

In Figs. 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, during the 60's and 70's, the enigma of Metabolism attracted Western critics more, when they saw this sudden burst of new ideas coming from Japan. It was during this period of time that we find a rising number of special issues and leading articles looking deeper in the Japanese and Eastern traditional concepts of space. Much deeper analyses were perceived. To our observation, one reason is the fact that the Modernist system of values gave place to plurality of values, to heterogeneity and fragmentation that characterized the post-Modern condition. They gave place to the juxtaposition of what was previously opposed. And in architecture, we could see different currents emerging and adapting these new principles (post-modernism in all its forms, deconstructivism...).

Perhaps the first reaction to the Modern Western architecture was in the Metabolist current. Through sometimes shocking scales, it was trying to break out of using Modern reference points. The other reason is that the reaction to the Modern movement marked the complex evolution towards a new type of society and architecture. An architecture where all Modern foundations would be destroyed. An architecture with a variable geometry, obeying no more to a coherent and decodable logic, but listening to the longings of the moments, even if sometimes they are contradictory. This implied looking elsewhere for foundations of cultural and architectural ethics. Many people then looked towards Eastern philosophy. Researchers who devoted a lot of their time in Japan made many discoveries. Japanese concepts could now be easily accepted in the Western mind. *Ma*, *Oku*, *Sabi*, *Furyu* (風流), etc. were all searched for in the deep past of Japanese culture by some Western critics [21]. And we notice that these concepts became a reference point for judging and evaluating the works of Japanese architects. It was a total shift from the early Modernistic points of reference. Architecture started to be oriented towards pluralism, or the 'hyperchoice'. In absence of a coherent system of values, architecture was fragmented, obeying the emotions of the moments. Each architect could orient himself towards where he sees fit, it is pluralism. All the cultures that were previously in contempt became legitimate and recruited many adherents. All choices were possible, including the Japanese choice. Which meant turning toward the Japanese concepts and learning from them. At this time (around the 60's and 70's), Western critics acknowledged that Western architecture, especially the 'undefeatable' Modern one, owed a lot to traditional Japanese architecture. And in Japan, borrowing ideas from the West became more subtle and obeying to a primarily Japanese concept. This is what Kisho Kurokawa calls "Metamorphosis".[22]

4. CONCLUSION

Now, what are the actual concepts of space that still interest Western critics? They emanate from the individual architect's vision of this world. But they are, in a certain way, interrelated. The "Imagined and Primary Landscape" [23] and "Floating Events" [24], "Metamorphosis" [25] and "Gray Space" [26], "Savagery" [27], "Bricolage" [28] and "Modality" [29], "Primitivism" [30], "Abstraction of Space" [31], "Ethnocentrism" [32], "Suffocation of Space" [33], "Surrational Architecture" [34], "Deconstruction" [35], "Static Worlds" [36], etc. All these concepts reflect the lost and fragmented identity of the 'floating space' in which architecture appears. This shows the actual crisis of Japanese culture. It reminds us of the Edo period in Japan. "The mass, or popular culture of Edo, its fantastic nature, its pluralism and its electicism, together with the high density of the city of Edo, its lack of boundaries, and its conviviality are precisely the defining features of the quality of post-Modern architecture and urban space." [37]

The actual age of Post-Modernity in Japan appears as a line going towards the moving and the undecidable. In this sense, Post-Modernity in Japan is not just an architectural movement, but a trans-historic aesthetic category. If we accept that interpretation, we can recognize a Post-Modern atmosphere in different phases of Japanese architecture. Maybe we could even go back, in another chapter, to Edo to evoke the same atmosphere, as mentioned before. And behind this apparent disorder, some logic is being drawn. This logic is structured around a pillar: rupture with Modernism, its will to discover new horizons, to establish a mode of creation or thought. And all the contemporary architectural works carry some common themes: fragmentation, coexistence of opposites, the ephemeral, and the labyrinth, which could be a preparation for a New World view. Now this is highly appreciated and subject to more research. It is the Japanese "Moral Geometry" [38] of proportion, related to emotions, relationships, and experience, not mathematics.

This is what we could call 'the floating architecture of signs and symbols'. Perhaps Roland Barthes was right calling Japan "The Empire of Signs".[39]

CHAPTER 2.
JAPANESE URBAN ENVIRONMENT: THE HIDDEN ORDER

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

This chapter aims to analyze the actual state of Japanese architecture and its urban environment. In what appears to be chaotic and fragmented, there has to be some order keeping the city and its inhabitants holding together and to each other. Therefore, it was necessary to go back to the deep roots of Japanese life and culture, which are an intangible heritage, in order to extract some meaning-generating conditions affecting contemporary Japanese design. The reinterpretation of these conditions is discussed through the analysis of some contemporary constructions and their urban environment.

1.2. Procedure

The aim is to know what are the common factors of contemporary Japanese architecture in its multiplicity. How is it held together, in its fragmentation, so that it is still called 'Japanese'? The answer could lie in the urban context and, eventually, the concepts behind it. I tried to focus on the conditions and the design frame inside which Japanese architects are designing, hence giving them this large freedom of thought and maneuver, leading to detachment from their urban environment. Yet, they are still seen and perceived only and mainly as 'Japanese', in their different concepts and methods.

The apparent being incoherent, the answer had to be in what is hidden: the intangible heritage and tradition. It was noticed that contemporary Japanese architecture and its urban environment are defining continuities between the past and the present.

2. ANALYSIS: THE JAPANESE CITY

2.1. The Temporal Domain

2.1.a. The Invisible Tradition

The Japanese traditions, compared to those of western societies, tend to place more value on the invisible tradition.

The comparison of the Greek Parthenon and the Ise Grand Shrine will help to explain this difference. Let us imagine that, right next to the Pathenon, we build its exact replica made out of bright new marble. People would recognize it as a copy and would certainly not recognize it as having the same value as the original. The Grand Shrine of Ise is a classic masterpiece of Japanese architecture with a history of 1,300 years, but in fact the shrine has been rebuilt at twenty-year intervals. The old design and the construction know-how are passed on from one master carpenter to the next and twenty years was the interval of this change of generation. (Fig. 2.1) Perhaps one important reason for this practice was that in Japan the visible object and its form might be destroyed almost every twenty years by earthquakes or repeated natural disasters. Also, it is the life cycle of one generation. The heritage was believed to be transmitted and the tradition preserved as long as the invisible tradition was behind the object. With its aesthetics and sense of order this was passed on spiritually from one generation to another, in contrast to the materialist aesthetics of Western civilization, which seeks eternity for its architectural monuments. We can call the Japanese aesthetics spiritual; the special character of this type of cultural transmission has been inherited by Japanese contemporary cities and architecture.[1]

It was said above, at first sight, at least for a non-Japanese, it seems that the Japanese city and thus architecture have lost their link with Japanese traditions. This is due to our preset image of continuity, which is perceived through lasting constructions that visually keep reminding us of our past. But in Japan the recollection of the past is not through visible and lasting buildings, but rather through the collective memory of the people and through their strong social structure, or the hidden flavor. So this implies that architecture does not have to respond to any preset constraints or visual orders in order to link people with their past. Their invisible tradition goes beyond the lasting image of architecture, and designing architecture gets liberated from any imposed ties.

2.1.b. Cycle of Life

Tokyo is an ancient city in which it is extremely difficult to find a building more than 40 years old. One reason is the short life cycle of Japanese urban buildings, constructed traditionally of untreated wood. The other reason is the disasters (earthquakes, floods, and fires) which have hit the city many times bringing it to the ground. No big city on earth has been hit so hard in such a variety of ways and each time recovering in such willpower. Tokyo has been living with the threat of extinction ever since it was founded. It is the condition of the city's existence. The combination of great wealth, the newness of the city's fabric and the near certainty of its destruction give the life and culture of the city a sharp emotionalism. Disasters precipitate drastic change. Trends that would normally take decades to mature are realized overnight. And the absence of older buildings, which means the absence of context in which a building has to fit, allows the significance of new buildings to receive the most imaginable expression in their design.

Repeated past experiences justify this constant fear and readiness for renewal after disaster. From this fact, one can start to understand the notion of temporality of urban life in the mind of the Japanese people. The city is ever changing and it presents nothing but a temporal frame to their activities and life.

This continual and repeated destruction of buildings and cities has produced in the Japanese uncertainty about existence, a lack of faith in the visible,

and a suspicion of the eternal. Arata Isozaki drew the Tsukuba Center in ruins when designed the project. Even before the building was even built, he imagined it in ruins [2] showing the cycle of construction, destruction and reconstruction in his mind. (Fig. 2.2)

The idea that buildings and cities should appear as natural as possible and that they should be harmonized with the rest of nature helps to create the tradition of accepting and incorporating the changing seasons into the human lifestyle. The tradition of making buildings and cities provisional structures evolved from this heritage. This temporality is integrated into the root concept of the Buddhist philosophy of the doctrine of impermanence. The Buddhist concept of impermanence teaches us that the whole of what we can see is nothing more than the succession of knowledge. When Tokyo was destroyed in World War 2, only fifty years had passed since building had begun after the great earthquake. The first buildings of those fifty years, with their continuous growth and change, have made Tokyo into a city well suited to temporality.

This temporality is not physical, meaning something that is short-lived and easily amended or added to, but something that is off-center, an architecture that purposefully rejects consistency. All of these represent temporality in a large sense. Life is defined as the process of continuous growth, both dynamic and stable. The importance of the idea of temporality was also a reason that some architects chose the biological term 'Metabolism' as the name of their movement in the 1960s.

In architecture, changes have reached great proportion leading to dramatic transformations. Today, many new projects are built by demolishing existing buildings that had been completed just a few decades before, or even more recently. Examples of razed buildings include Kenzo Tange's Tokyo City Hall, built in 1957, (Fig. 2.3) which was a famous representative of Japan's post-war architecture. Upon completion of Tange's new City Hall in Shinjuku, (Fig. 2.4) the previous one is replaced by Raphael Vinoly's Tokyo International Forum.[3] Another famous example is Masaharu Takasaki's Crystal Light Building. Built in 1987, it was torn down in 1990 without ever being used at all. (Fig. 2.5) It was replaced by a more profitable structure. In this context, Toyo Ito once commented that many architects expect their projects to last only a few years. Ito's own Nomad Restaurant in Tokyo's Roppongi area had been commissioned for only a couple of years' use; designed within two weeks in 1986, it has been replaced with something else.[4] (Fig. 2.6) We can clearly see how the ever-changing city, due to fear of destruction and the natural feeling for temporality, is affecting architecture. The latter has become like seasonal foliage fading away and the next foliage is waiting for its turn in the following season.

2.1.c. Meeting the Future

In "The Fractal geometry of Nature", Benoit B. Mandelbrot says "There are various ways of evaluating length... coastline length turns out to be an elusive notion that slips between the fingers of one who wants to grasp it. All measurement methods lead to the conclusion that the typical coastline's length is very large and so ill-determined that it is best determined infinite." The shape of a coastline changes constantly with shifting tides. If the coast were composed of vertical, rocky cliffs, the tides would not greatly alter the configuration of the coastline, but a shore of sandy beaches will be reshaped by the tides with each advancing hour. A coastline, therefore, is not a clear-cut outline. We are forced to acknowledge that the existence of an intermediary territory incessantly changes, both physically and conceptually, causing intrusions into both inner and outer space in accordance with such phenomena as the rising and falling of the tides, as mentioned by Beniot B.Mendelbrot in "There are some various ways of evaluating length"

Western thought, beginning with the Greek philosophers, is traditionally reluctant to deal with this intermediate territory. Other traditions, on the other hand, attach considerable importance to this realm, as does Japan's, with its affinity for ambiguity and incompleteness. The differing views regarding the definition of an outline are important when considering form in architecture, the aesthetics of the townscape and the appearance of cities.

Close observation of urban environments in Japan reveals that there is some wisdom in allowing for such undefined outlines. If an outline must be clearly delineated, it is necessary to impose restraints on the function of architecture or on the lifestyles within the area. Building codes are established, and town planning or zoning ordinance is enacted. It becomes necessary to place constraints on individual freedoms. Building and urban planning policy in Japan is considerably looser and more ambiguous than that in European countries, and this is the result of the strong resistance the Japanese have against giving up freedom of movement for the sake of regularity of forms or clarity of outlines.

Japanese architecture gives priority to content. Content evolves in response to societal change, but form, once determined, is very hard to alter. The practice of setting standards for the height or configuration of buildings, as often-observed in European cities, was never very popular in Japan. On the contrary, there was complete freedom regarding the shape or location of windows and other features closely related to building outline, as well as for the materials of color of the walls. This lack of unity is, in addition, made to seem more chaotic by the inclusion of projecting signboards, rooftop advertising towers, hanging banners and electric poles, amid various trees and shrubs, gates, and concrete walls.

Where the outline is clear, a distinct form emerges that possesses a certain artistic quality. Where the outline is unclear, form is random or amorphous, like a spontaneous organism or the branching of a tree. If there is a hidden order in such amorphous shape, then it cannot be said to be complete chaos, and architecture and cities characterized by it have a potential not sufficiently appreciated until now.

Tokyo is the perfect example of the fluid, regenerating city. It was leveled by fire many times during the Edo period, and a major part was burned to the ground in the Great Kanto Earthquake and Fire of 1923. Even after the devastating bombings of World War II, it did not become an abandoned ruin; it survived and revived with even greater vigor. Many of Europe's metropolises are plagued by the so-called doughnut phenomenon, or depopulation of the city core, but the heart of Tokyo – and most of Japan's cities – remains vital. This is the result of a healthy metabolism, making the city the scene of constant renewal and change. The cores of Western cities, with their indestructible masonry structures, on the other hand, suffer from stagnation and rigidity.

Today, rapid changes in society are calling for new functions for cities and some modification of the nature of architecture. Faced with a building whose exterior tile is flaking off, whose metallic curtain walls have corroded, whose elevators and air-conditioners no longer work well, or which does not have strong enough floors, high enough ceilings, or powerful enough electrical wiring to accommodate the introduction of high-tech communications and computer equipment, the Japanese would tend to decide that it is wisest to construct a new, more efficient building. Japanese are accustomed to thinking of architecture as temporary; the notion of this earthly world as being as but a transient abode has a long tradition going back to early modern times. In fact, the changeless monuments of masonry of the West, preserved and lived in for literally centuries, are somewhat curious monuments of the past.

The coming 21st century will be an era of sophisticated technology. It will be necessary to lay optical fiber and lines for the information network system beneath the streets in our cities and to channel them to every part of our buildings. Will a city like, for example, Paris, where fundamental architectural change is impossible, be able to adapt? Perhaps we will all be compelled to re-evaluate the merits of the changeful character of Japanese cities.

It is certainly true that Tokyo is chaotic and lacking in artistic coordination as well as clear identity. Nevertheless, a tremendous urban population has managed to live in relative harmony, and has been responsible for achievements in economic development that have astonished the world. Cities in the West may give more priority to form than does Tokyo, but with its concern for content Tokyo thrives according to an order hidden within chaos. If there was no such order, how could the citizens of the world's second largest city lead the lives they do in such reasonable comfort? And architecture, in what seems to be chaos, is waiting to be substituted.

Japanese architecture has always given more priority to the invisible than to the visible. Thus allowing the visible to be free in having expressions often incoherent with each other. Looking deeper into the freedom that allows this preference of the invisible we uncover, as we saw in paragraph 2.1.a., that the invisible tradition lies in the people's culture, memory and activities, and not in long lasting buildings.

2.2. The Moving Realm

2.2.a. The *Sugoroku* City [5]

At first glance, the Japanese city, especially Tokyo, offers little sense of order. It has no symbolic center, as a Western city would, and no geometric framework for its spatial hierarchy. It is an agglomeration of many villages. (Fig. 2.7)

No matter how much the parts of Tokyo are emphasized, they do not add up to one whole. It brings to mind the game of *Meisho Sugoroku* [6] in which each spot on the board represented a famous place in the city to be visited with a roll of the dice. This game graphically demonstrates the view of the city of Edo as a chain of distinct places with its own distinct image. (Fig. 2.8) In this perspective, the city of Edo, or Tokyo, is itself a game of *Sugoroku*. Each area is strongly identified with some distinctive characteristic, which yet does not diminish the feeling of subordination to a whole. The city itself is formed by a network that connects these places, which the citizens hold in common. Therefore, this "*Sugoroku* City" maintains its tradition by allowing a total freedom in architectural design and keeping it subordinate to the whole. Although the 'placeless' architecture is being designed, it is still subordinate to the "*Sugoroku* City"; a concept carried on since the Edo era. We can see how tradition offers a moving frame, which goes on so far, within which a freedom of mind and spirit is allowed, extending to architecture.

The *sugoroku* game shows the means of understanding the city in the Japanese mind. The city is not centered on a famous landmark; it is the linkage of points constructed in people's mind. Nothing is fixed; everything changes and moves. The concept of the city is very much associated with movement. Although the city is being built and rebuilt, it is the memory of the people that keeps moving in the city's history through the temporal construction. The city itself becomes a temporal frame for all kinds of manifestations.

While Western architecture in cities is organized in an exemplary hierarchy from infrastructure down to the part and detail, there is a stronger feeling of autonomy of parts in Japanese cities. In previous writings that analyze Tokyo, Kisho Kurokawa has expressed the idea that Tokyo is a conglomeration of 300 cities.[7] In fact the Capital City in the Edo period

was forced by the ruler of Tokugawa to take up residence in the new capital, Edo. Each Lord was assigned an area in addition to his ample revenue. Temples and shrines and monks from the region gathered in the area and took up residence, forming a city within a city. Tokyo used to be a group of small cities and this tradition has been inherited by contemporary Tokyo in a symbiosis of parts and whole.

The new Japanese style hierarchy is evident in this new hierarchy; no city-center or plaza, no boulevards or landmarks are necessary and there seems to be no order except for the energy, freedom and multiplicity that comes from the parts that are there. The creation of this new hierarchy is a process which makes use of spontaneous occurring forces, and for that reason it is probably more accurate to say that Tokyo today, where private investment plays too strong a role, finds itself somewhere between chaos and order.

In architecture, this decentralization and absence of a center or unique landmark sets new values. These values move towards the ephemeral. People's memory becomes more important to satisfy than the locale, or the physical space, which is being defined by people's activities rather than their visual order. Again, architecture responds to this further and goes on in fragmenting the city landscape and detaching itself from any visual and central order. It floats over the city and denies it any imposed restraints, thus becoming again a free-spirit architecture. A spirit because the physical body and material are ever changing in an ever-moving city, as in the *Meisho Sugoroku* game.

2.2.b. The New Primitivism

Chaotic conditions, congestion, heterogeneity, the variety of signs, along with the lack of any sensible center or regulating order are by now well-known features of Japanese urbanism. Nevertheless, there is another important aspect that articulates urban life in Japan.

Japanese homes are not only cramped together but are also extremely small and can hardly be used for much more than a place to retire for the night. As such, they are usually not places for entertaining guests or meeting others. These activities have to take place outside the home, in the city: on the streets or other public places like the smaller or larger pubs, bars, cafés, tea parlors, clubs, shopping arcades, etc. not to mention one's own office that most employees regard as their larger home or family. Moreover, people often commute several hours daily between their homes and places of work. Consequently, Japanese cities and the urban life within have acquired apparently paradoxical dimensions and can be interpreted in two different ways.

a. First, the urban realm now functions as a kind of large common living room of the citizens, where the city appears to have no exterior.
b. Second, this city being always on the move, restless, has minimized the traditional notions of permanent residence and home whereby it can be considered, according to Toyo Ito, as a continuously temporary "camp of urban nomads".

In fact, Toyo Ito designed his own house in Tokyo as a Silver Hut. It is a "primitive hut", but now conceived in the modern urban environment of Tokyo. Instead of wood and logs, it is built of lightweight, easily available and cheap metallic materials of today. Ito observes the fast changing urban realm as a point of convergence where the life of people is in flux and where the physical, spatial and formal permanence of the environment tends to lose its meaning.

Ito understands contemporary city life as something drawing near the lifestyles of 'nomads', His Nomad pub was designed in two weeks.

In his recent architecture Ito foresees a potential future wherein the Japanese city is a series of high-tech camps of urban nomads. Nomadic space or architecture can be traversed easily. Comprised of thin metallic frames, aluminum screens and other ferrous plates, plus tent structures, the Silver Hut is penetrated and animated by natural elements such as light and wind, and is shaped by them. It is an architecture of wind.

A few other ideas, similar to Toyo Ito's, reveal this affinity to move architecture towards a nomadic space and the new primitivism, wherein space is in continuous alteration: Kazuyo Sejima, in Platform #1 and #2. Fluid and scattered spaces are evoked by performance. Sejima's works suggest an architecture as site which is generated by actions. Her 'nomadic architecture' is formed by thin roofs, like tents floating over empty spaces, inducing light and shadows. Riken Yamamoto's Hamlet, a residential building for an extended family in Tokyo, uses Teflon fiber fabric to define an ambiguous domain of habitat in the surrounding city. Minoru Takeyama's Tokyo Port Terminal is open to nature: wind, sunshine, and also to both the sea and the city, and thus defining an architecture that goes with the wind, sunshine, the sea and the city. The Urban Nomads and the new primitivism take over.

2.3. The Urban Theater

2.3.a. A Post-Modern Tradition

The cosmopolitan power of games overflows the actual powers. The 'bourgeois' culture of the Edo period, born in the pleasure quarters, deviated from the general order. From which we have the expression: "It is the theatre that comes first, the world is only imitating it" [8]. The whole system of social distinction was reoriented. To recognize the power of game and imagination characterizes the culture of that period. And it can be said that it was post-modern before the letter. It is astonishing that contemporary Japan discovered Post-Modernism and rediscovered Edo, under the angle of urbanization marked with games and theatrical attitude in architecture.

Post-Modernism appears as liberation from the modernist reason. But this is actually a Western point of view. In Japan, the games and atmosphere of Post-

Modern design have been there for a long period of time. The specially lit atmosphere of Tokyo, its chaotic action, is peculiar. This spatial animation is not new. While the streets of Yamanote district were quiet, the streets in Nihonbashi and other places where commoners gathered were given life by a vast array of signboards, *noren* shop curtains and banners. (Fig. 2.9)

The actual age of Post-Modernity in Japan appears as a line going towards the moving and the undecided. In this sense, Post-Modernity in Japan is not just an architectural movement, but a trans-historic aesthetic category [9]. In the sense that it is not related to a sequence of time and style, but rather to a world view. If we accept this interpretation, we can recognize a Post-Modern atmosphere in different phases of Japanese architecture. We could go back to Edo to evoke the same atmosphere. We could notice how the urban theater of Tokyo is still being carried on since the Edo era, leading to the architecture of signs. This leads us to say that the apparent incoherence of the forms of the city, in fact, nourishes the cohesion of the Japanese city.

Architecture responds to the collage-like heterogeneous Japanese city. This made it acquire a certain sign quality, freely manipulated. The Post-Modern embedded tradition allows that freely. We find traces of scenography enhanced by sophisticated technology. We could imagine Tokyo as a big stage on which architecture is playing its role. Architects integrate in the act, participate energetically, but knowing that the act will be renewed one day. It will not last forever. The feeling of temporality is overcastting.

2.3.b. Images and Information

Tokyo was already a very densely populated city in the Edo period with a population density of 890 people per hectare. The streets were always filled with people and all sorts of business was constantly being conducted on the street. In the 19th century the population climbed to over one million making it the most populated city on earth. Much of Japan is mountainous and almost all level ground holds cities.

One other remarkable feature of contemporary Japan is the density of information. Everyday, information and events from every corner of the world appear on Japanese television, in newspapers, magazines and specialist journals. Although mostly about the USA and Europe, a remarkable amount of information concerning Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Russia and Eastern Europe reaches the general public on a daily basis. Such information from other countries and cultures on a popular level is unknown in Europe or America. It is unique to Japan. The astonishing development and widespread availability among the masses of the latest communication and technology, including all the audio and visual devices, cameras and the world's latest telephones, smallest portable computers, word processors and faxes has made Japan a nation with the highest concentration of information in the world.

Tokyo could be called the invisible world capital, the silent center. The fantastic inflow of information from the rest of the world into Tokyo means that every place on the globe feels very close, within reach. The outflow, however, is quite weak, with results that from outside Tokyo can still feel remote. And this inflow of information, style and techniques is taken for granted in Japanese cities as an integral part of the culture, thus creating a huge variety of styles. The urban theater of Tokyo appears to be nothing but signs. It is an architecture that "floats on the sea of signs", as Hajime Yatsuka calls it. Some architecture, like the Japanese city itself, is also superficial. It is a delirious urban theater, a stage set. (Fig. 2.10)

This wave of internationalization, increasing density and growing information has created stiff competition for Japanese architects. The condition of the dense and highly developed society forces the Japanese architects to practice and study continuously in their society. The slightest difference is taken seriously, encouraging the architects to create works that distinguish them from their competitors. And the amount of inflow of information makes people ready to accept many ideas that seem to be smoothly assimilated into architectural design.

There are reasons why people grow very fond of this city: [10]

First, every type of architectural development is crammed in without any concern for the impression, which the whole picture makes. It is just a complete random conglomeration of economically viable elements.

Second, the most glamorous face of modern Tokyo, which is only apparent by night, has a lot to do with the fantastic quality and importance of Japanese neon signs. Roland Barthes made a great deal of this, quite rightly, that in a way the signs are more significant than the buildings. At nighttime the buildings disappear and the signs are left hanging in the air, and you suddenly have an unfamiliar image of urban glamour which is quite persuasive and quite novel.

The fact is that architects have an enormous amount of freedom to build what they want. It is surely very enviable from the point of view of architects working in the West and yet because the chaos is so vast and so unrelieved the effect of any architectural design is very limited by this. An example of this is that a lot of foreign architects have built in Tokyo over the last 20 years. But of those who have built here, the one who has had the most impact and the most popular success has been Philippe Starck. While he is not an architect, he was building really quite cynically to shock and to astound, and what he did was to shout out loud to be noticed in the architectural chaotic jungle of Tokyo.

In the fiercely competitive environment, profitability demands the continued attention and attraction of both the public and the media, therefore newness and imaging are often primary criteria in

commissioning new edifices. Hence architecture and urbanism tend towards the quality of changeable signs and advertising, whose strategy of fascination is to exploit human desires. Their ultimate purpose is to turn people into consumers who are irresistibly attracted to commodities.

Architecture's respond to these dominating conditions of the city: acceptance. The traditional predisposition of the Japanese towards a 'floating world', as well as the penetration of the most advanced information and media technologies into contemporary life, recent society in Japan has produced cities in the fast lane. More than merely an ephemeral realm, this is radically a volatile world, wherein a sense of reality is profoundly undermined by forces of simulation or wherein reality is rendered as a fiction. It may be said that we have reached a stage of architecture and urbanism wherein the essence of the built environment is produced as images and information. That is to say the city is rendered largely as media and architecture is the mean to promote that media through signs and simulation.

2.3.c. Technology and Fiction

Today's design intentions increasingly rely on new technologies that include the latest in construction, computer and media technologies. The range of examples wherein a new approach to technology is particularly evident includes the works of Shinohara, Isozaki, Maki, Hara, Hasegawa, Ito, Sejima, Sakamoto, Yatsuka, Kitagawara and Takamatsu. These architects and others reinterpret technology in their own individual ways and also according to the character of the task at hand.

The range of new technologies behind today's developments in architecture and culture is more related to a software technology that operates like a computer program. With no claim to universality and rigid rationality, this technology is more intuitive, flexible and more locally oriented. Here, in contrast to Modernism's rational systemization, standardization, mass production, with industrial technology which was universal. The new technology in architecture aims to stimulate the human senses and to appeal to human emotions and desires, thus becoming sensual.

The potentials and impact of the new software technologies are far-reaching in architecture. And it is evident that in Japan these potentials are being thoroughly explored both in their positive and negative implications. Such implications would be theatricality and its spectacular manifestation.

The effect of new technologies is apparent in the articulation of details. This represents a high quality craftsmanship. The precision in which some buildings are put together seem to defy construction limitations. This attitude surpasses the artistry of traditional craftsmanship. The excessive details in Takamatsu's buildings for example: Metallic parts, steel plates, polished surfaces, etc. are technological in nature. Such details can only render technology as merely an image.

Lightness, permeability, fluidity of space, a feeling for temporality and an 'immaterial evocation of building'. This is related to a new interpretation and application of technology, different from the idealized one, upon which Modernism was built. The reliance on new technologies has begun to disclose a new technological landscape:

1. A new industrial vernacular as in Itsuko Hasegawa's house in Oyamadai.
2. A difficult, highly elaborated and a personal style, and monuments in search of meaning as in Shin Takamatsu's many projects.
3. Acknowledging the urban theater or the city as fiction:

The new urban technology is an architectural software technology that ranges between simplicity and highly sophisticated craftsmanship, with a strong appeal to sensuality. The technology with its vagueness is derived from the existing urban conditions that emanate from the Japanese feel for reality and fiction.

" The days when there was an immutable style... are past... The classical urban order having collapsed, any work of architecture that, in a sense, internalizes the city and functions on its exterior surface as a mechanism of information transmission will... symbolize today's image of the city - an environment that is fragmented but that constantly renews its vitality precisely through its state of fragmentation". (Fumihiko Maki, 'Spiral').

The new architectural technology produces a non-structural, non-hierarchical landscape. It results in an architecture of independent parts in a fragmented landscape.

Many recent Japanese works do not intend to forward any formal statement. Yet they intend to break the unity of form and fragment it:
Kazuo Shinohara's house in Yokohama is an agglomeration of parts, like in a 'zero degree machine', as he calls it. His inspiration comes from the latest technological advancements, which display extremely complex forms, yet they are lacking any formal synthesis. The various forms and volumes of the house are joined abruptly. This way of assembling achieved a certain fragmentation.

Fragmentation, however, does not mean that there are no structural considerations in shaping the new architecture and technological landscape.

Shinohara's TIT (Tokyo Institute of Technology) Centennial Hall is inspired from the chaotic energy of its urban surrounding. Trying to deny it, he builds over it. (Figs. 2.11, 2.12, 2.13)

Fumihiko Maki, in Spiral, Tokyo, responds to the collage-like heterogeneous city by articulating his buildings with sequentially layered spaces. Similar to traditional architecture, these layered spaces involve the intricate arrangement of surfaces, as in Tepia Science

Pavilion, Tokyo, and the use of various screens, thus inducing a certain depth. Building envelopes of Maki's works, freely manipulated, have become detached from the main body, acquiring a certain sign quality. We could see traces of scenography. (Figs. 2.14, 2.15)

Hajime Yatsuka's Tarlazzi Building is a collection of fragments in architecture. It is an architecture that floats 'on the sea of signs', resonating with the urban theater of Tokyo which appears as nothing but signs. (Fig. 2.16)

Shin Takamatsu's technology is hardly more than a sign of itself, technology rendered as ornament. In Kirin Plaza in Osaka, technology is a computer-controlled system of electric signs. Like the Japanese city, it is superficial. It is an urban theater, a stage set. (Figs. 2.17, 2.18)

For many Japanese architects, reality and fiction appear to be the same thing. This is not new. The qualities of the 'floating world' prevailed in Japanese life and architecture in the past. The Japanese have always preferred to perceive things as events rather than substance. This is an aspect of Japanese architecture and urbanism, which is defenseless while confronting the exploitation of the marketplace.

2.4. The Urban Forest [11]

The interpretation of nature as a phenomenon has always been a characteristic of the Japanese mind. It is perceived from the Shinto sacred interpretation of natural phenomena to the Zen philosophy and its miniature gardens representing the cosmos.

In the Katsura and the Shugakuin detached palaces in Kyoto, the buildings would not be complete without the surrounding gardens. By contrast, Le Corbusier's architecture is self-centered, requiring huge spaces, as in Chandigarh, so that it can be seen uninterrupted from a distance. The first thing one notices about the traditional buildings of Japan is their relative diminutive proportions, asymmetry, and modest facades, often deliberately hidden in the surrounding shrubbery. Upon close inspection, one sees that great attention has been given to the grain of the wood, its carefully smoothed texture, and the precision of its joints and interlocking timbers. Each such feature demonstrates a beauty in irregularity that originates from a hidden viewpoint; together they stand in sharp contrast to the beauty of proportions meant to be seen from a distance.

Lately, some reinterpretations of nature could be recognized. Many contemporary Japanese architects have a continuous search for theories that allow them to use nature as a symbol in their design. The symbol goes beyond the form or mere presence. It is a concept by itself, a concept of life and the interpretation of present-day city. It is a live phenomenon. We can distinguish this on two levels: the buildings and the city.

On the building design level, there is a new interpretation and application of technology, different from the idealized one, upon which modernism was built.

In Japan today there is a direction in which association with nature is predominant. This alternative mode design relies on lightweight structures and thin, semi-permeable, ferrous and other materials to evoke flexible, scattered and ambiguous spaces; comparable to those experienced in nature. This way intends to redefine "architecture as another nature" [12]. The buildings become "poetic machines or futuristic, man-made constructs" [13].

As for the city, it is used as topography of landscape. Riken Yamamoto calls the "city as topography". The existing city is regarded as layered substructure, like a metaphorical archaeological site, and architects build out of it, as well as over it. We have now a reinterpretation of the city landscape, which is not only a physical one anymore, but one that also contains images from the past and metaphors of nature.

Now we have a new generation of architects like Toyo Ito and Kazuyo Sejima who were born in Tokyo and have spent their whole life there. For them the artificial things like technology or concrete are nature. Actually the massive concrete city looks like a new mountain or river, and that is why the new tendency of the younger generation is easily making a high-tech architecture as second nature or their own nature. (Figs. 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 2.22)

What emerge are the reconsidered and new roles of nature and the outside world, and the reinterpretation of nature in relation to the city. That is, understanding the city as topography. Understanding the city as topography sees the possibilities of an architectural and urban renewal over and above the existing urban landscape:

1.The first direction regards the existing city as a layered substratum, like a metaphorical archeological site, and builds out of it as well as over it.

Numerous architects began to interpret the existing fabric of the 'city as topography' and build over or above this reality. Much of this architecture acts as an artificial land on which urban activity continues while the independent new facilities above are free:

Minoru Takeyama designed the Tokyo Port terminal as an artificial hill with a house-like structure on it. (Figs. 2.23, 2.24)

Riken Yamamoto calls the 'city as topography.' Rotunda is designed to comply with the characterless suburban setting of Yokohama. And also to sustain a new kind of architecture over the lower base section, with the owner's residence under the Teflon fiber tent structure. (Fig. 2.25)

Hiroshi Hara: the Iida City Museum occupies the site of the previous feudal castle. Hara's new urban fabric, abundant with wide stairways, rooftop public promenades and various scattered gazebo-like structures, is both futuristic and archaic. It is a 'paradoxical high-tech ruin.' Hiroshi Hara's new 'architecture of modality' aims to make the boundaries between nature, architecture and the city as ambiguous

as possible. Undulating forms, designed with highly polished aluminum plates, remind us of clouds, mist and foliage. (Figs. 2.26, 2.27, 2.28) Both Hasegawa and Hara's methods imply the process of 'naturalizing architecture', wherein architectural forms stand as replacement of nature. The 'architecture as another nature' runs the risk of turning architecture into a simulacrum of nature.

Tadao Ando has set the phenomena of nature against the contemporary superficial mass culture and the megalopolis. In his Sumiyoshi Row House in Osaka he recollected the notion of an 'urban space', complete with an open-air stairway and bridge in-between the two sections of the residence. Yet as he does in some of his recent projects, such as Collezione in Tokyo, the space is more open and more fragmented than in earlier private residences, and these new works accept the outside world more willingly than before. He continues to deploy elements of his own imaginary city within the context of urban ephemerality. Yet, by the use of layered walls, focused openings, and sequences of spaces Ando continues to 'architecturalize nature'.

2. The other direction relies on the topography of actual landscaping by embedding architecture in it. We can observe the emergence of a trend that, rather than interpreting architecture as landscape or nature, utilizes the landscape as architecture:

Toyo Ito uses both directions, in Sapporo Beer Guest House, 1989 and Yatsushiro Municipal Museum, Kumamoto. The lower section of the building is covered by an artificial mound, and the upper section floats above the site and the rest of the structure. (Figs. 2.29, 2.30)

Tadao Ando, in his Water Temple, Awaji-shima, buries large parts of the structure under earth. These buildings create a special relationship between architecture and the reality of the land. The earthwork is neither landscaping nor gardening. It is an active part of the building. (Figs. 2.31, 2.32)

3. SYNTHESIS

In the light of what has been discussed so far, some actual constructed projects and their urban environments will be analyzed. The aim is simply to try to unfold some concepts that are relevant today and that might help us to understand the actual state.

Strategies generated by many architects will be developed in trying to understand the actual state of Japanese architecture. Some of these strategies, or concepts, are mutually exclusive, while some are closely related to others. That is to say, they reveal continuities. As each strategy is not conceived in a 'formula' type, it could not fall under a specific category or in a single chapter. Being interrelated, the examples are discussed separately in the synthesis.

The concepts unfolded and discussed will focus on the new prevailing spirit in the pluralistic contemporary Japanese architecture and the state of the Japanese city. As mentioned before, the new architecture in Japan is affected by temporality, movement, theatrical attitude, technology and association with nature. These concepts offer a setting, a frame of work for the new design that recalls some fundamentals of the Japanese culture. And these are not rigid principles applied to the letter, they present a prevailing spirit in design.

The Japanese city is liberated from any pre-set ideas. We saw previously the constant fear of physical change, the enormous inflow of information through advanced technology and the apparent chaos of signs and forms, the perception of city through movement. Adding to that the reinterpretation of the city as nature. All these give us a feeling of temporality in the context of the city, which offers a joyful playground for architects to fantasize and achieve their dreams.

4. CONCLUSION

Given this dynamism it is quite likely that, as the dialectic continues to develop within Japanese architecture, there will be further interactions and new regrouping. The basic differences between the different architectural currents would lessen as each side borrows from the other. The convergence of Japanese architecture under one umbrella is even possible given the eclectic and inclusive philosophy in Japan.

All the contemporary architectural works, as well as their urban context, carry some common themes: fragmentation, coexistence of opposites, the ephemeral, and the labyrinth. It is the Japanese "Moral Geometry" of proportion, related to emotions, relationships and experience, not a mathematical one. The variety of architectural positions current in Japan leads to confusion which might be questioned. But it also sustains a dynamic culture, which absorbs new ideas and transforms them. Finiteness of classical thoughts is opposed to impermanence and chaos; perfection is traded for creativity; and finally, stability is replaced by change.

The setting and framework that inspires this fragmented pluralistic architecture is due to the many factors discussed earlier. These factors are concepts found in the roots of Japanese culture and it is realized that, by analyzing the present, they are still relevant today. The inter-action of these concepts is very strong. It offers a logic, which is both derived from and responds to the existing urban conditions that are founded on the Japanese feel for reality and, especially, fiction.

The Japanese city, as we saw previously, being traditionally a city of change, inflow, chaos, movement and proscenium, offers a framework at liberty of any pre-set values and rigid norms, allowing the pluralistic and free spirit of contemporary design. Nature, imbedded in the ancient philosophies of the country, is repeating itself in a metaphorical way, both on the urban and the building levels. Temporality, starting with the traditional rites, extending to the traditional house and

then contemporary design, is being constructed both as a temporal frame (the city) and as an architectural expression (materials).

As we have seen so far, the past carried with it concepts of the future, which is the present now, allowing the acceptance and the evolution of different pluralistic concepts through history. And the present, in its turn, carries references to the past from which the setting and the framework are inspired. This state of mind, in which the new technological landscape is the outcome of what seems to be lying in the past, is a continuous process of going 'back to the future' in Japan. In architecture and its urban environment the link between past, present and future has always been the interpretation of nature and the prevailing feeling for temporality.

In the end of the 20th century, it seems that architects have no choice but to accept the Japanese city as is, as virtual reality. Therefore, the new architecture in Japan is paradoxical as the cultural and built landscape in which it is set. Although Japan's accelerated urban culture has rendered the fate of architecture unpredictable, it has also opened up almost unlimited possibilities. In fact, the demand for innovative experimental designs can be characterized by a sense for both realism and fiction. The broad spectrum of architectural intentions and directions should be considered and evaluated with regards to how Japanese architects understand and are able to respond to the interrelationship between reality and fiction.

CHAPTER 3.
RITUALS: THE ACT OF BUILDING

1. INTRODUCTION

As we saw in Chapter 2, the Japanese traditions, compared to those of western societies, tend to place more value on the invisible tradition, and that the Japanese perceive their built environment through their activities, not through the physical presence. However, through some special performances, or rituals, we could see the reasons behind this attitude. And also, through deeper understanding of the origins of these activities and their symbols, we could understand further the invisible tradition. Numerous methods are possible for the study of *matsuri*, among them the traditional method of investigating the history of the festival. But some research, including this paper, have attempted to approach the study of *matsuri* not merely as a problem of history, but of function, namely the way in which the *matsuri* influences or operates on the people involved.

In this chapter a study is done on some of the primitive rituals that bear with them the concepts of place making. These rituals still exist now and I think they have a great effect on contemporary Japanese perception of space, thus the city and architecture. We should always keep in mind the ephemeral space and the apparent chaos of the city and architecture, which is the subject of our research. And by studying some of the rituals, our intention is to reveal the connection between them and the main subject.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1. The Mythology

In one of the oldest written documents recording the legends and myths of Japanese history, the Nihonshoki (compiled circa 720), it is said of the Japanese archipelago: "In that Land, there were numerous deities (or spirits) that shone with a luster like that of fireflies, and evil deities that buzzed like flies. There were also trees and herbs that could speak."

This passage reflects the spirit of Shinto, which centered around the presence of *kami*, the divine ancestral spirits, and their life-giving powers. Inherent to Shinto ideology is the belief that all perceptive beings are the common offspring of *kami*, and therefore are strong with their spiritual force and presence. Shinto, "The Way of the Gods", considered uniquely Japanese, is not so much a religion as a complex of beliefs that has remained relatively unaltered through time. With the practice of proper rites and celebrations, a spiritual harmony is maintained that assures the human community of a secure existence. The individual, as a result, becomes but one link in an infinitely larger chain of life.

Shinto's roots can be traced to the early Japanese agricultural population. They were in wonder and fear of the mysteries of nature; these were explained by the existence of *kami*. *Kami* also served to explain the creation of the world: "... in the beginning men and animals were gods, and plants and rocks had speech." *Kami* existed in the service of the community too, and each clan associated itself with a particular deity (*ujigami*).

In the early stages of Shinto worship, prayers and the expression of gratitude on the part of the living were addressed directly to nature and none of the symbolic repositories of the spirit, such as shrines, that are associated with Shinto today, were needed. *Kami* were believed to live in remote places and only visited human society on select occasions. Prior to important festivals or rites, an *iwasaka* (a sacred area marked off by a stone) or a *himorogi* (a symbolic square demarcated with straw ropes hung between four posts) was erected for the *kami* to inhabit. (Fig. 3.1, 3.2) The desire to capture and contain the holy power of the deity was a primary motive.

Another familiar Shinto element is the *shimenawa*, the tying of the sacred rope. The *shimenawa* is hung on rocks, trees, shrine structures, and in private residences in order to expel evil spirits and to protect against religious impurity. (Fig. 3.3, 3.4)

2.2. Micro Scale

Gunter Nitschke [1] provides evidence to show that primitive man staked out his bit of land with bound

bundles of grass which, in time assumed such importance that they were deified. And their creation, use and subsequent destruction were ritualized, developing eventually into the many varied and complicated Shinto and Buddhist festivals of Japan today.

Building is primary in the evolution of man; religion, secondary. Etymologically, religion hints at an act of binding. And binding seems to have been one of the earliest constructive skills which man acquired in his evolution.

From the Japanese perspective this is hardly a revolutionary statement. As Nitschke argues, it can hardly be an accident that: The earliest buildings in Japan, as reconstructed by archeologists, as well as some of the temporary structures still erected in the backcountry are held together only by binding.

The tying of the sacred rope (*shimenawa*) inscribes the territory and indicates its occupation by the *kami*, and also denotes the temporality of the event that takes place within that territory. From the simple act of tying a sacred rope a divine space, a 'place', is created .[2]

The temporality here is expressed in two ways.

1. The purpose of the construction is to allow a temporal event materialized in the symbolic function of the structure itself, the event being the temporal occupation of the location by the *kami*.
2. The construction itself is executed as a temporary act in reference to the technique, being dismantled or untied, and to the materials being perishable (rope, wood, grass, straw, etc.).

Therefore, we can say that temporality is constructed, and that the act of tying the rope (*shime*) transforms a simple human action, through the creation of a place, into an architectural conceptualization.

The constructed temporality involves two constant elements: the construction technique and the place.

1. The construction technique, the tying of the rope, indicates the use of minimum temporary perishable things (rope, wood, grass, straw, etc.) and the precision of the binding method, performed by specialized Shinto priests in a ceremonial way. The technique and the method of construction are entirely independent from any specific place. They are applied anywhere, in the same manner. The location itself is not relevant as much as the event that denotes it. The technique and the method involve the minimum elements, and the construction is 'placeless'.
2. The place is achieved in terms of its temporal potential capacity rather than an actual lasting object. It is through the intervention of the construction, the tying of the rope, that the place is really actualized, though temporarily. It is through the use of temporal material that temporary structures are conceived, leading to an ever-changing notion of place.

The act of making architecture in Japan could be seen as a similar concept of the process of demarcation and occupation found in the process of *shimenawa*. The distinction of what is constructed and conceived is the manner of assembling the material in order to produce a meaning-generating condition. The material remains a light instrument of various possibilities of construction, of making a 'place' irrespective of location. The concept of this construction bears the notions of the territorial demarcation and temporal occupation of the 'place', reflective of the idea of *shimenawa*.

2.3. Medium Scale

I will refer in this paragraph to some findings by Japanese scholars who affirm that the spiritual and ritual, thus intangible, origins of architecture in Japan precede and define the physical construction.

A number of points demonstrate the similarities between the concept of *shime* and the typical idea of Japanese architecture. The most relevant is the notion of "Shared Space" in domestic architecture intended by Mitsuo Inoue [3]. For him, the interior space in Japanese architecture was conceived traditionally as a domain, not only reserved for humans, but also deities and ancestral spirits. In this respect, the house represents a sacred and physical structure. (Fig. 3.5)

And according to Sakae Mogi,[4] the shrine is not the only ritual site for the performance of certain festivals. In fact, it was formerly performed at the individual homes of families that had made serious religious prayers to the deity in time of crisis. And that fact indicates that the spatial relationship of *kami* and Buddhas within the home is connected to their relationship within the space of the village. The *kamidana* (the Shinto god shelf) and the *butsudan* (the Buddhist family altar) often coexist inside the house, although there are differences in their spatial arrangement within the home depending on the geographical area.

One interesting example taken from Sakae Mogi's research [5] is the Festival of Purification at Tenryu Village, Nagano Prefecture. The *tatami* mats in front of the *kamidana* were removed so as to allow the bear floor to be used for dancing, a religious performance called *Kake Odori*

According to Toshiaki Harada,[6] shrine architecture is not as old as it seems. The architecture did not exist from the original establishment of the shrine. Originally, the majorities of shrines had no permanent architecture, but were provided merely with such facilities as a *himorogi* (divine tree) or *iwasaka* (divine stone) at which periodic worship was performed. As people lead their lives within a society, it is certain that they come to recognize a center to their spiritual union; the life of the society comes to be regulated by that center, and follows that center. And the physical space, which became the fixed locale for their rituals, was what is called now the *ujigami* shrine. Even if its exterior form was not necessarily one that our current common sense

would call a 'shrine', it nonetheless was a location for the observance of religious ceremonies, namely ritual worship. In short, the worship of a deity was not dependent on the prior existence of a physical structure as became common in later shrine architecture.

In fact, these community rituals have their significance in the prognostication of abundant crops and the celebration of harvest. These rites are observed as communal activities with the *kami*, at places appropriate to the public life of the residents.

The locales in which such deities are worshiped form the original significance of the 'shrine'. Such locales did not necessitate physical buildings, and it was moreover considered sufficient to invoke the deity's presence merely for the duration of the festival.

2.4. Macro scale

The analysis of Japanese festivals, *matsuri*, carries with it many of the concepts discussed earlier and extends the debate to the city level. *Matsuri* is a wide subject by itself and could be a subject for an extensive research later. However, it is imperative to mention some of symbolic and religious aspects in order to understand further the hidden order that we are looking for.

The case of the *Hakata Gion Yamakasa* festival will be examined here.

2.4.a. Building Process

Matsuri, or festival, according to Toshiaki Harada,[7] is essentially a matter of purification. Through *matsuri* one is restored to the state of *ke*, or filled with divine life energy, dispelling the state of *kegare*, the accumulation of impurities through exhaustion. The notion is also related by Hiroko Yoshino to the original Japanese creation myth involving the descent of the gods to the profane world and their subsequent return to the sacred world after death. *Matsuri* is also a process of political integration, incorporating the original shrine, clan shrine, as well as a state visit to the City Hall and paying respect to the prominent personalities of the town.

Portable shrines, or *mikoshi*, stand at the center of most Japanese festivals today. Originally, it imitates in miniature the symbolic construction of a shrine.[8] In the case of the *Hakata Gion Yamakasa Matsuri* in Fukuoka, every year, portable shrines are built from temporal material like wood, rope, straw (perishable elements of the environment) and carried through the neighborhood to entertain the gods. It is more than just a parade or procession, it is a ritual and manifestation of the presence of the *kami*. A lot of religious performances, energy, money and time are spent during the two weeks of preparation and training. (Fig. 3.6 ~ 3.11)

The building process of the *mikoshi* is a challenging task for the few remaining craftsmen. The technique is highly sophisticated and depends on good craftsmanship. Although it is built of light and perishable materials, the tying and the way to assemble the *mikoshi* is the real challenge. By the time the assemblage is finished, the *mikoshi* weighs a little more than one ton. The huge wooden one-ton festival floats are completed with model figures and other sacred elements. On one side of the model is a sacred figure built on a large scale, on the other side a contemporary or fictional figure is built, which is usually inspired from the Japanese cartoons (*manga*) in order to keep the children attracted to the festival.

2.4.b. Order Reappears

The older men transmit the knowledge of the rituals and the social customs of the festival to the young men of the community and who vigilantly watch the playing out of the ceremonies. The festival stitches a bond between the older and the younger generation, reconstituting a communal spirit.

At the time of the festival, the entire town re-organizes itself into *chonai* system of the feudal period for the preparation and performance of a grand two-week religious festival. Through this festival, the entire community renews its traditional roots in a way that appears mythical to the modern Western mind.[9]

Although the portable shrine is a temporary structure, it still maintains an aura of dominance in the minds of the participants who, by ritual re-enactment of the procession through the neighborhood, understand a hierarchical relationship of the spaces of the town with the revival of the *matsuri*. The actual configuration of the town, thus the visible public space, loses its meaning, allowing for the hidden order to appear again. (Fig. 3.12, 3.13)

To the Japanese, however, spatial discovery is one of sequence from the part to the whole, the parts being united into a whole by the festival. The idea of sequence in a spatial context derives from the practice of purification, in which one progresses by degrees from one stage to the next. This sequence occurs in time as well as in space. From the time of everyday activities to the time of festivities, when through an act of purification, life energy is restored for the working days ahead and the space of the town is unified, so that it can again work in its individual parts. (Fig. 3.14)

Victor Turner [10] speaks of everyday structure, of our everyday lives, against which the period of *matsuri* would represent a completely different order, one that he calls "antistructure", the emergence of a different world. However, while it is understandable how that other world comes about in the sense of structure, the problem of why it is that this antistructure totally disrupting the everyday order emerges in the middle of *matsuri*.

In fact, we could also speak of a hidden structure reappearing, instead of an antistructure. The real structure that appears once a year during the time of *matsuri* reveals that the apparent structure of everyday life is a flowing temporary one.

2.4.c. Urban Performance

The *matsuri* is a ritual that mobilizes a large number of people, incorporating frequent ceremonial

aspects while simultaneously adding elements of recreation, so that the overall tone becomes one of a kind of celebration or rejoicing.

Minoru Sonoda [11] made the following observation about the recent tendencies of the *matsuri*:
Just a short time ago, it seemed that the movement marching under the banner of 'modernization' would sweep all before it, and the foolish excitement of *matsuri* was one of the victims of that movement. There was a tendency to add easy rationalization to anything appearing to be beyond the reach of rational understanding. And as a result, many aspects of *matsuri* ended up being transformed into cold, lifeless formalities. On the other hand, recent years have seen a number of new kinds of foolish excitement gain the popular imagination.

Festivals involve an extravagant expenditure of dazzling sound, color and energy. People anticipate becoming crazily intoxicated on the festival itself.
William Currie [12] sums it up very well:
"...Carnivals and street fairs were not new to me, nor were outdoors religious festivals and processions. But the mixture of the sacred and the profane, the solemn and the earthy, rich symbolism and loud bargaining, this was something I had not experienced before. I had the feeling that if one could understand the spirit of *matsuri*, then one would have gone a long way toward understanding the Japanese way of looking at the world..."[13]

When matsuri is viewed structurally, it can be seen to involve dualism, or a situation comprised of opposed elements. At the same time, when we look near the end of Currie's description, he talks about the vivid colorfulness, the wildness of the *mikoshi* procession, the sounds of drum, or the beauty of the Chinese lanterns. In other words, rather than merely a matter of structure, there seems to be a kind of raw experience into which such elements themselves draw participants and observers as well. In other words, when we take up the problem of *matsuri*, rather than as a matter of religious faith, it is in the form of sensations that the phenomenon is recorded in our memories. As a result, we could say that many aspects of present-day *matsuri* involve problems of the senses.

It is worth noting that the festivals of Christianity in the West have become extremely abstract. [14] And in the process of abstraction such festivals, rather than having become detached from symbols, they have become separated from the senses.

On the fifteenth day, the festival reaches its highest point. At which time the men, hoarse from shouting, exhausted from pulling their wagons and intoxicated with rice wine (*sake*), carry the floats and race at the break of dawn. A tremendous energy is released over the entire town. This ritual allows each participant, in the image of a holy fighter, to transcend his limited existence in an ecstatic union with the gods and his comrades. Late in the morning, as the floats are returned back to their neighborhoods, a tremendous silence falls over the town and the gods return to their mountains. The festival has come to an end and the energy of the town has been recovered and renewed.

We can see how the power of games overcomes in some aspects the holiness of the occasion. The huge dolls carried on the *mikoshi* represent images of religious meaning on one side and images of children cartoons on the other side. Also, we feel how the men describe themselves as holy fighters integrating in the act, separating themselves from their everyday activities. Ritual is mixed with play. We can recall the Urban Theater discussed in Chapter 3 and how the built environment becomes a game of signs. If we consider the *mikoshi* as a construction, the similarity could be perceived.

2.4.d. Temporal Borders

The concept of temporal and ephemeral construction in Japan is extended to the city. As we saw, the Japanese cities lack civic spaces with a monumental character in the form we are used to seeing in the West. So public spaces exist in the arrangement of the city as a whole.

The festival perfectly reveals the spatial context of areas surviving from past eras. Sacred spaces as well as the often-unremarkable spatial composition of the neighborhood are vividly brought to life through the festival. Although the portable shrine is, like the *shimenawa*, a temporary structure, it maintains an effect of dominance in the minds of the participants. The whole neighborhood becomes the 'place' created by this temporal and ephemeral construction. At the end of the festival the shrine is dismantled. The festival has ended, and the energy of the town has been renewed.

The concept of temporality of the city can be perceived in two ways:

1. The city itself being temporal, or considered temporal. As we saw before, many factors allow this idea
2. The city houses temporal events, like the *matsuri*, performed by the people and regardless of the temporal configuration of the neighborhood.

It is worth noting also that the *matsuri* discussed earlier, and which continue unchanged from the past, are viewed as a joining of man and nature through ritual. They represent the central act of worship that renews ties with the spiritual world.[15]

The *shime* is erected to welcome the deity to earth, and after the end of the festival thanks are offered to the deity as it leaves the earth again.[16] .The *shime* is a more abstract and vague representation of the sacred. Namely, the *shime* can be considered a symbol of the city,[17] in this case Fukuoka, as a united whole.

The whole city becomes a temporal moving realm whose borders are not physically defined. The borders are connected with time, i.e. the temporal delineation of limits experienced during *matsuri*. Architecture finds

itself caught up, or should we say free, in this fiction domain, the city.

Even physical constructed architecture gives way voluntarily to the flow of the festival. A good example is the Nakasu area in Fukuoka. In the path of the festival, a new commercial complex was built, Hakata Riverain. In order to let the path of the *mikoshi* clear, a passage was designed in order for the procession to be able to visit a neighboring shrine. Since the unity of the complex is needed, a bridge was designed. (Fig. 3.15 ~ 3.18) The design of the new commercial complex gave way to a ritual that takes place once a year. A good example how contemporary design can allow the traditions to go undisturbed. The procession is undisturbed and the *mikoshi* is dismantled for to restart the whole energy the following year. (Fig. 3.19, 3.20)

3. SYNTHESIS

So far we have seen the following temporal elements that constitute the Japanese rites:

Shimenawa This rope can set apart an object or space, at any possible scale, from an otherwise profane environment, forever or only temporarily. If one hangs such a straw rope once a year over one's entrance or around one's premises, this not only sanctifies one's property for the next year, but in addition it invites a deity representing time, the *toshi-gami*, the Year God. Thus by a spatial manipulation, by an act of binding, one is capable of representing and sanctifying, and what is even more important, of measuring and renewing time.

Ritual signs in the form of banners, lanterns and ritual ropes mark the paths, the places and the temporary headquarters of the seven groups to which the community subdivides itself for the time of the festival. How do they affect the perception of space in Japan?

Human history knows of two patterns to represent the sacred by building:

1) The tradition of the pyramids and cathedrals, the timeless and constant in opposition to his own impermanence. Here time was defeated by the seeming timelessness of the material, the stone, iron etc. and by the ideal quality of its form, mostly geometry.
2) The tradition of the bundle of grass or the crown of flowers, i.e. not to allow time to leave traces on his sacred built images. Man himself destroyed them shortly after their completion and ritual use. Then he could afford to build them of grass, straw, reeds, flowers etc., that is, the most impermanent material at his disposal at any one time and place. A sacred and often secret order watched over.

One can probably claim that to date Japan shows few attempts to build monuments for eternity, to outwit time by the seeming durability of certain materials. The phenomenon of cyclic renewal of human artifacts must have pervaded nearly all scales of human building operations. Even whole capitals in Japan were once subject to renewal with the accession of a new ruler.

From the Japanese perspective, forms made of the most impermanent materials are probably far older than objects archeology had been interested in so far. Because of their material quality, these forms are subject to constant renewal, and moreover, because of their inherent sacred character, subject to isomorphic copying. Even some of the oldest of them already show imprints, which can only have been earned through techniques of binding, knotting or folding.

4. CONCLUSION

Space in Japan is defined by time and ritual, and festal rites involve elaborate symbolic temporary constructions. A public space in Japan is rarely conceived of as hard bordered, but rather as *kaiwai*, or an activity space. Public spaces exist in the arrangement of the city or town as a whole, and enter the collective memory of the citizens as a function of the festival.

We can see how the Japanese might think of physical spaces, through the way of everyday activity and the way of the festival as a fluctuation of spaces which are defined by their activities rather than their visual order.

Kaiwai, or activity space, unlike the visually defined spaces of the West, is an amorphous sense of space that changes with the activities of its users and their intentions. The street is the locus of the *matsuri* experience and gains its form from the memory imprinted on it by the people of the community. The street is not seen simply as a corridor of vehicular or pedestrian traffic, but as the connector of private and social space. It is a spatial mode of social integration, characterized by layering function and experience, the basis and culmination of which the experience of *matsuri* during which the environment is charged and infused with the mystical *kami* energy. The public spaces are the streets rather than a central square because the Japanese perception of street and private spaces is a part of an integral space-time continuum or *ma*

In order to understand the actual state of architecture in Japan, one has to go back to the origins. The life cycle of Japanese cities creates a special frame for the architecture concepts. It is an architecture created by the people's memories rather than constructed places. It is a 'placeless' architecture, detached from the physical sense, and related to the signs of the mind.

Japanese *ma*, or space-time relation, is not fragmented, labeled and contained like space in the West, but is rather an emptiness or void that gains its form only in relation to unseen boundaries created by the activities performed in it.

Space-time referred by architects is a sort of spatial current, a combination of spacing and timing as a constant flow of possibilities, a tension between things

allowing for different patterns of interpretation. A Japanese room, for instance, can be used simultaneously for living, sleeping and eating, and is called an eight mat *ma*. Or, the context of space might change from a study to one for a tea ceremony by the addition of a flower arrangement. These artifacts are a 'bringing together' of the space with the utensils, giving the spatial current its temporary form. Like the form of a stream, the form of spaces in a house is the result of process patterns. In fact, Kiyonori Kikutake [18] has said that form is not merely the visible delineation of a space but is rather the total consideration of space with its function. *Ma* is constantly awaiting or undergoing transformation by the availability of physical components and potential uses. Kikutake is recognizing process patterns rather than objects.

The interval of Shinto is therefore closely bound to the intervals of nature, which cause fields to yield the harvest and then to lie in fallow. The Shinto deities are invited for the season of fertility, production and harvest to an impermanent resting-place in the fields. This temporary resting-place for the deities might be symbolized by a straw rope hung between four bamboo saplings set up in a rice field. While the deities are invisible, the way of formalizing and experiencing their presence is postulated by the temporary preparation of a space for the gods to visit. The void in the rice field created by these four saplings (or symbols) is then filled with the spiritual form of the deities called *ki*. The presence of this spiritual force spreads out and transforms the fields, temporarily, from a profane place for growing rice to a sacred place for the deities to rest. The sense of *ma* here, too, is therefore indefinite and temporary, like that of the eight-mat room which can be transformed by sliding doors and the addition of various accoutrements to take on one form after another.

More difficult to understand, however, is the lack of Japanese civic spaces with a monumental character typical of the West. Japan does have great temples and shrines which are, in many ways, equal in scale and grandeur to western architecture Having great open spaces in front of and around buildings. these spaces were to be experienced by moving through them rather than by viewing them from a fixed vantage point. "Sequential spaces may be understood as a distribution of memories of the experience, noting that the content of memory includes not only the beauty of physical space, but also the story, or legend concerning the elements along the path",[19] reflective of the activity of the *matsuri*.

The procession route can lie at a right angle or parallel to the everyday route and in this way the path of the gods is an interpretation to the normal activities of the town and therefore lends itself better to a remembrance of the mythical past. The shift to accommodate the gods signals the cleansing of the town from all blemishes and the recovery of the life energy necessary for the period of prosperity and growth in the streets. The Japanese do not experience space and time as objective detached observers, but are fully involved in them. The Japanese, in experiencing their town spaces sequentially, are renewed and invigorated by the healing actions of the parts as they are magically and mystically subsumed into the human psyche at festival time.[20]

The similarities between the concepts discussed above and contemporary Japanese architecture can now be revealed:

1. The temporal materials being used in the making of the space for the gods to visit could be compared to the contemporary light materials used today. The contemporary temporality here is a feeling evoked by the use of these materials and, sometimes, also their short life span. Architecture is becoming this temporal realm for activities that are renewed periodically.
2. The fact that this construction (*mikoshi*) is built and, after being used, demolished makes it easier for us to understand the acceptance of physical change by Japanese designers. Temporality of construction is a way of thinking. The construction's meaning and function are more significant than its life span.
3. The city, being a temporal frame for this activity brings to mind the new primitivism discussed earlier where life of people is in flux and the physical space tends to lose its meaning. The city becomes like a huge *shimenawa* space created for activities.
4. The ambiguity between reality and fiction through the mixture of rituals and games, the structure and the anti-structure, the everyday order and the temporal order, during the festival. The Urban Theater and the Sea of Signs find their origins.

EPILOGUE

Japan eagerly embraces the 21st century and forges an architecture of transition, which is the expression of a technological, consumer society. Japanese architecture is inviting, fascinating, diverse, free in spirit, responsive to nature, and rich in emotion. Nevertheless, it is not always understood or assimilated correctly by visitors or observers abroad.

There are, perhaps, good reasons why the new Japanese architecture cannot easily be assimilated abroad. This is because it expresses a specific response to Japanese society. So it was clear that in order to understand the physical appearance of Japanese architecture we had to study the concepts that influence it: the city and the traditional thoughts carried on.

In Japan, the age of the ephemeral building has dawned (again). Ephemerality also stimulates inventions and freedom, and represents a shift away from the monumentalism of the past.

As Koji Taki explains: "Ephemerality, if taken in a positive sense, never means that architecture is short-lived, but new meanings are perpetually emerging." In such ephemerality, in relation to the perpetually emerging meanings, there emerges a new space as well. This space comes into being as a result of human actions, events and various phenomena occurring. Space here not merely responds to phenomena but it becomes the phenomena themselves. This is a space that is evoked and is both phenomenal and illusory.

Yet there is a deeper meaning, a reference back to the 'floating world' of fashion, which hides deeper truths, and an implied inquiry of the consumer society. A whole new way of critical thinking is a condition to an understanding of Japanese architecture today. Impermanence is the essence of Japan today.

The new architecture in Japan looks beyond contemporary society. Its obsession with the ephemeral represents a vision of man and nature, which is a central theme in the new global architecture. It invites us to redefine the relationship between the world of nature and the world as created by mankind, which should be the central concern for humanity at the beginning of the 21st century. Japan offers a view of the architecture of the future: now.

Let's recapitulate what we have discussed so far:

There are traditions that are both visible and invisible, the religion, philosophy, aesthetics, lifestyle, customs, psychological environment, emotional sensitivity and a sense of order are all clearly characteristics of the people and their culture, but they remain invisible, an intangible tradition. In contrast, architectural style, works of arts and traditional symbols and forms are given expression in concrete objects such as roof shape, decorative element and traditional performing arts, and these forms are a visible tradition. The Japanese traditions, compared to those of Western societies, tend to place more value on the invisible tradition.

The combination of great wealth, the newness of the city's fabric and the near certainty of its destruction give the life and culture of the city a sharp emotionalism. Disasters precipitate drastic change. Trends that would normally take decades to mature are realized overnight. And the absence of older buildings, which means the absence of context in which a building has to fit, allows the significance of new buildings to receive the most imaginable expression in their design.

This temporality in architecture is not physical, meaning buildings that are short-lived and easily amended or added to, but something that is off-center, an architecture that purposefully rejects consistency. All of these represent temporality in a large sense. Life is defined as the process of continuous growth, both dynamic and stable.

Where the outline is clear, a distinct form emerges that possesses a certain artistic quality. Where the outline is unclear, form is random or amorphous, like a spontaneous organism or the branching of a tree. If there is a hidden order in such amorphous shape, then it cannot be said to be complete chaos, and architecture and cities characterized by it have a potential not sufficiently appreciated until now.

It is certainly true that Tokyo is chaotic and lacking in artistic coordination as well as clear identity. Nevertheless, a tremendous urban population has managed to live in relative harmony, and has been responsible for achievements in economic development that have astonished the world. Cities in the West may give more priority to form than does Tokyo, but with its concern for content Tokyo thrives according to an order hidden within chaos. If there was no such order, how could the citizens of the world's second largest city lead the lives they do in such reasonable comfort?

In architecture, this decentralization and absence of a center or unique landmark sets new values. These values move towards the ephemeral. People's memory becomes more important to satisfy than the locale, or the physical space, itself being defined by people's activities rather than their visual order. Again, architecture responds to this further and goes on in fragmenting the city landscape and detaching itself from any visual and central order. It floats over the city and denies it any imposed restraints, thus becoming again a free-spirit architecture. A spirit because the physical body and material are ever changing in an ever-moving city

The urban realm now functions as a kind of large common living room of the citizens, where the city appears to have no exterior. This city being always on the move, restless, has minimized the traditional notions of permanent residence and home whereby it can be considered as a continuously temporary "camp of urban nomads". The fast changing urban realm as a point of convergence where the life of people is in flux and where the physical, spatial and formal permanence of the environment tends to lose its meaning.

In the fiercely competitive environment, profitability demands the continued attention and attraction of both the public and the media; therefore newness and imaging are often primary criteria in commissioning new edifices. Hence architecture and urbanism tend towards the quality of changeable signs and advertising, whose strategy of fascination is to exploit human desires. The ultimate purpose is to turn people into consumers who are irresistibly attracted to commodities.

Lightness, permeability, fluidity of space, a feeling for temporality and an 'immaterial evocation of building' characterize contemporary Japanese architecture. This is related to a new interpretation and application of technology, different from the idealized one, upon which Modernism was built. The reliance on new technologies has begun to disclose a new technological landscape

We have a generation of architects like Toyo Ito and Itsuko Hasegawa who were born in Tokyo and have spent their whole life there. For them the artificial things like technology or concrete are nature. Actually the massive concrete city looks like a new mountain or river, and that is why the new tendency of the younger generation is easily making a high-tech architecture as second nature or their own nature.

Finally, these few interpretations should be made:

The space that we encounter in Sejima, Ito, Hara, and many others' examples discussed in this research, is thus not a real space; first, it is only an imminent space, and with action or events arising, it is a space by performance.

1. The city, being a provisional domain, shows confusion and fragmentation. Yet, behind this chaos there is an order in the social structure and a certain adherence to the past traditions.
2. The fear of destruction due to repeated disasters and change strengthens the feeling of temporality and makes architects think of the future in its conceptual form rather than its physical permanence. The absence of a directory landmark gives no physical reference to the past.
3. The tradition of Edo, being a fragmented city viewed as a conglomeration of different towns is carried on in Tokyo today, as a modern version of *Meisho Sugoroku* game. The absence of a coherent system loosens the ties on architects and they tend to fragment the system further.
4. The age of signs, media and technological games is reflected in architecture. It responds to the consumer society by projecting this feeling into the construct. Architecture becomes the sign and technology is used as a mere sign language with no intention to forward a statement.
5. The similarities with nature are an escape and at the same time a return. An escape from the consumerist society that became a void technological expression, and a return to mother nature through the use of the same technology as a mean to evoke images of nature.
6. Contemporary Japanese architecture is characterized by lightness, permeability, fluidity of space, a feeling for temporality and an immaterial evocation of building, reflective of the traditional idea of *shimenawa*, the tying of the sacred rope.

In this fast moving society of ours, we find that ideas are changing at a dramatically accelerated pace. Architecture and cities find themselves lagging behind these ever-new ideas. The new spirit of experimentation and the feeling for temporality in Japan could be the concepts that are shaping the future of cities and architecture.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

([1]) L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, Les editions Jean-Michel Place, France. It is monthly magazine for architects and architecture students. Actually, each issue is dedicated to a different theme. The language of publication is French.

([2]) i.e. Shuji Takashina, Yasume Yoshitake (A.A. May 1956), Oshinobu Ashihara (A.A. Oct.-Nov. 1961), K. Sone, R. Suzuki, S. Takemura (A.A. Oct.-Nov. 1970), Kazutoshi Morita (A.A. April 1983, June 1985).

([3]) Serge Salat and Francoise Labbe spent several years in Japan researching Japanese architecture. The outcome was a book, "Le pont flottant des songes/ Createurs du Japon, ed. Hermann, 1986.

([4]) Architectural Design, an imprint of Academy Group. A Wiley-VCH Publication, U.K. It is a monthly magazine for architects, students and teachers, developers and general public interested in architecture. Each issue has a different central theme devoted to a specific topic. A stress is given to theoretical developments.

([5]) Noel Moffett stayed in Japan to make this extensive study.

([6]) The guest-editors were Alison and Peter Smithson.

([7]) Gunter Nitschke has been in Japan closely examining the architecture. He makes important contributions to the further understanding of Eastern art, which hitherto had been on a purely formal level. For the last twenty years, he has been the lecturer in theory and history of East-Asian architecture and urbanism. He is the director of Private Institute for East-Asian Architecture and Urbanism, in Kyoto.

([8]) Botond Bognar was a Monbusho scholar, and he stayed in Tokyo researching about Japanese architecture.

([9]) The first issue of a series of three special issues titled "Japanese Architecture" aiming at charting the evolution of Japanese architecture.

([10]) Lynn Breslin is a partner of the New York based architectural firm Moser & Breslin. She also teaches architecture at both Princeton University and Pratt Institute of Technology.

([11]) Maggie Toy is the actual editor of A.D. magazine.

([12]) Architectural record, division of McGraw-Hill companies. It is a monthly magazine for architects and other members of the design profession. It provides an integrated mix of design ideas, trends, news, business and professional strategies...

([13]) John Ely Burchard went abroad and came back to America offering some critical observations on Japanese architecture. He finds that Japan, with "some of the best modern buildings in the world", faces the same architectural dilemmas, as does the Occident.

([14]) The author is Mildred E. Schmertz

([15]) Paolo Riani is an Italian architect and planner. He had lived and worked in Japan, also lecturing at the urban engineering department of Tokyo University.

([16]) William Marlin has written many articles analyzing the concepts of Fumihiko Maki and Kisho Kurokawa.

([17]) Ibid.

([18]) Martin Filler is editor of House & Garden and frequently writes criticism on architecture and design. He traveled to Japan to see the architecture of Arata Isozaki.

([19]) Abner A. Layne, A.R. March 1989 pp.33-35, explores the opportunities of American architects and constructors in Japan, especially after the signed agreement between Japan and the U.S.A. concerning that subject. Mr. Layne is free-lance writer and former senior/editor of Engineering News-Record.

([20]) E. A. Gutkind, A.D. February 1953, pp.31-34

([21]) Mainly Gunter Nitscke, William Marlin, Serge Salat, Francoise Labbe, Paolo Riani, Op. Cit.

([22]) Douglas Brenner, A.R. March 1985, pp.116-134

([23]) William Marlin, A.R. August 1976, p.80. Imagined Landscape considers how people would inhabit the building, while Primary Landscape considers how people would be affected by the building.

([24]) Serge Salat and Francoise Labbe, A.A. April 1987, p.6. What Fumihiko Maki brings to the surface is a new form of reality: scattered, elliptical, with deliberately weak links, which can be called "floating events".

([25]) Douglas Brenner, A.R. March 1985, p.117. Metamorphosis is the reconciliation of opposites: past versus present, art versus technology,

civilization versus nature. They are conflicting symbols that compose the texture of present-day culture, Oriental and Occidental.
([26]) Serge Salat and Francoise Labbe, Op. Cit. The Gray Space is an allusion to the *Riyuku* gray, which affects Kisho Kurokawa's architecture, where nature and the artificial coexist.
([27]) Lynne Breslin, A.D. May-June 1988, p.28. Savagery is clear in the crowded program, forced several diverging spatial configurations, not always in harmony. Shinohara's theory is also the use of the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss who affirms the will of all humans to symbolize.
([28]) Ibid., p.29. Hiroshi Hara uses Levi-Strauss' construct: Bricolage. It is a collage, which is the combination of quoted elements to create a metaphor. Such metaphors are central to the creation of 'scenes'. Mood is always the lens to any scene.
([29]) Serge Salat and Francoise Labbe, Op. Cit., p.40. The Modality logic is a logic in which A and non-A do not exclude each other. One thing, for example, can be simultaneously 80% A and 20% non-A. It is the cancellation of cultural and spatial limits in architecture.
([30]) Lynne Breslin, Op. Cit., p.30. Toyo Ito's earlier houses explored the "archaeological" origins of architecture. It is a primitive type in which relations among architectural elements can be compared.
([31]) Kazutoshi Morita, A.A. June 1985, p. 63. The author of the article is Japanese, but we considered that he reflects the editor's point of view. Itsuko Hasegawa's abstraction of space implies the transparence of architecture between interior and exterior. It is a transitory architecture towards a new space.
([32]) Ibid. Osamu Ishiyama's architecture is like an illustrated folkloric sign. It is a return to the origins of the "de-rooted" Japanese.
([33]) Ibid. Shin Takamatsu tries to limit and capture his volumes. Interior spaces are hardly perceived from the outside.
([34]) Serge Salat and Francoise Labbe, Op. Cit., p.7. Arata Isozaki's use of classical elements is not a classical work, but an ironical parody that presents itself as a dialogue between East and West, a homage to the golden section and to the positive/negative philosophy of the Orient.
([35]) Ibid., p.23. Hiromi Fujii is influenced by Jacques Derrida and his theory of "deconstruction". His works were structured around the theme of the effacing of conventional meanings in architecture.
([36]) Ibid., p.39. The value of Tadao Ando's architecture lies in the way it enables static worlds to intermingle in multiple super-positions that lead the spectator to a mental space without limits.
([37]) Douglas Brenner, Op. Cit.
([38]) William Marlin, A.R. April 1977, p.107. The Japanese builder, obliged by moral custom, processed by eliminating the insignificant. A single element is enhanced until it grew, becoming the cladding and the core of the thing being done. This is all done without any mathematical concepts. It is a natural cultural process.
([39]) Roland Barthes, Empire of Signs, Cape 1983

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

([1]) Kisho Kurokawa, interview, In *Architectural Design*, Jan./Feb. 1994
([2]) Arata Isozaki drew the Tsukuba Center in ruins during the process of designing the project. So before the building was even built, he imagined it in ruins.
([3]) Here, we are talking about monumental buildings being demolished and replaced, costing billions of Yens and time consumption
([4]) In fact, Toyo Ito knew, when he designed the project, that it was going be demolished a few years later. And this is what he expects from architecture now.
([5]) This expression was used by Hidenobu Jinnai, In *Process Architecture*, Jan.1991
([6]) From the Edo period (1603~1868)
([7]) Kisho Kurokawa, Op. Cit.
([8]) Augustin Berque, *Du Geste a La Cite*, Gallimard, Paris, 1993
([9]) Augustin Berque, Ibid.
([10]) Peter Popham, *Tokyo: the city at the end of the world*, Tokyo, New-York, Kodansha International, 1985
([11]) This expression is used by Toyo Ito in describing the actual state of the city. Instead of trees and shrubs, we have now concrete buildings and blocks.
([12]) Botond Bognar, In *Architectural Design*, March/April 1992, pp. 73-96
([13]) Ibid.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

([1]) Gunter Nitschke, Shime, Binding/Unbinding, In *Architectural Design*, no. 12, 1974
([2]) Vladimir Krstic, In *Architectural Design*, Sept./Oct. 1998, pp. 10-15
([3]) Mitsuo Inoue, *Space In Japanese Architecture*, Weatherhill, New York, 1974
([4]) Sakae Mogi, Religious Space in the Village as Seen through Festival and Legend, In *Matsuri, Festival and Rite in Japanese life*, Institute of Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 1988
([5]) Ibid.
([6]) Toshiaki Harada, Op. Cit. Toshiaki Harada, The Origin of Rites of Worship within The Local Community, In *Matsuri, Festival and Rite in Japanese life*, Institute of Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 1988
([7]) Ibid.
([8]) F. Thompson, In *Architectural Review*, Oct. 1997, pp. 78-83
([9]) It is worth mentioning the Japanese system of *Sha*. It is close to being somewhat an obscure phenomenon in Japanese society. For instance, in Japan, business companies of all kinds are called *kai-sha* where *kai* simply means an association. Members of a company are called *shai-in* and the president *sha-cho*. In Hakata, community participant members are called *sha-in* and their leader, *sha-cho*. This seems to suggest that, in Japan, even a business company is a quasi-religious group held together by a religious sentiment towards their common shrine, the company. From this perspective it is not surprising that Japanese workers are loyal to their companies, and there are very few strikes in the country. After F. Thompson, Ibid.
([10]) Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, Adline, Chicago, 1969
([11]) Minoru Sonoda, Festival and Sacred Transgression, In *Matsuri, Festival and Rite in Japanese life*, Institute of Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 1988
([12]) William Currie, "Matsuri", In *A Hundred Things Japanese*, Japan Culture Institute, Tokyo, 1969. This book is issued by the Japan Culture Institute and in which foreigners with an interest in Japan were asked to write about various aspects of Japanese culture.
([13]) Ibid.
([14]) Keiichi Yanagawa, The Sensation of Matsuri, In *Matsuri, Festival and Rite in Japanese life*, Institute of Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 1988
([15]) Amy Reigle Newland, *Tokyo: Form and Spirit*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1986, pp. 98, 99
([16]) Hirochika Nakamaki, Divine Symbols in Japanese Festivals, In *Matsuri, Festival and Rite in Japanese life*, Institute of Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 1988
([17]) Ibid.
([18]) Kiyonori Kikutake, *World Architecture 2*, pp. 10-19, 26-27
([19]) Teiji Itoh, *The Japanese Approach to Urban Space*, Tokyo, 1973, p.109
([20]) F. Thompson, Op. Cit.

GRAPHS AND FIGURES

Figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. The Number of Pages and the Categories of All Articles

- x-axis: the chronological order of the articles.
- Left y-axis: the number of pages of each article.
- Right y-axis: the categories of the articles.

The categories were classified as:

1. News: simple mentioning of architectural works, sometimes not exceeding a few lines. It is a simple news bulletin in order just to know what is happening in Japan on the architectural scene.
2. Description: containing simple descriptions of projects and architectural works. It is mainly functional and/or technical description without deep analysis.
3. Analysis: discussing concepts and methods of design of architects and/or projects. Usually it goes deeper in the concept of the project, sources of ideas and analysis of the outcome.
4. Space Concepts: related to Japanese concepts of space as a theme by themselves. Since it is my main concern, I created this category in order to trace the critics' interest in searching for the Japanese concepts as a theme, going beyond projects and architects.

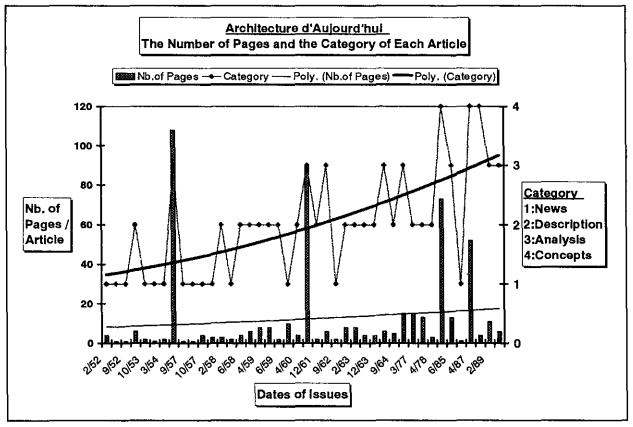


Figure 1.1.

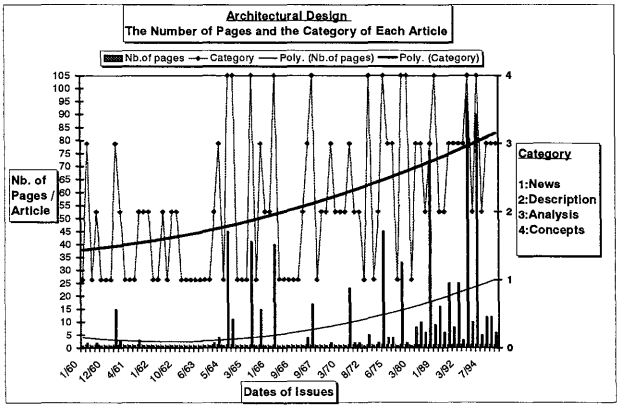


Figure 1.2.

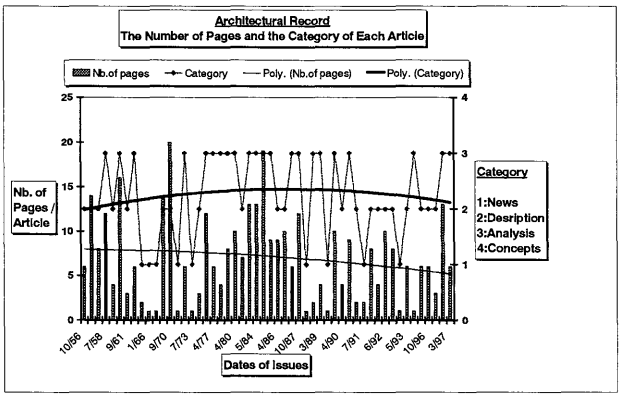


Figure 1.3.

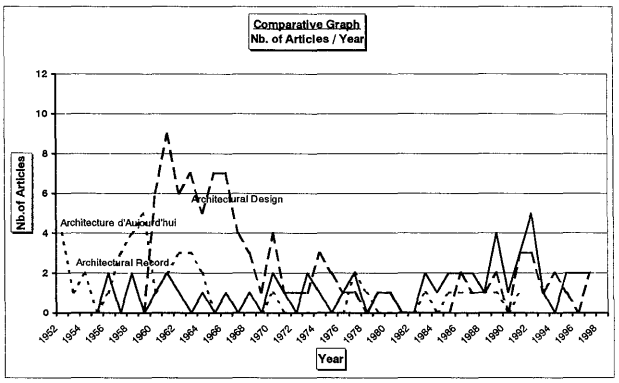


Fig. 1.4. A Comparative Analysis of the three magazines

- x-axis: the chronological order of the articles, taken in years.
- y-axis: the number of articles for each year, for all three magazine.

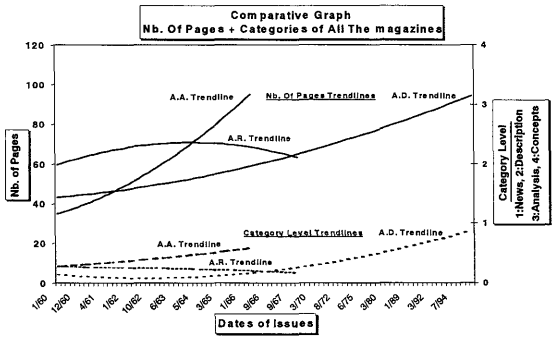


Figure 1.5. Comparative Graph of the Number of Pages and Category Level Trend lines in All three Magazines

- x-axis: the chronological order of the articles.
- Left y-axis: the number of pages of each article.
- Right y-axis: the categories of the articles.

GRAPHS AND FIGURES OF CHAPTER 2

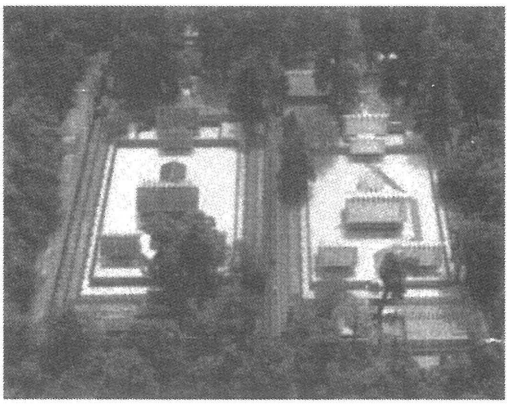


Fig. 2.1. The twenty-year old precinct of the Inner Shrine of Ise and its newly erected copy. The process of renewal in the interval of a generation.

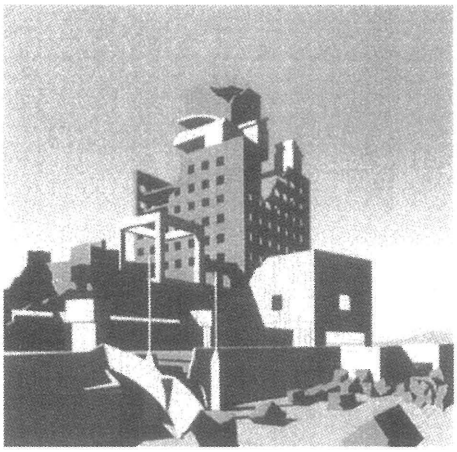
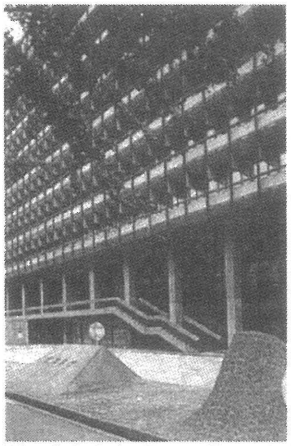


Fig. 2.2. Tsukuba Center in ruins. Serigraphy by Arata Isozaki showing the constant fear of destruction and alteration even during the design phase.



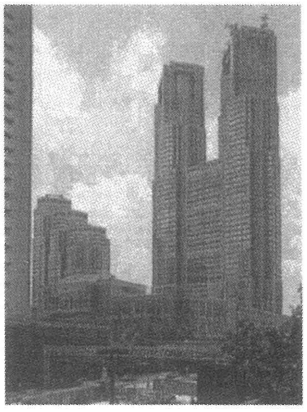


Fig. 2.3, 2.4. Kenzo Tange's Tokyo City Hall, 1957, which was destroyed and Tange designed the new City Hall in Shinjuku. The drastic change that occurs in Tokyo in a short period of time.

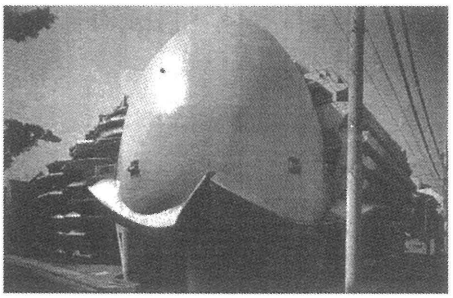


Fig. 2.5. Masaharu Takasaki, Crystal Light. This building was built in 1987 and destroyed in 1990 without ever being used. It was replaced by another more profitable structure.

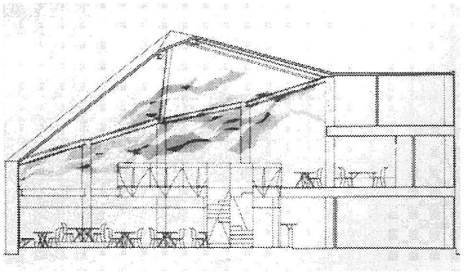


Fig. 2.6. Toyo Ito, Nomad Pub, Tokyo, 1986. Designed within two weeks in 1986, it has been replaced with something else.

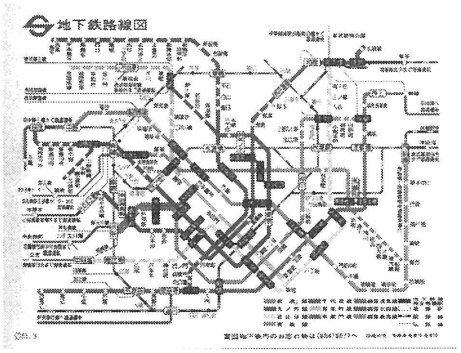


Fig. 2.7. The Subway map of Tokyo, showing that it is an agglomeration of many small towns that do not add up to one whole.

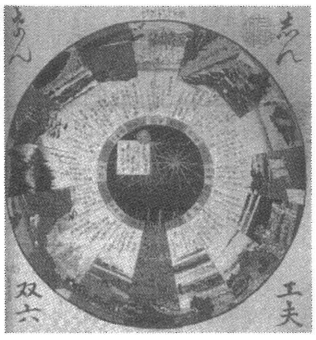


Fig. 2.8. Meisho Sugoroku game of the Edo era. The parts of the city do not add up to one whole.

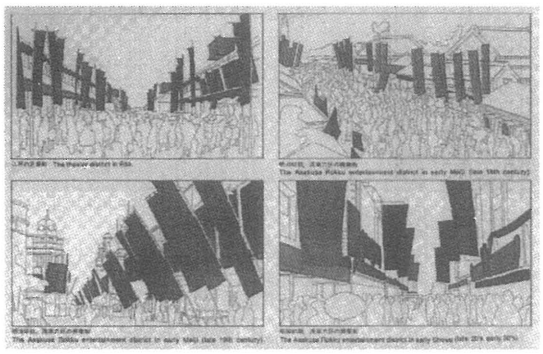


Fig. 2.9. Since the Edo era, banners and signs overcome architecture. It is noticed how the urban theater of Tokyo is carried on since the Edo era, leading to the architecture of signs.

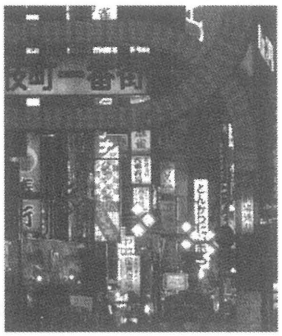


Fig. 2.10. Urban landscape in Shinjuku, Tokyo. At night, architecture appears to be replaced by neon lights hanging in the air.

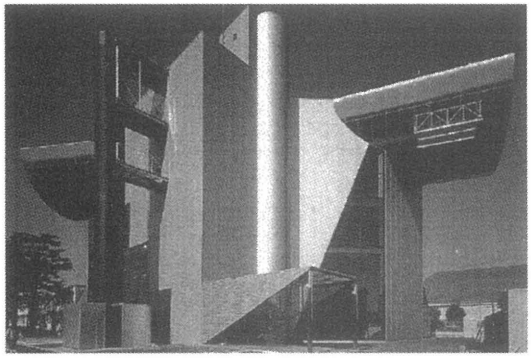
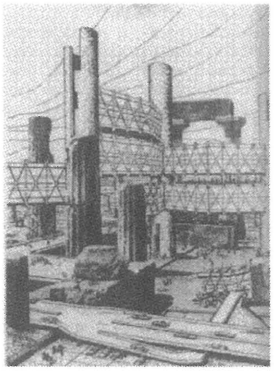


Fig. 2.11. Kazuo Shinohara, TIT Centennial Hall, Tokyo. "The City in the Air" of Isozaki is repeated here by considering the city as topography and building on it, and out of it.



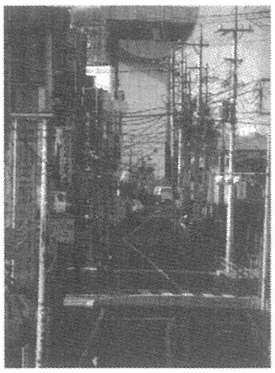
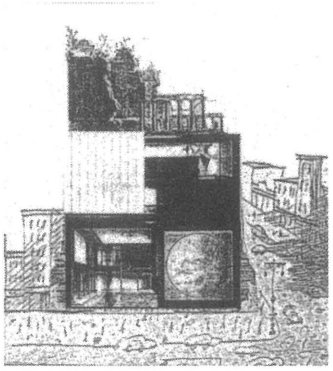


Fig. 2.12. "The City in the Air", Arata Isozaki.
Fig. 2.13. Kazuo Shinohara, TIT Centennial, Tokyo. He considers the city as topography and builds over it, in a detached way from his environment.



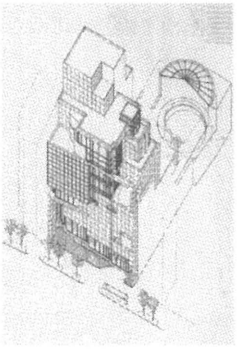
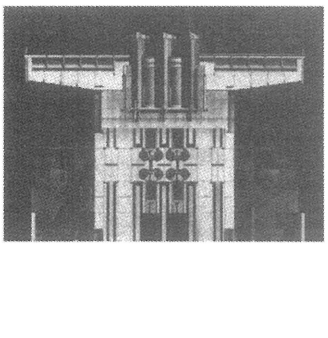


Fig. 2.14, 2.15. Fumihiko Maki, Spiral, Tokyo. Images of the city as a ruinous acropolis, and building over it and out of it.
He refers to a ruinous acropolis when imaging the upper part of his Spiral building in Tokyo, in reference to his interpretation of the city as a metaphorical archaeological site.

Fig. 2.16. Hajime Yatsuka, Tarlazzi Building. A collection of fragments in architecture. It is an architecture that floats 'on the sea of signs', resonating with the urban theater of Tokyo.



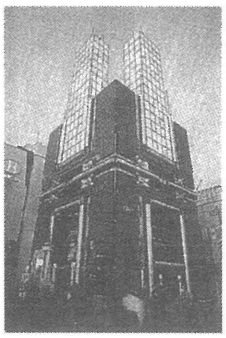
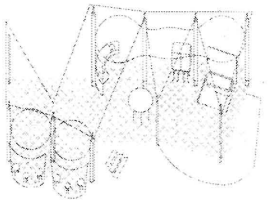


Fig. 2.17. Shin Takamatsu, Syntax, Kyoto.
Resembling a robot, the building has no connection whatsoever with the rest of its urban environment.
Fig. 2.18. Shin Takamatsu, Kirin Plaza, Osaka.
Technology is a computer-controlled system of electric signs. Like the Japanese city, it is superficial. It is an urban theater, a stage set. It is a difficult, highly elaborated and personal style and monuments in search for a meaning.



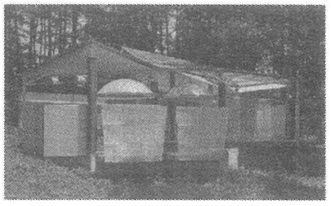
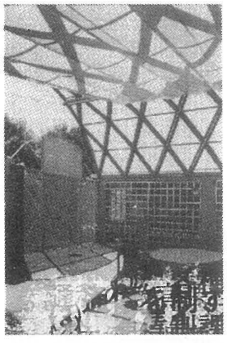


Fig. 2.19, 2.20. Kazuyo Sejima, Platform #2.
Sejima evokes fluid spaces by performance, suggesting an architecture as site that is generated by actions, a 'place' denoted by temporal potential capacity rather than a lasting construct. Also, this 'nomadic architecture' is limited to thin, protective roofs, like tents floating above airy spaces, subject to light and shadow.



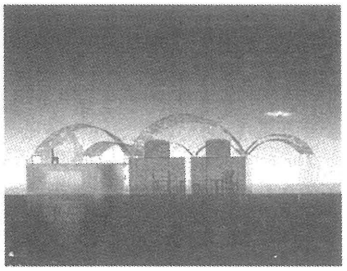
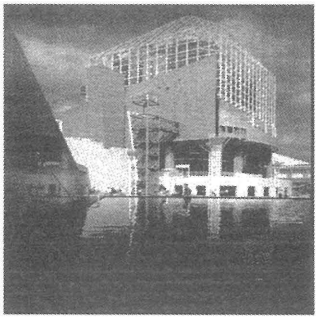


Fig. 2.21, 2.22. Toyo Ito, Silver Hut, Tokyo. The architecture of Urban Nomads. It is formed by natural elements such as wind and sunshine. Life of people is in flux. It is a 'primitive hut', but conceived in the modern urban environment (or jungle) of Tokyo. Instead of wood and logs, it is built with lightweight, available and cheap metallic materials of today.



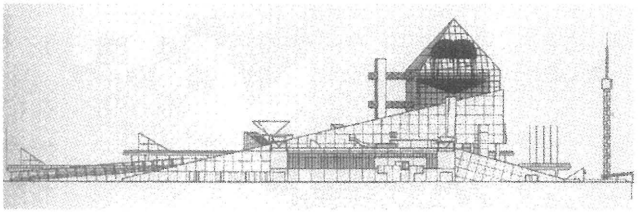


Fig. 2.23, 2.24.. Minoru Takeyama, Tokyo Port Terminal. Artificial Hills over the borrowed landscape. Architecture is also penetrated by natural elements such as wind and sun. He is interpreting the city as an archaeological site.

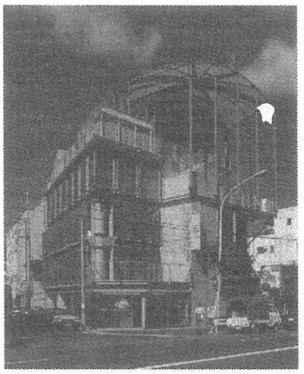


Fig. 2.25. Riken Yamamoto, Rotunda, Yokohama. Riken Yamamoto calls the 'city as topography.' Rotunda is designed to comply with the characterless suburban setting of Yokohama.

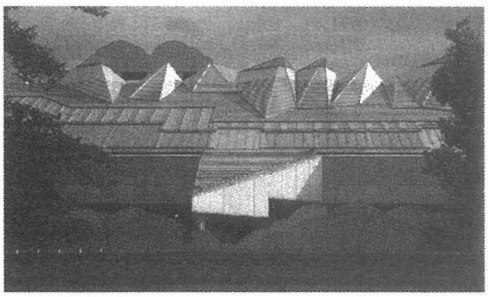
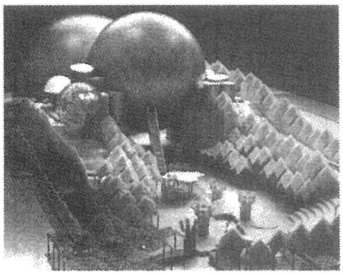


Fig. 2.26. Hiroshi Hara, Iida Museum. Forms of hills, trees, etc. and highly polished materials evoke nature in architecture.
His undulating forms, designed with highly polished aluminum plates, are to remind us of such natural formations as clouds, mist and foliage both outside and inside.



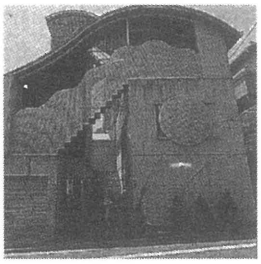


Fig. 2.27. Itsuko Hasegawa, Shonendai Center. The city is a metaphor of nature, and the elements of nature are reflected in the materials used.
Itsuko Hasegawa intends to redefine 'architecture as another nature'. She shapes her works as complex assemblages analogous to nature.
Fig. 2.28. Itsuko Hasegawa, House in Nerima. The simulation of nature in architectural forms. It is also a trial towards a new technological vernacular.

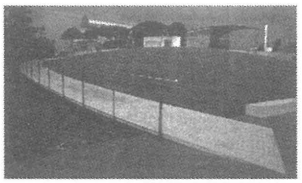
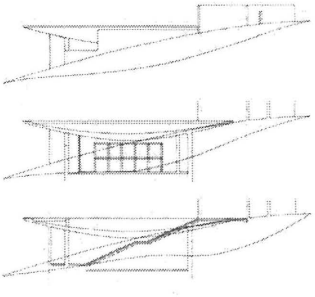


Fig. 2.29, 2.30. Toyo Ito, Yatsushiro Museum, Kumamoto. Life of people as urban nomads, and using nature as integral part of the building. Like Tadao Ando, the earthwork is an active part of the building.



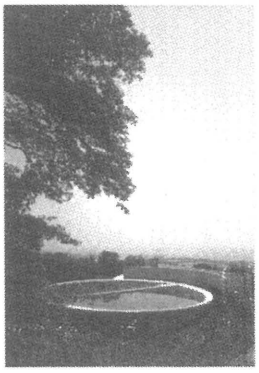


Fig. 2.31, 2.32. Tadao Ando, Honpukuji Temple, Awaji-shima. This building creates a special relationship between architecture and the reality of the land. The earthwork is neither landscaping nor gardening. It is an active part of the building.

GRAPHS AND FIGURES OF CHAPTER 3

Fig. 3.1. With the *shimenawa*, or the tying of a sacred rope, a space called *iwasaka* (a sacred area marked off by a stone) is constructed. It is a temporal space, where the gods descend for a brief period of time.

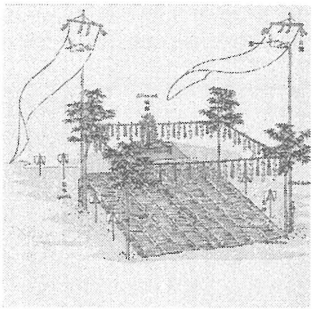
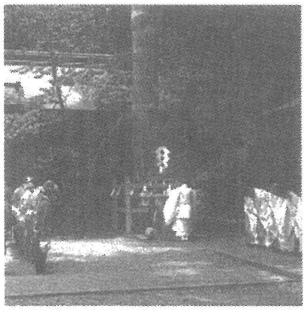


Fig. 3.2. *himorogi* (a symbolic square demarcated with straw ropes hung between four posts) was erected for the *kami* to inhabit.
Perishable materials, through human action, are transformed into an architectural conceptualization. The desire to capture and contain the holy power of the deity was a primary motive.



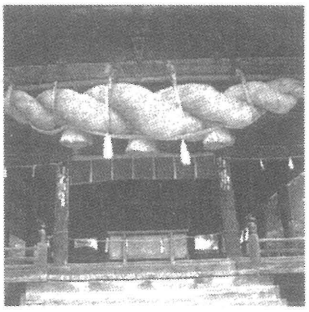


Fig. 3.3, 3.4. Different types of *shimenawa*, defining a sacred space.

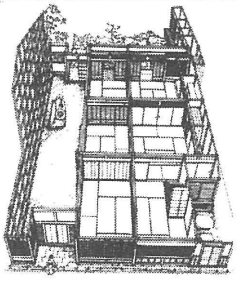


Fig. 3.5. Traditional interior space, a domain created for humans and also for ancestral spirits, according to Mitsuo Inoue

Fig. 3.6, 3.7. The blessing of the parts that will form the *mikoshi*, the portable shrine. Also the blessing of the people who will engage in the activity. It is expected that the gods will occupy the *mikoshi* and the people using it and, therefore, the entire neighborhood as they move in it.

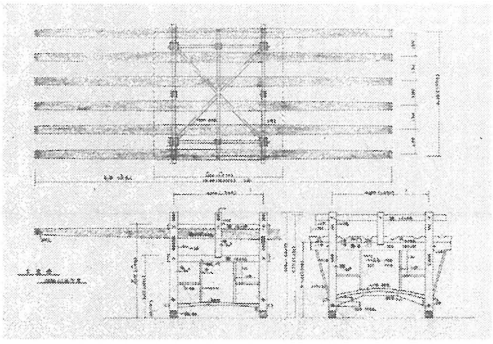


Fig. 3.8. Building the *mikoshi* requires a lot of effort and a preciously rare skill. It is a perfectly balanced and aesthetic architectural work.

Fig. 3.9. The *mikoshi* is built with high precision craftsmanship, transferred from one generation to the next. In the same manner as the building craftsmanship.

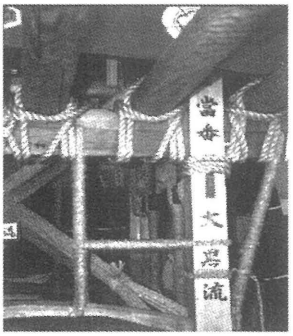


Fig. 3.10, 3.11. Although the *mikoshi* is built of temporal material, it is a high precision temporal shrine. A lot of energy is spent to build it. It weighs a little more than one ton.

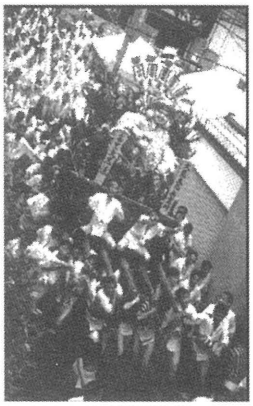


Fig. 3.12, 3.13. The *mikoshi* is carried through the neighborhood to entertain the gods.
The traditional space composition is temporarily brought to life. The whole town becomes the temporal frame for this temporal religious activity.

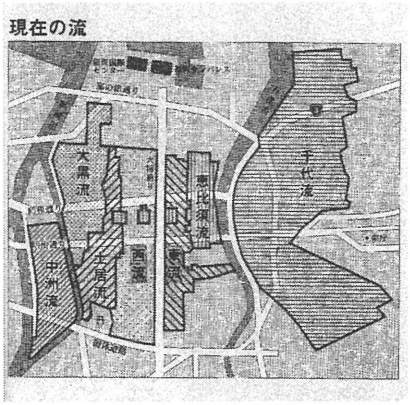


Fig. 3.14. The town is divided into *chonai*. These neighborhoods are decided by the people, independently from the actual configuration of the town. The memory of the people is activated and defies the physical configuration.

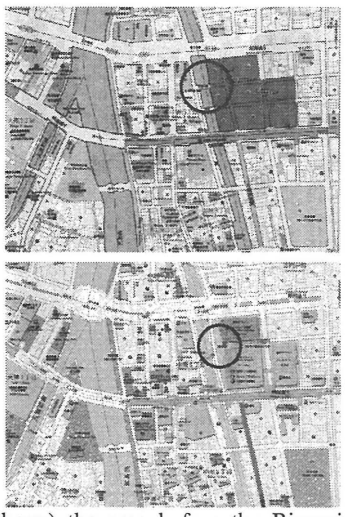
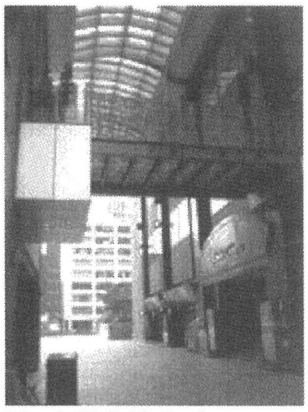


Fig. 3.15. (above) the area before the Riverain complex was built.
Fig. 3.16. (below) the area after the Riverain complex was built. The circle indicates the location of the shrine to be visited.
Nakasu, part of Hakata, where the *matsuri* takes place and the processions are held. In order not to change the path of the *mikoshi*, a passage was included in the design of the new Riverain complex. The *mikoshi* can always visit the shrine that was kept in place.



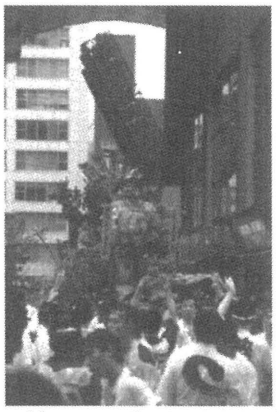


Fig. 3.17, 3.18. In the passage created between the two parts of the building, a bridge was designed to allow continuity in the divided complex. However, the bridge is a movable one in order to allow the procession undisturbed.
And since the *mikoshi* represents a temporal shrine, it should not be covered at all.

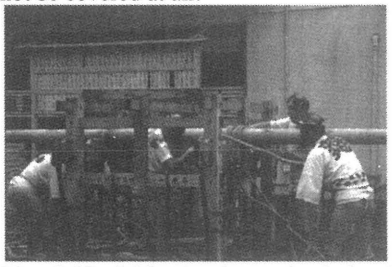


Fig. 3.19, 3.20. At the end of the festival, the *mikoshi* is dismantled. This is another way of discovering the spatial perception of space in Japan. Space is perceived through rituals and events, not through its physical components. The festival has ended and the energy of the town is restored.