Frank Lloyd Wright was unequivocal concerning the importance of responding to place as a primary 'organic' design principle, having insisted that "it is in the nature of any organic building to grow from its site, . . . the ground itself held always as a component . . . part of the building":[1]

> In any and every case the character of the site is the beginning of the building that aspires to be architecture. And this is true wherever the site or building may be. It is true whether it be a dwelling among the Wisconsin hills or a house on the bare prairie, the imperial Hotel at Tokyo, or a skyscraper in New York City. All must begin where they stand.[2]

While there were many instances when even Wright was unable to fully live up to this ideal of place-specific building,[3] arguably in works such as Fallingwater he came closer to realising it than almost any other modern architect (Figures **2**, **3**). On his first sight of Japan, moreover, from the deck of the ocean liner *Empress of China* in March 1905, Wright recognised the same sense of belonging to their surroundings in many traditional Japanese buildings, which—prophetically, in light of the discussion to come—he suggested, "like the rocks and trees, grew in their places."[4]

2 Integration of an existing boulder as a hearth. Frank Lloyd Wright: Fallingwater, Bear Run, PA, 1936

3 Accommodation of an existing tree. Frank Lloyd Wright: Fallingwater, Bear Run, PA, 1936

Built Marking of Natural Places

In early Japan, as in many other cultures, awareness of physical objects long pre-dated any conscious notion of space.[5] Much as elsewhere, Japanese understanding of space seems to have begun with the vague idea of an essentially unfilled gap between tangible things, with the emphasis firmly on the latter.[6] Indeed the early Japanese seem to have understood their world as essentially

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1 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954), p. 41.

2 Wright, *The Future of Architecture*, p. 322.

3 The 1909 Stewart House, for example, is almost indistinguishable from several of the Prairie Houses Wright designed for the Mid-West, and yet is located in an entirely different environment, near Santa Barbara in California.

4 Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Print and the Renaissance," manuscript, Taliesin, 15 November 1917. © The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, in Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings: 1894–1930* (New York: Rizzoli/FLW Foundation, 1992), p. 152. During almost four years in Japan between 1916 and 1922, Wright could hardly have avoided becoming aware of the Japanese reverence for unusual natural objects, especially peculiar trees and rocks, and his own preference for sites containing such distinguishing features could well have been encouraged by this experience. He described asking himself at the outset of each project, for example: "has the site features, trees, rocks, a stream . . . . Has it some fault or special virtue?" Wright, *The Future of Architecture*, p. 322.

5 It was not until the influx of Western ideas at the end of the nineteenth century that any abstract concept of space itself was recognised in Japan, and then a new word, *kukan*, had to be coined to describe it. On this subject, see for example "The Preeminence of Material Objects," in Mitsuo Inoue, *Space in Japanese Architecture*, Trans. Toshio Watanabe (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, 1985), pp. 7–17.

6 In English of course this kind of gap is commonly described as 'a space.' In Japan it was given the name '*ma*.' While this term later came to take on other important implications in Japanese culture, like the word 'interval' it is also

4 Tectonic marking of a natural 'object-place.' Deified camphor tree, Temple of Zentsu-ji, Kagawa

5 A taboo rope acknowledging the spirit of a natural place. Hiroshige Utagawa, "Fudo Falls, Oji," *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1857

a constellation of 'object-places.' Initially these were distinctive features in the natural landscape, such as unusually large trees, peculiarly-shaped rocks, or even entire mountains and islands, all of which were considered places where energetic spirits known as *kami* emerged into the physical world.[7] Described as *shintai* when believed to be permanently occupied 'spirit bodies,' and *yorishiro* when thought to be visited by *kami* only occasionally, these natural features of the landscape were treated with religious awe as manifestations of powerful natural forces.[8] Wherever possible the object was bound with a rice-straw taboo rope, known as a *shimenawa*, which served both as a visible mark of respect for the *kami* and clearly separated their domains from those of humans.[9]

These distinctive features in the natural landscape were effectively the first places recognised by the Japanese, and significantly they were acknowledged through the fundamentally tectonic act of enclosure (Figures **4–9**). While many of their sites were later also marked by Shinto buildings, the bound objects themselves were in effect the first shrines. As the noted architectural historian Teiji Itoh explains:

> Originally there were no shrine buildings in Japan. Instead, a tree, a forest, a giant boulder, or a mountain stood festooned with sacred ropes of worship.[10]

If binding is considered a form of building in its most basic sense, then these natural-object shrines were in effect the first Japanese built responses to place, and in their siting—if not in their forms—they could hardly have been more place-specific.[11]

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routinely used to refer to periods between events in time. Although the Japanese notion of place is generally considered to *include* a time component, for analytical purposes, built responsiveness to each is examined separately in this study.

7 Chikao Fujisawa has suggested that it is appropriate to understand *kami* as "the deification of the life-force which pervades all beings, animate and inanimate," and this is the sense in which the term is used throughout the present work. Chikao Fujisawa, "Some Parapsychological Aspects of Shinto," in Jean Herbert, *Shinto: At the Fountain-head of Japan* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), p. 25.

8 The two characters of the word '*yorishiro*' (依代) translate literally as 'hiding behind' and 'substitute object.' These objects are treated as the temporary haunts of *kami*.

9 The earliest mention of the *shimenawa* appears in the first history of Japan, the *Kojiki*, where it is recorded as having been used to prevent the Sun Goddess Amaterasu from returning to hide in a cave. Its original purpose, then, may have been as much to contain *kami* as to deter *people* from trespassing onto their domains. See *The Kojiki: Records of Ancient Matters*, trans. Basil Hall Chamberlain (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1981), p. 65 n. 34.

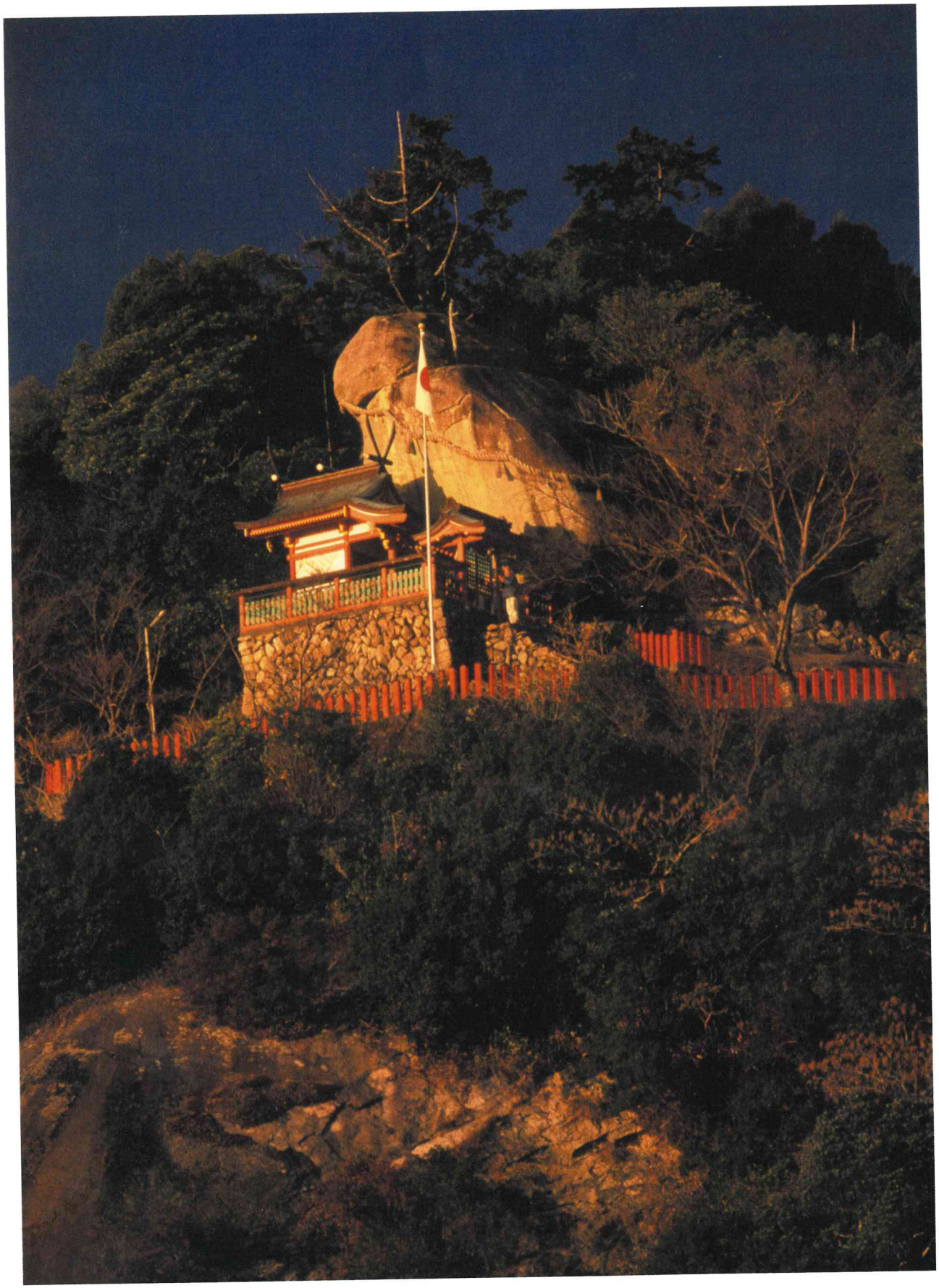
10 Teiji Itoh (text) photographs by Yukio Futagawa, *The Roots of Japanese Architecture* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan Sha, 1963), p. 21.

11 For more on the Japanese tradition of binding as an act of building, see Gunter Nitschke, "Shime: Binding/Unbinding," *Architectural Design*, 44, no. 12 (December 1974): pp. 747–791.

6 Built acknowledgement of the spirit of a natural place. The sacred 'wedded rocks' at Shimamachi, Fukuoka

7 The formal entrance to the sacred island of Miyajima. Seaward gate of Itsukushima Shrine, Hiroshima

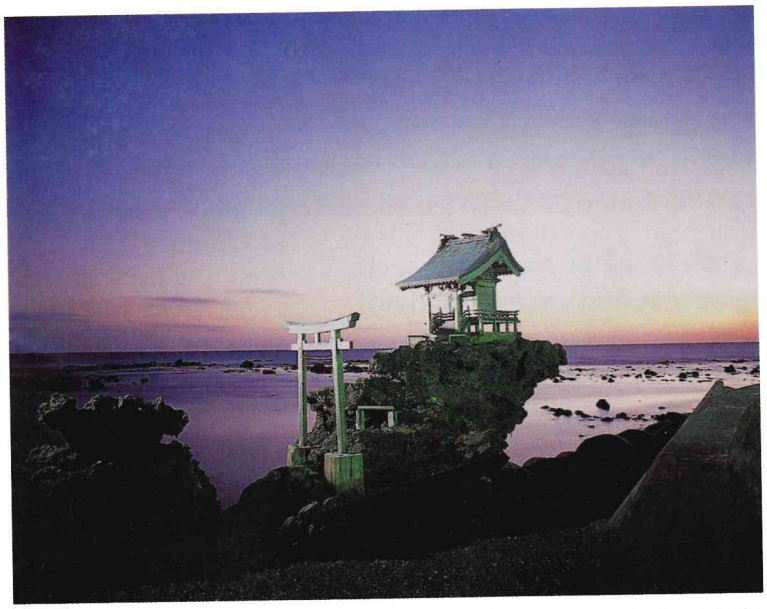
8 A volcanic mountain treated as a sacred object. Entrance to the shrine at the base of Mount Iwaki, Aomori



9 The sacred Gotobiki Iwa, or 'Toad Rock,' Mount Kamikura, Wakayama.

These spirits inhabiting the natural landscape were—and to a remarkable extent still are—believed by the Japanese to be capable of influencing events within their vicinity.[12] The political assassination which took place in 1219 under the ancient ginkgo tree at Kamakura's Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, for example, was thought to be due to a disgruntled *kami*, which was duly placated by binding the tree with a taboo rope (Figure **10**). In contrast, three centuries later, the unlikely victory of the Japanese Matsumae clan in a seemingly lost battle with the indigenous Ainu at Kumaishi in Hokkaido was attributed to the benevolent intervention of the *kami* of a peculiarly-shaped rock, behind which the Japanese were taking refuge when an earthquake suddenly sent their enemy into unexpected flight. In gratitude, a small shrine was erected on the outcrop, where local people still make offerings to this day (Figure **11**).

10 The spirit of a natural object-place acknowledged as an act of placation. Deified gingko tree, Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, Kamakura, Kanagawa



11 The spirit of a natural object-place acknowledged as an act of gratitude. The Kiganunseki, or 'Strange-Cloud-Stone Rock,' Kumaishi, Hokkaido

12 There are clearly parallels in Western cultures of buildings being used to placate gods thought to inhabit the landscape. See for example Vincent Scully, *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962). As the historian and contemporary Japanese architectural critic Hiroyuki Suzuki has noted, in their association with particular locations, Japanese land spirits (*jishu-shin*) are essentially similar to the Western concept of a 'spirit of place.' When it was first articulated in the Roman term 'genius loci,' this notion was likewise also associated with objects. See Hiroyuki Suzuki, "*Genius loci no kengen—Biwa-ko sosui to iumono,*" in Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, trans. Kunio Kato and Sachio Tasaki (Tokyo: Sumai no Toshokan Shuppan Kyoku, 1994), appendix, pp. 2–4, in which the author uses the term '*chirei*' as the Japanese equivalent of genius loci. This subject is also explored more generally in Kevin Nute, "*Kami* and the Spirit of Place in Japan," *Journal of Architecture and Building Science* (Architectural Institute of Japan), 111, no. 1396 (October 1996): pp. 48–49.

Animism of this kind was clearly by no means unique to Japan.[13] In occupying a group of mountainous volcanic islands frequently visited by lethal earthquakes, typhoons and landslides, however, the early Japanese may have had more reasons than most to respect the forces of nature. A passage from the *Nihongi*, one of the first chronicles of early Japan, seems to suggest as much when it notes how even "the very rocks, trees, and herbs were all given to violence."[14]

This honouring of the spirits of natural places through physical marks of respect was apparently motivated primarily by self-preservation and the sense of security afforded by the belief that they were effectively pacified. As the anthropologist Mircea Eliade has suggested, early humans in general not only seem to have gained a feeling of protection from living close to such sacred places,[15] but these distinctive landmarks also helped them to orientate themselves spatially and thereby feel more at home in the world:

> . . . the discovery—that is, the revelation—of a sacred place possesses existential value for religious man; for nothing can begin, nothing can be *done*, without a previous orientation—and any orientation implies acquiring a fixed point.[16]

Making Space *Between* the Sacred and the Profane

12 An *iwakura*, the prototype of the sacred Shinto precinct. Achi Shrine, Okayama

To avoid either humans or *kami* intruding onto the other's territory, in addition to sacred natural objects themselves being bound with taboo ropes, in many cases the space immediately surrounding them was also roped off (Figure **12**). The resulting precinct, or *kekkai*,[17] was effectively a mediating zone of sanctified nature, *in between* a piece of true wilderness occupied by the *kami* and the domesticated world of man, which some believe was one of the indigenous sources of the Japanese garden.[18]

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13 Indeed it appears to be an almost universal stage of human civilisation which even occurs in the development of the individual. See, for example, "The Origins of Child Animism," in Jean Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, trans. Joan and Andrew Tomlinson (London: Granada, 1973), pp. 236–243.

14 W.G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from Earliest Times to* AD *697* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), p. 60.

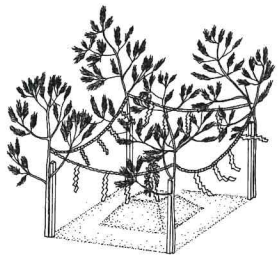
15 Eliade suggested: "The man of the archaic societies tends to live as much as possible *in* the sacred or in close proximity to consecrated objects." Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. William Trask (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1987), p. 12.

16 Ibid., p. 22.

17 The word '*kekkai*' derives from esoteric Buddhism, where it represented a sacred enclosure intended to ward off evil spirits. It was only applied to Shinto precincts much later, but its use does seem to reinforce the suspicion that the original role of Shinto taboo ropes was as much to try to control *kami* as to honour them.

18 Masao Hayakawa, for example, has suggested that the common Japanese word for garden, *niwa*, first appears in Japanese literature in the *Nihon Shoki* where it was used to refer to a place purified for the worship of gods. See Masao Hayakawa, *The Garden Art of Japan*, trans. Richard L. Gage (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, 1973), p. 27. Wright, for one, shared this opinion, having suggested: "Their gardens were idealized patterns of their landscape—they were native *shrines*, in themselves a form of worship for their native land." Frank Lloyd

The temporary version of this sacred precinct, the *himorogi*, consists of a branch of an evergreen *sakaki* tree set up at the centre of a roped enclosure as a resting place for a visiting *kami*. (Figure **13**). These four-posted enclosures derive their identity as places from the objects and beings which temporarily occupy them, and might well be indicative of the way habitable space in general was originally perceived in Japan.[19]



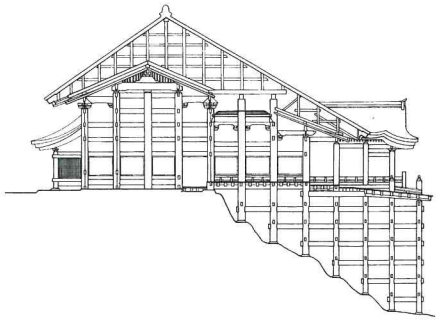
13 The *himorogi*: a temporary sanctified space centred on a relocated *yorishiro*.

Giving Way to the Lie of the Land

Although these initial Japanese architectural responses to natural places were effectively a process of *marking* through the specific location of more or less standard built forms, the particular characteristics of the land eventually began to be affect the forms of buildings themselves. Until the tenth century, for example, most Buddhist temples in Japan had been built on flat sites in the midst of cities, and were generally based on bilaterally symmetrical Chinese models. The temple complexes built by the so-called 'esoteric' Buddhist sects established in Japan after this time, however, were frequently located away from the political life of the court, often on remote mountain sites. As part of their greater respect for the uniqueness of the individual, these new religious communities went to considerable lengths to adapt both the layout and structures of their buildings to the particular terrain.[20] The result in each case was a unique marriage of geometric and natural order, which in addition to revealing the character of the site also created a sense that the buildings—and by extension their occupants—somehow 'belonged' there (Figure **14**).

14 Temple layout and individual structures adapted to natural terrain. Temple of Muro-ji, Nara

The construction of *kake-zukuri*, or 'hanging-style' buildings, which had their origins in Chinese cliff temples, developed in Japan during this period largely in response to these new mountain locations. In order to create level floor platforms on sloping sites without the need to cut into the mountainside, the lengths of the timber columns supporting these structures were individually cut to fit the particular profile of the land (Figure **15**). While this



15 The integration of a *kake-zukuri* structure and its site. Section through the main hall of the Temple of Kiyomizu-dera, Kyoto

Wright, "The Print and the Renaissance," manuscript, Taliesin, 15 November 1917. © The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, in Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings: 1894–1930*, p. 152.

19 *Yorishiro* in general, and the *himorogi* in particular, are central to the relationship between place and time in Japan and their architectural implications will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

20 As Teiji Itoh explains, "Esoteric temples were free of the roofed corridors and enclosing walls that had characterised Buddhist temples of other sects. Their compounds were the sacred forests in which they stood." Teiji Itoh, *The Gardens of Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1984), p. 76. The character of these esoteric temple complexes is described in detail by Gunter Nitschke in his pioneering article, "'MA': The Japanese Sense of 'Place'," *Architectural Design*, 36, no. 3 (March 1966): pp. 116–156.

was primarily a pragmatic choice, and only to a much lesser extent to avoid damaging the landscape, it nonetheless effectively tied the built form inextricably to the particular piece of ground it occupied. The structure would literally be unable to stand in any other location, and what would often otherwise have been an unremarkable slope was dramatically revealed in the form of the building. Not only does the structure mirror the uniqueness of its particular location on the earth's surface, but through its effective merging with the ground, it evokes a powerful sense of being part of its place.

Though never in reality quite as dramatic as the woodblock prints of Hiroshige and his protégé Hiroshige II would have us believe, the *kake-zukuri* structures at the temples of Bandai-ji and Kasamori-ji were typically inseparable from their unique sites. Being so rooted in their particular place gave these structures an air of almost inevitability. They could, it seems, have existed virtually nowhere else (Figures **16**, **17**).

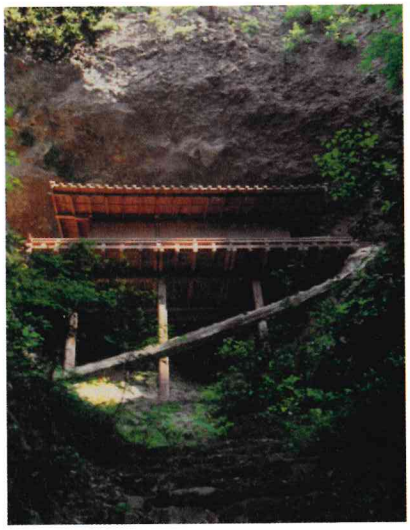
16 A *kake-zukuri* Buddhist Kannon hall built to protect shipping on the Inland Sea. The Kannon-dou, Temple of Bandai-ji, Hiroshima (1570). Hiroshige Utagawa: "The Kannon Hall at Cape Abuto in Bingo Province," *Famous Views of the Sixty-odd Provinces*, 1853

17 A *kake-zukuri* Buddhist Kannon hall built to honour the spirit of an auspicious sandstone outcrop. The Daihizan Nankou-in, Temple of Kasamori-ji, Chiba (1028). Hiroshige II: "Rock-style Kannon, Kasamori Temple, Kazusa Province," *One Hundred Famous Views of the Provinces*, 1859

Smaller *kake-zukuri* structures were often located on inland cliffs, particularly near caves. One of the best known is the Nageire-dou, a Buddhist icon hall perched high on a mountainside in Tottori Prefecture, which serves as the innermost sanctuary of the temple of Sanbutsu-ji. Again, in the process of honouring the spirit thought to inhabit this distinctive natural place, the building not only effectively marks the place, but at the same time mirrors its unique topography in its own form (Figure **18**).

18 Built space honouring the spirit of a natural place. The Nageire-dou, Temple of Sanbutsu-ji, Tottori

The similar cave sanctuary at the temple of Ryugan-ji in Oita Prefecture was also built to accommodate the natural spirit of the place rather than human beings, there having been no provision for ordinary people to enter either of these structures (Figure **19**). As if to further emphasise this inaccessibility to mortals, the Gou-dou at the temple of Gakuen-ji in Shimane was actually built behind the waterfall which it marks (Figure **20**).



19 *Oku-no-in*, Temple of Ryugan-ji, Oita.

20 Gou-dou, Temple of Gakuen-ji, Shimane.

These structures not only reveal the distinguishing features of a particular piece of the earth's surface, but also, by adapting their own forms to reflect its unique characteristics, effectively reinforce its identity. Their primary appeal, however, appears to stem from their compelling sense of belonging, something we ourselves seem to seek and with which we can directly identify.[21]

Framing Features in the Surrounding Environment

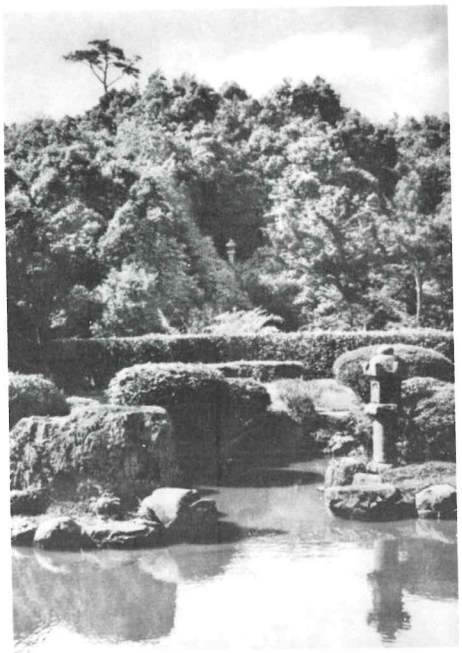
In the well-known device known as *shakkei*, or 'borrowed scenery,' in which a distant landscape is integrated into a garden composition, Japanese designers found a very different yet equally effective means of linking the tectonic to its natural context. It is difficult to imagine temples such as Entsu-ji and Shoden-ji in Kyoto, for example, without their framed views of Mount Hiei, which are literally an integral part of their forms (Figure **21**).

21 In this regard, Edward Relph suggests "it is not just the identity *of* a place that is important, but also the identity that a person or group has *with* that place," *Place and Placelessness*, p. 45.

21 View of a distant natural landscape feature 'captured' to appear part of a built foreground. Garden of the Temple of Shoden-ji, Kyoto

As the indigenous Japanese term for this device, *ikidori*, or 'captured alive,' suggests, it is the active procuring of a remote scene which differentiates *shakkei* from an ordinary vista. This is achieved by a carefully designed frame located some distance from the viewer, which is usually of natural plant material, trees and hedges being most popular. The frame is positioned to trim the raw view aesthetically, while at the same time obscuring many of the spatial depth clues which would normally indicate the true distance between the observer and the far-off landscape. This concealing of the intervening space has the effect of bringing the distant natural scene forward so as to appear part of the built foreground.[22] In being visually connected to a recognisable feature in the landscape, the viewer not only knows unmistakably *where* they are, but through the apparent merging of the tectonic and the natural, is also made to feel that, like the garden, they too in a sense belong there.

The captured object can also be man-made. At the garden of Joju-in on the grounds of the temple of Kiyomizu-dera in Kyoto, for example, a stone lantern placed beyond the limits of the garden proper enables the latter to seem continuous with its natural surroundings (Figure **22**). While such gardens are clearly 'built', they nonetheless succeed in creating the illusion of continuity with nature. Again, this seems to resonate with one of the most powerful of human instincts; the desire to feel that we are part of the natural world around us.



22 A stone lantern placed to make the natural landscape seem continuous with built space. Garden of Joju-in, Temple of Kiyomizu-dera, Kyoto

22 One of the most thorough accounts of *shakkei* and *ikidori* is to be found in Teiji Itoh's landmark study *Space and Illusion in the Japanese Garden* (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, 1973), pp. 15–58.

Autonomous Built Places

The same apparent merging of nature and culture was often evident in the relationship between gardens and buildings in Japan.[23] One of the traditional Japanese terms for a home, for example, is *katei*, a compound word formed from the Chinese characters for 'house' and 'garden' respectively (家庭). The built reality was a similar marriage of the two in a single tectonic entity (Figure **23**).

23 Traditional *katei*: house and garden as a single built entity. Watanabe House, Niigata

With the exception of those which made use of borrowed scenery, however, far from *connecting* people with their surroundings, most Japanese gardens were actually intended to be isolated, idealised landscapes, through which one could in effect *escape* the immediate here and now.[24]

Disengagement from the everyday world was even more clearly the intent of the form of garden and teahouse developed by Zen-inspired teamasters such as the celebrated Sen Rikyu (1521–1591). Far from being integrated with its surroundings, the *wabi* tearoom was effectively an autonomous built place, a fact

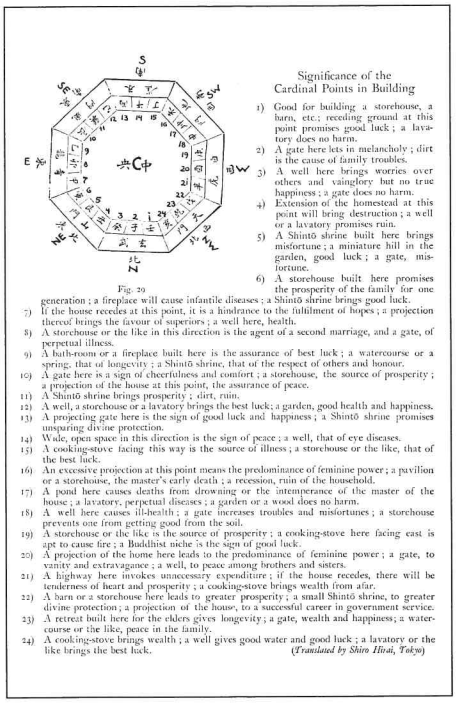
23 In fact, as Josef Kyburz explains, in *Japan*, it was only "during the Meiji (1868–1912) era that the conception of 'nature' and 'culture' as two distinct and opposing categories finds its verbal expression in the terms *shizen* and *bunka/bunmei*, employed to match the Western concepts. (These words existed before, but the dichotomy between them did not)." Josef A. Kyburz, "Magical Thought at the Interface of Nature and Culture," in P.J. Asquith and A. Kalland, eds., *Japanese Images of Nature: Cultural Perspectives*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), p. 260.

24 For more on this topic, see the chapters on the courtyard garden in Teiji Itoh, *Space and Illusion in the Japanese Garden*, pp. 59–93.

attested to by their often having been relocated.[25] The tearoom was intended to be a place apart, its convoluted garden path, or *roji*, having been designed less as a link to, than as a means of psychological *dis*connection from the world at large (Figure **24**).

24 The convoluted 'path through the mountains' which psychologically distances the teahouse from the surrounding world. Fushin-an teahouse and its *roji*, Omote Senke, Kyoto

25 This was partly the result of their great value, but it was made all the easier because of their relative independence from their surroundings. The term '*wabi*' refers to the aesthetic of 'rustic simplicity' which was actively celebrated in tearooms from the sixteenth century onwards. The existential implications of this aesthetic will be discussed in Chapter 3. Suffice to say at this point that on first inspection it would seem to represent almost the antithesis of the built celebration of existence being discussed here. Yet, like so much in Japanese culture, it manages to balance the seemingly contradictory; in this case revering the intrinsic individuality of existence while at the same time treating it as merely a transitory state.



Significance of the Cardinal Points in Building

1) Good for building a storehouse, a barn, etc.; receding ground at this point promises good luck; a lavatory does no harm.
2) A gate here lets in melancholy; dirt is the cause of family troubles.
3) A well here brings worries over others and vainglory but no true happiness; a gate does no harm.
4) Extension of the homestead at this point will bring destruction; a well or a lavatory promises ruin.
5) A Shintō shrine built here brings misfortune; a miniature hill in the garden, good luck; a gate, misfortune.
6) A storehouse built here promises the prosperity of the family for one generation; a fireplace will cause infantile diseases; a Shintō shrine brings good luck.
7) If the house recedes at this point, it is a hindrance to the fulfilment of hopes; a projection thereof brings the favour of superiors; a well here, health.
8) A storehouse or the like in this direction is the agent of a second marriage, and a gate, of perpetual illness.
9) A bath-room or a fireplace built here is the assurance of best luck; a watercourse or a spring, that of longevity; a Shintō shrine, that of the respect of others and honour.
10) A gate here is a sign of cheerfulness and comfort; a storehouse, the source of prosperity; a projection of the house at this point, the assurance of peace.
11) A Shintō shrine brings prosperity; dirt, ruin.
12) A well, a storehouse or a lavatory brings the best luck; a garden, good health and happiness.
13) A projecting gate here is the sign of good luck and happiness; a Shintō shrine promises unsparing divine protection.
14) Wide, open space in this direction is the sign of peace; a well, that of eye diseases.
15) A cooking-stove facing this way is the source of illness; a storehouse or the like, that of the best luck.
16) An excessive projection at this point means the predominance of feminine power; a pavilion or a storehouse, the master's early death; a recession, ruin of the household.
17) A pond here causes deaths from drowning or the intemperance of the master of the house; a lavatory, perpetual diseases; a garden or a wood does no harm.
18) A well here causes ill-health; a gate increases troubles and misfortunes; a storehouse prevents one from getting good from the soil.
19) A storehouse or the like is the source of prosperity; a cooking-stove here facing east is apt to cause fire; a Buddhist niche is the sign of good luck.
20) A projection of the home here leads to the predominance of feminine power; a gate, to vanity and extravagance; a well, to peace among brothers and sisters.
21) A highway here invokes unnecessary expenditure; if the house recedes, there will be tenderness of heart and prosperity; a cooking-stove brings wealth from afar.
22) A barn or a storehouse here leads to greater prosperity; a small Shintō shrine, to greater divine protection; a projection of the house, to a successful career in government service.
23) A retreat built here for the elders gives longevity; a gate, wealth and happiness; a watercourse or the like, peace in the family.
24) A cooking-stove brings wealth; a well gives good water and good luck; a lavatory or the like brings the best luck.

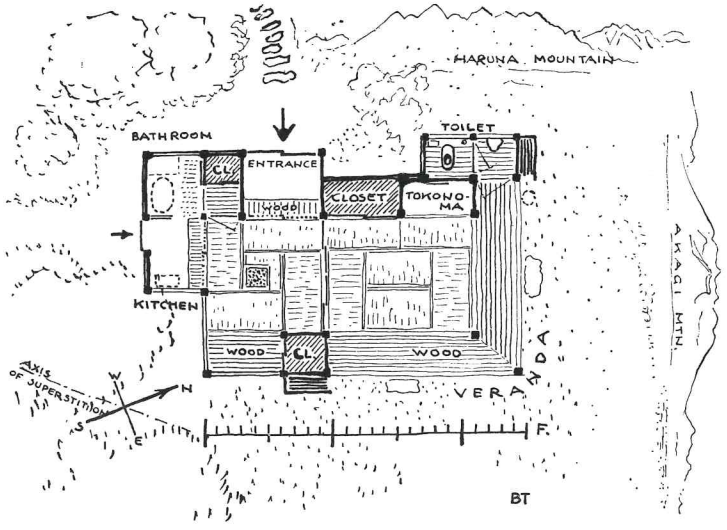
(*Translated by Shiro Hirai, Tokyo*)

Fig. 29

25 A geomantic planning compass as illustrated by Bruno Taut. Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan*, 1937

Domestically, Japanese built responsiveness to place was often overridden by general planning rules, known collectively as *chiso*, which were in effect intended to re-create the same *ideal* living place anywhere. Moreover, that ideal was based more in Chinese than Japanese reality. As the German modernist Bruno Taut noted of the traditional Japanese house he lived in for several months in 1933:

> As I wanted to know better the house I inhabited, I began to draw a ground-plan. But before I could go into details I stumbled on a remarkable fact, ... It was the angle at which the house was placed in regard to the surrounding country. I quite understood that south and east sun had been given to the veranda in front of the big room . . . , but there was no reason why the unquestionably lovely view over the charming river valley, . . . with the chain of hills behind and the grand mountain-silhouette at the horizon . . . , should not be made visible from the veranda, a thing which might easily have been done. . . . Why, then, could one have the best view only out of the small window in the lavatory? And so I asked. Everybody gave the same answer. On no account may the lavatory, the entrance, or the kitchen be placed on a north-east to south-west axis. Architects confirmed that even in modern homes nearly every house owner wishes this rule to be strictly obeyed, a fact which necessitates in many cases a similar sacrifice of advantages in the plan. Why? People of different professions and different regions agreed that this rule had come from China and that there may have been quite an obvious reason for it there, because of the predominating directions of the wind and the flow of the water courses, but for Japan absolutely no reason could be discovered.[26] (Figures **25**, **26**)



26 Bruno Taut's plan drawing of his house near Takasaki, Gunma. Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan*, 1937

Despite this lack of adaptation to *actual* location, however, the repeated re-creation of the same, ideal place nonetheless effectively enabled the occupants of the house to know 'where they were in the world,' and precisely because of its familiarity, to feel at home there.

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26 Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan* (London: John Gifford, 1938), p. 26.

Adaptation to Local Climate

The degree of adaptation of the traditional raised-floor Japanese house to the local climate is similarly open to question, not least because of evidence suggesting that one of its prototypes, the *takayuka* dwelling, may well have been imported from mainland Asia during the Yayoi Period (*c.* 300 BC—300 AD).[27] If this was in fact the case, then it would have a number of implications for the current discussion. Firstly, several features of the traditional Japanese house which seem well suited to Japan's hot, wet summers, such as its raised floor, wide eaves and general openness, may actually have been developed elsewhere in response to a genuinely tropical climate, making their degree of adaptation to the *Japanese* environment debatable. This is even more the case when the Japanese winter is considered, since the open, raised-floor dwelling is basically unsuited to cold weather, as numerous Western visitors have suggested.[28] Bruno Taut, for example, concluded that "the structure of a Japanese house is completely adapted to the requirements of summer. Indeed, it seems to be only a summer house."[29]

In one of his well-known "Essays in Idleness" the famous fourteenth-century poet-monk Kenko Yoshida seemed to confirm the Japanese priority of keeping cool when he declared that "A house should be built with summer in mind. In winter it is possible to live anywhere."[30]

It was largely left to the occupants of the traditional Japanese dwelling to adapt *themselves* to the cold in order to make up for the shortcomings of the raised-floor house in winter. This was generally achieved by donning multiple layers of heavy clothing inside the home and staying close to the hearth. The need for the household to gather around this central heat source may well have had a positive effect on Japanese family cohesion, but it also illustrates the raised-floor dwelling type's basic lack of adaptation to cold conditions; the usable floor area of the house in winter effectively shrinking to a fraction of its full size (Figure **27**).

27 The area around the hearth became the main habitable space in winter. Traditional *minka*, Iwate

27 Raised-floor storage structures (*takakura*), and subsequently raised dwellings used for the ruling elite, began appearing in Western Japan during the Yayoi Period and had spread to other parts of Japan by the Burial Mound Period (*c.* 300–600 AD).

28 See for example Edward Morse, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1886), p. 12 and Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1945), p. 428.

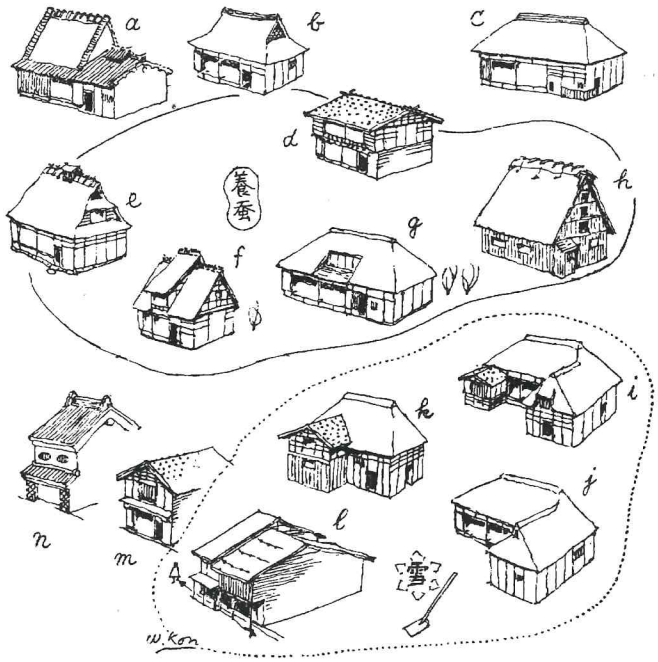
29 Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan*, p. 73.

30 Kenko Yoshida *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness), Section 55, as translated by Donald Keene in "Japanese Aesthetics," *Japanese Aesthetics and Culture: A Reader*, ed., Nancy G. Hume (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 35.

28 **In summer habitable space effectively extends to include the garden.** Tajima House, Ibaraki

On the other hand, in summer the traditional raised-floor house functions admirably well. The wide eaves, for example, prevent the intense summer sun from entering the interior, while keeping its heavy monsoon-like rains away from the delicate paper *shoji*. These external screens can also be removed to allow whatever cooling breeze there may be to pass straight through the house (Figure **28**).[31]

As Heinrich Engel points out, however, Japanese folkhouses, or *minka*, which are believed to have descended from indigenous pit dwellings, exhibit "a much more realistic attitude toward local climatic conditions."[32] In fact these houses are notable for the way in which their forms and materials reflect the particular geographic characteristics of different regions (Figure **29**).



29 **Regional *minka* types resulting from different combinations of local climate and livelihood.** Wajiro Kon, *Nihon no Minka*, 1927

The steeply-pitched thatched roofs of the famous *gassho-zukuri*, or 'praying style,' *minka* found in Gifu and Toyama prefectures, for example, derive in large part from the heavy precipitation and lack of available land in the narrow mountain valleys where they developed (Figure **30**).

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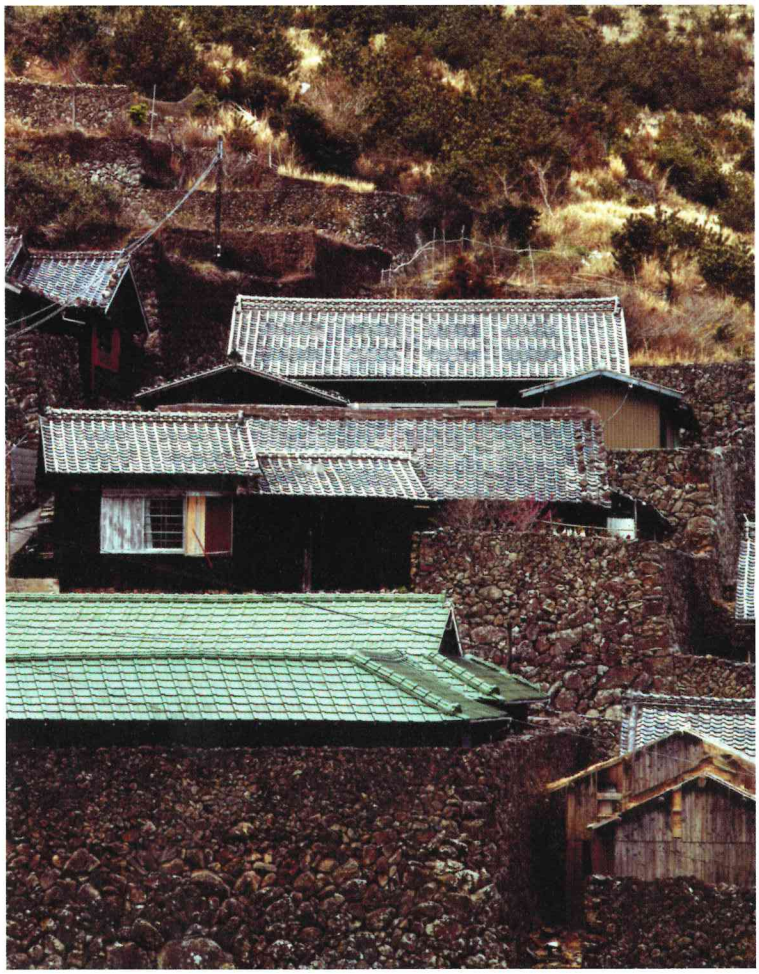
31 These built adaptations to heat and humidity were also augmented by similar adaptations in human clothing, which in summer was both lighter in material and less numerous in its layers.

32 Heinrich Engel, *The Japanese House: A Tradition for Contemporary Architecture* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1964), p. 359. As Engel points out, the partially raised floor, openness and sliding panels of some *minka* were copied later from the residences of the ruling classes and were by no means universal.

30 House form adapted to heavy mountain precipitation and the needs of local silk-making families. *Gassho-zukuri*, or 'praying style,' farmhouses, Shirakawa-go, Gifu

At the other extreme, frequent gale-force winds associated with typhoons on the southwestern coast of Shikoku combined with local availability of stone and clay to produce houses with protective wind-breaking walls and low-pitched, heavily-tiled roofs (Figure **31**).



31 House form primarily adapted to strong coastal winds. Dwellings in the fishing village of Sotodomari, Ehime

These regional dwelling types also tended to reflect particular agricultural livelihoods, which were themselves largely the result of local geography.[33] As physical expressions of local materials, climate and lifestyles, rural *minka* in particular were powerful sources of cultural and natural regional identity. This not only enabled the inhabitants to feel a sense of belonging, both to a recognisable place and a coherent community, but the distinctiveness of their forms also effectively helped locals and strangers alike to confirm where they were in the world.

The Sacred Column as the 'Original' Place

A sacred pillar lay at the heart of the Japanese creation myth, in which the god and goddess Izanagi and Izanami encircled a giant column linking heaven and earth. The standing column is a common representation of the *axis mundi*, around which many early civilisations seem to have orientated their worlds.[34] This vertical line represented the symbolic centre of the cosmos, the ultimate home, which, according to Mircea Eliade, we continually re-create in all of our buildings.[35]

32 A living tree as a spatial origin and emblem of life. Deified camphor tree, Mitsushima Shrine, Osaka

Simple verticality alone, then, might well have been sufficient to give trees a spatial status among the many sacred natural objects recognised by the early Japanese, of which they were by far the most common (Figure **32**).[36] More likely, however, particularly given the early Shinto preoccupation with growth and renewal, it was a combination of orientation and their inherent vitality. As Christian Norberg-Schulz explains:

> In the *tree*, heaven and earth are . . . united, not only in a spatial sense because the tree rises up from the ground, but because it grows and is 'alive.' Every year the tree re-enacts the very process of creation.[37]

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33 The upper group of *minka* ringed in Figure 29, for example, were all associated with the production of silk, while the lower group developed in areas of heavy snow fall. The effects of particular livelihoods on the forms of *minka* are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

34 On this subject, see for example Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 37. Rather than a vertical line, Gunter Nitschke has suggested that the early Japanese thought of the centre of their cosmos as a point in space. See Gunter Nitschke, "Shime: Binding/Unbinding," p. 753.

35 See Micea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 37.

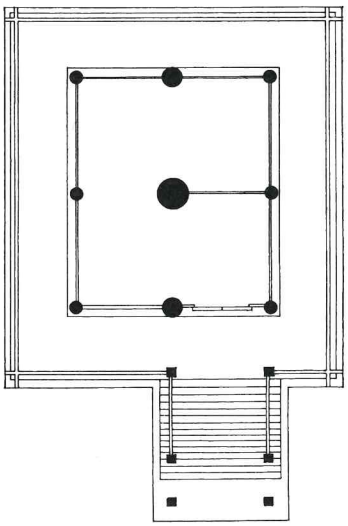
36 Many of the other natural sacred objects recognised by the early Japanese were likewise vertically orientated, including standing stones, mountains and waterfalls for example. Not only do such objects conform to the model of the *axis mundi*, but also to Heidegger's notion of 'locations,' or places, which 'gather and preserve the fourfold' of the earth, the sky, the divinities and mortals. See Martin Heidegger, *Bohen Wohnen, Denkin* (1954), translated into English as "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 145–161. This connection is explored further in Kevin Nute, "Heidegger's Concept of 'Dwelling' as Expressed in Traditional Japanese Architecture." *Summaries of Technical Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Architectural Institute of Japan 1997* (September 1997): pp. 491–492.

37 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, p. 25.

While the tree was considered a sacred object in many cultures, however, few seem to have carried it—quite literally—as deeply into their architecture as the Japanese. As Teiji Itoh explains, "the Japanese word for forest, *mori*, means both a stand of trees and a holy zone to which gods descend—in short, a shrine without a building."[38] Sacred tree trunks were also central, both metaphorically and spatially, to the first proper shrine buildings:

> When the primitive Japanese first felled a tree and set it up as a center pillar for a shrine, this sacred quality followed it into their buildings. There the pillar towered, still dominating the space around it, and thus for both religious and structural reasons, from the earliest days to the present it has been recognized as playing a guiding role in the establishing of architectural order.[39]

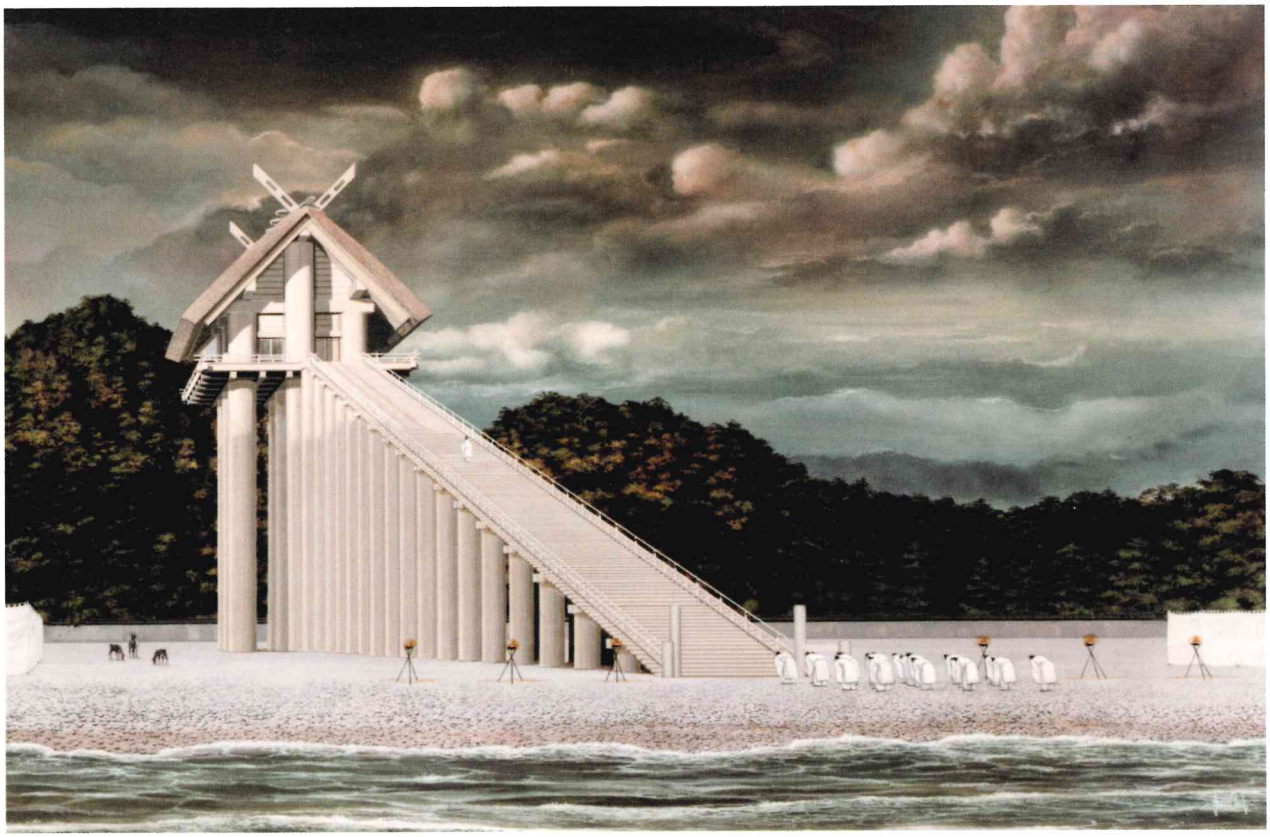
In the first Shinto shrine buildings the sacred tree became a sanctified column near the centre of the space reserved for the *kami*. This is still evident today in several major shrines. At Ise Jingu, for example, the sacred pillar remains in the form of a short post, the *shin no mi hashira*, which is buried beneath the floor of the hall reserved for the deity and regarded as the shrine's holy of holies. The main sanctuary at the even older Izumo Taisha is likewise centred on a sacred wooden column, in this case cut from a single tree trunk of over a metre in diameter (Figure **33**).



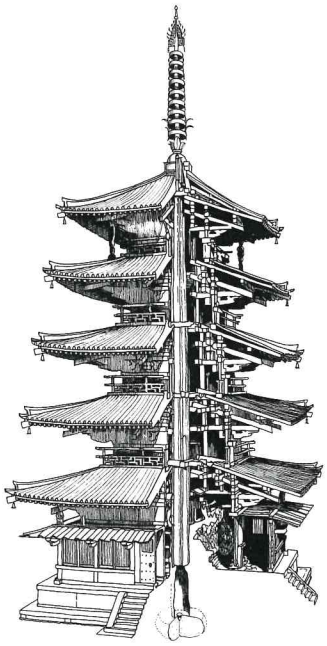
33 A relocated tree used to establish an artificial sacred object-place. Plan of the main sanctuary at Izumo Taisha, Shimane

38 Teiji Itoh, *The Gardens of Japan*, p. 33.

39 Teiji Itoh, *The Roots of Japanese Architecture*, p. 21. Daniel Holtom suggests similarly: "There are good reasons for believing that trees were the original shrines of Shinto, and . . . that god-houses were provided for trees because trees were spirits or because they were the haunt of the Kami." Daniel Holtom, "Some Notes on Japanese Tree Worship," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (December 1931), in Jean Herbert, *Shinto: At the Fountain-head of Japan*, p. 492.



34 Conjectural reconstruction of the original sanctuary at Izumo Taisha. Based on the research of T. Fukuyama



35 A relocated tree used to mark a man-made sacred place. Sectional view of the pagoda at the Temple of Horyu-ji, Nara

Still as tall as a four-storey building, the *honden* at Izumo is thought to have originally stood up to three times higher, which would have made it in effect a sacred form of 'relocated tree house' (Figure **34**).[40]

Mitsuo Inoue has described the Japanese pagoda in somewhat similar terms as essentially 'a splendidly ornamented pillar' in the same tradition as the sacred Shinto column.[41] Here, moreover, the column was not only being used to create what amounted to a *built* object-place, it was serving to mark a particular point on the earth's surface which had been artificially made significant through the burying of Buddhist relics (Figure **35**).

Serving a parallel role to that of the sacred pillar in the Shinto shrine, the domestic *daikokubashira* was traditionally the first column to be positioned in the dwellings of the agricultural and merchant classes, where it was likewise regarded as the temporary resting

40 On this topic, see for example, Yasutada Watanabe. *Shinto Art: Ise and Izumo Shrines*, trans. Robert Ricketts (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1974), pp. 89, 91.

41 See Mitsuo Inoue, *Space in Japanese Architecture*, p. 22. Whether the *shimbashira* at the core of the Japanese pagoda had any direct link with the sacred Shinto tree is uncertain, however, since the tree was also central to the Buddhist symbolism associated with the Indian stupa, which is generally

place of a deity. In this case, however, it was Daikoku, the god of good fortune from Chinese folklore. (Figure **36**).

36 A relocated tree used to establish a symbolic centre for a household. *Daikokubashira,* Yoshijima House, Gifu

In Eliade's terms, this column served as a symbolic 'point of origin,' from where members of the household could venture out into the world safe in the knowledge that they could return to this fixed centre.[42]

thought to have been the original prototype of the pagoda. Adrian Snodgrass explains, "As the axis, the tree is prominent among the aniconic representations of the Buddha, who is the humanized type of the Cosmic Pillar." Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 180–181.

42 While its use can only be traced from the sixteenth century onwards, the *daikokubashira* seems to fit Eliade's description of a sacred axis at the symbolic centre of a built re-creation of the world.

Rather than being located in *response* to an existing natural object-place, such as a living tree, these column-centred buildings relocated the tree—together with its *kami*—to create what in effect were *built* sacred object-places. Regardless of their actual locations, moreover, these were all essentially re-creations of the same 'original' place, which could in effect provide a familiar point of reference anywhere.

Revelation of Place in Contemporary Buildings

37 The ancient spirit of a place re-housed. A rebuilt Shinto shrine incorporated into a modern building, Sengaku-ji, Tokyo

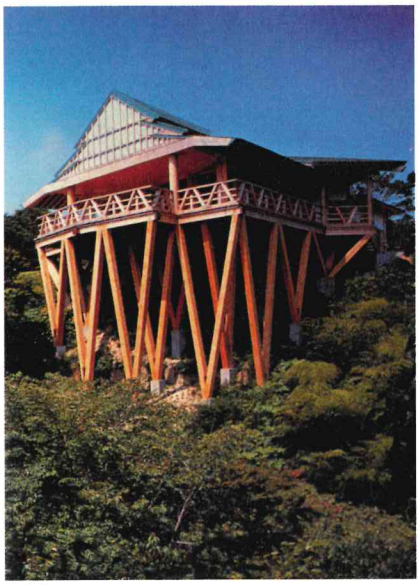
Respect for *kami* and the places they inhabit is still very much part of Japanese life today and not just in rural communities. In cities such as Tokyo, for example, it is common to see new buildings expensively adapted to accommodate tiny but long-established shrines rather than risk incurring the displeasure of their incumbent *kami* (Figure **37**). This generally involves rebuilding the same form in new materials, a distinctive feature of Shinto tradition which suggests a very different notion of preservation to that of the West. The fact that this kind of respect for existing buildings has tended to be rare in Japan when the occupants have been merely human, however, gives some idea of the special significance still afforded *kami* today.

Physical Integration of Natural Site Features

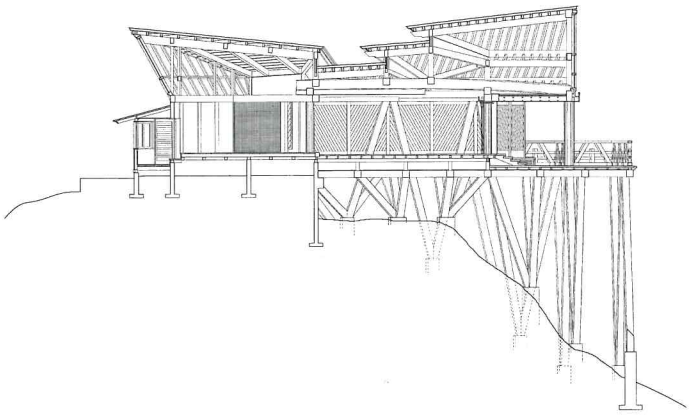
While the previous kind of built response to place may not be applicable beyond Japan, the slope-revealing form of the traditional *kake-zukuri* building type could well be. This form has already been successfully updated in Japan itself, for example, in Hidetoshi Kawaguchi's worship hall for the temple of Shichifukuten-ji in Chiba Prefecture (Figures **38–40**).

38 An updated version of the traditional *kake-zukuri* structure. Hidetoshi Kawaguchi's proposed new worship hall for the Temple of Shichifukuten-ji, Chiba

The triangulation of the new hall's supporting structure was a clear departure from the Japanese orthogonal post-and-beam tradition. Yet by keeping the base of each triangle fixed and varying their internal angles, the peculiar profile of the sloping site is nonetheless faithfully revealed in the built form. Like its traditional model, the building's supporting structure acts as a mediator between the human logic of the horizontal floor plane and the natural lie of the land. The two orders coexist in close proximity and in so doing help to define one another. Again, there is a real sense in which the built form seems to belong to the place, the identity of which, far from being destroyed by the building, is actively reinforced by its presence.

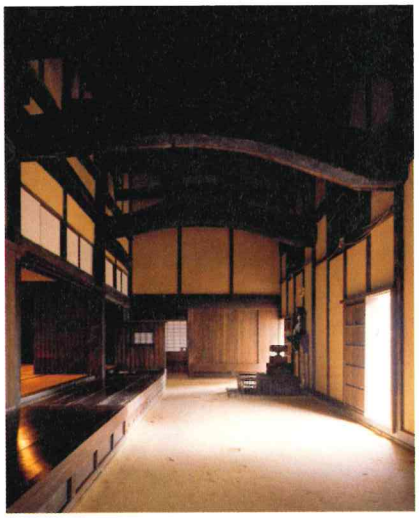


40 Built form and natural topography coexisting. The completed worship hall, Temple of Shichifukuten-ji, Chiba, 1996



39 Built form belonging to natural place.
Section through the new worship hall, Temple of Shichifukuten-ji

In the Tanikawa House, located in the mountain resort of Karuizawa, Kazuo Shinohara similarly decided that rather than destroy a distinctive natural characteristic of a site to make way for a building, the two could be combined, in this case quite literally.[43] The use of the natural slope of the site 'as is' to form the earthen floor of this dwelling's summer space was apparently inspired by the *do-ma*, or 'earth room,' of traditional *minka*, a feature Shinohara had overtly quoted in his earlier House with an Earthen Floor (1966).[44] The *do-ma* served as a covered storage and work area in between the outside proper and the raised living areas of these dwellings, and in effect brought the ground surface and with it the threshold deep within the building (Figure **41**).[45]

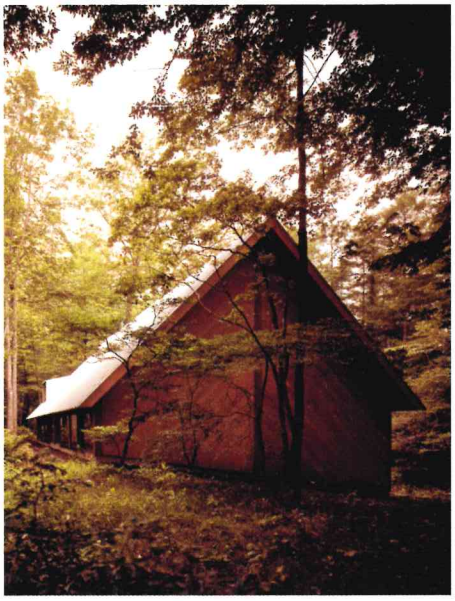


41 Traditional *do-ma*: the ground itself used as an enclosing element of habitable space.
Kumaya House, Yamaguchi

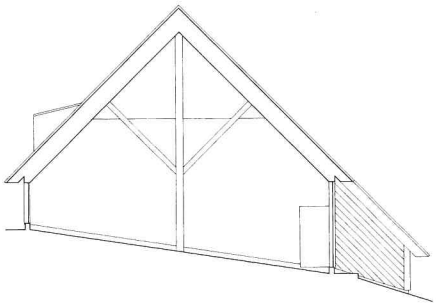
43 Interview with the author, Tokyo, August 1998.

44 Shinohara has described such traditional Japanese farmhouses as "mushrooms—outgrowths of nature rather than architecture," by which he seems to have meant that they were shaped more by natural circumstances than by conscious design. See Kazuo Shinohara, *Kazuo Shinohara: 11 Houses and Architectural Theory* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 1976), p. 35.

45 The *do-ma* was an early precursor to the *genkan*, the traditional split-level entrance vestibule where it is still the custom to change footwear on entering and leaving the Japanese home.

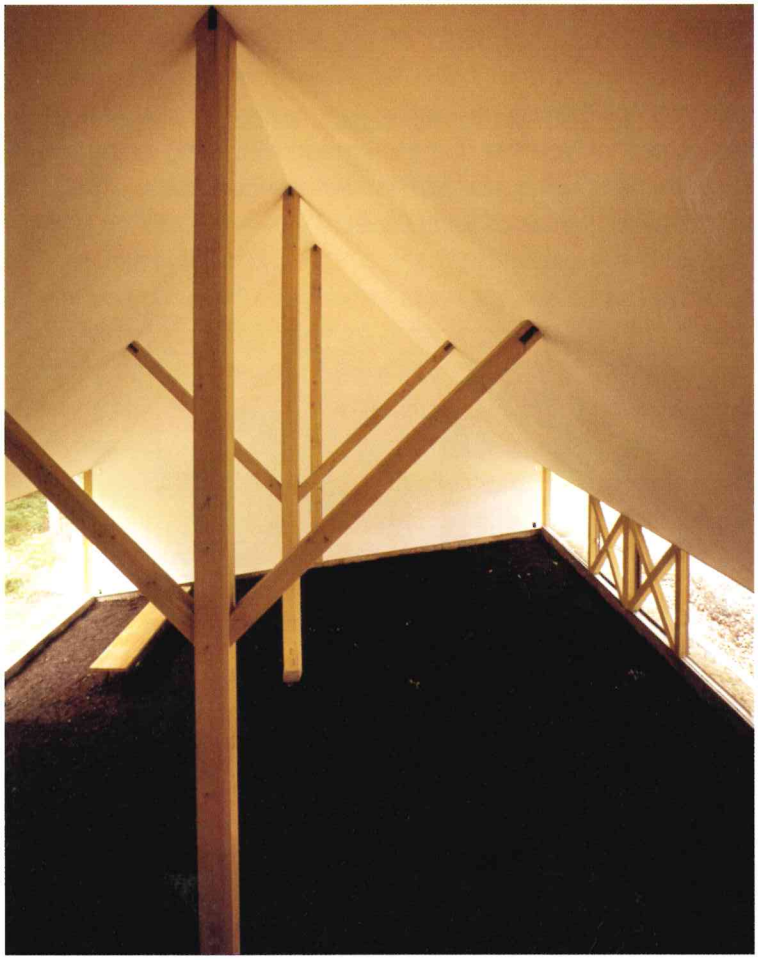


42 A conventional-looking exterior belies the fact that the built form gives way to the natural terrain. Kazuo Shinohara: Tanikawa House, Nagano, 1974



43 Natural topography and built form as parts of the same tectonic whole. Tanikawa House, cross-section through summer space

By including the natural slope as well, the Tanikawa House raised this traditional pragmatic device into the realm of the poetic, in the process becoming inseparable from its particular piece of the earth's surface (Figures **42–44**).

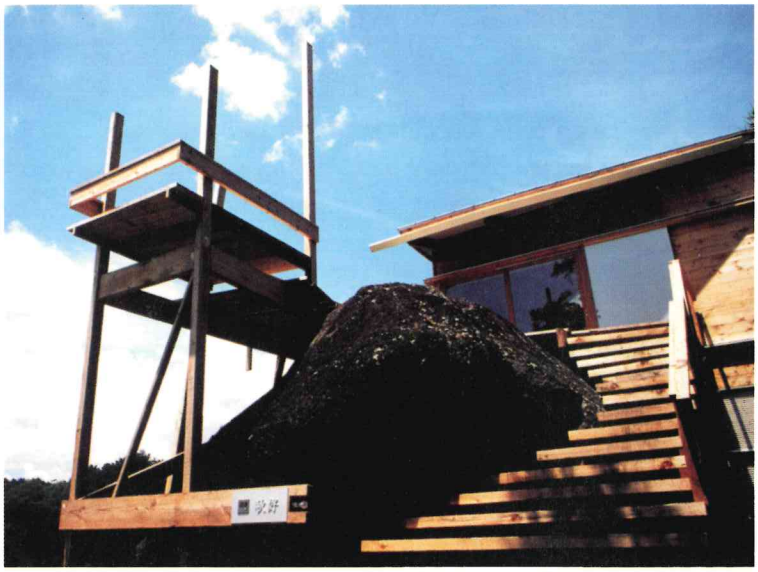


44 The earth made a part of tectonic enclosure and vice versa. Summer space with sloping earth floor, Tanikawa House

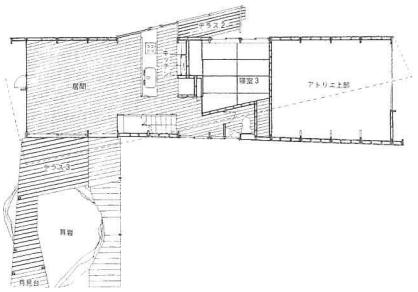
45 The Ear Rock and behind it the 'ground-quieting' ceremony held to placate its *kami* before construction of the house began.

Osamu Ishiyama's Ear Rock House in the same region of central Japan consciously recalls a particular *kake-zukuri* structure, the Kannon hall at the temple of Kasamori-ji (shown earlier in Figure **17**), being similarly perched astride a large boulder thought to possess special powers. In the case of the Ear Rock House, only the form of the external staircase is eroded to accommodate the prior claim on the site of the existing rock and its *kami*. In the process, however, the building is again rendered to all intents inseparable from its natural context (Figures **45–47**).[46]

46 Local legend has it that the *kami* of the boulder can hear people's prayers, hence the name, 'Ear Rock.' In his account of the house Ishiyama mentions Kasamori-ji as one of several *kake-zukuri* precedents. The architect originally wanted to include the boulder in the interior of the dwelling, as Wright had at Fallingwater, but compromised after the client expressed reservations.

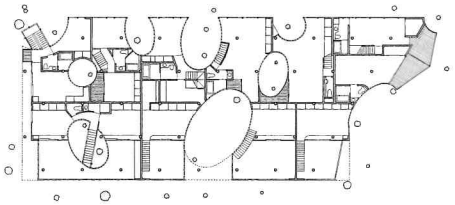


46 The completed house embraces the boulder, making it a part of its own form. Osamu Ishiyama: Ear Rock House, Nagano, 1998

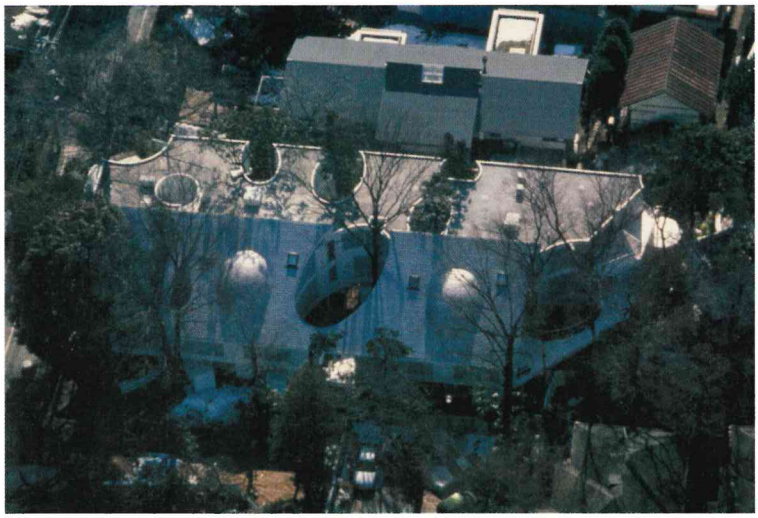


47 In making way for the boulder the entry stair and terrace acknowledge its prior claim on the space. First-floor plan, Ear Rock House

More recently, in this instance at his client's request, Shigeru Ban went to even greater lengths to preserve a group of trees on the site of the Hanegi Forest apartment building in a suburb of Tokyo. This involved developing a special triangulated structural grid to accommodate the intrusion of over twenty mature tree trunks. The idea of integrating trees into an architectural plan is neither new nor especially Japanese of course. One immediately thinks of several of Wright's buildings, beginning with the Winslow stable of 1894, and of Le Corbusier and Ozenfant's 1925 Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau. Yet the extent to which it has been carried through here, to the point where the building resembles something of a Swiss cheese, seems unprecedented (Figures **48–50**).

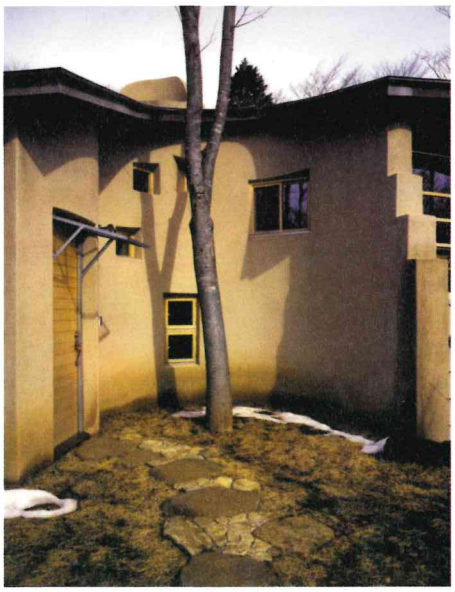


48 An existing natural order integrated into built space. Shigeru Ban: Hanegi Forest apartment building, Setagaya, Tokyo, 1997, upper floor plan



49 Tectonic space occupied on equal terms by people and trees.

50 The built form keeps a respectful distance, effectively giving the trees their own living space.



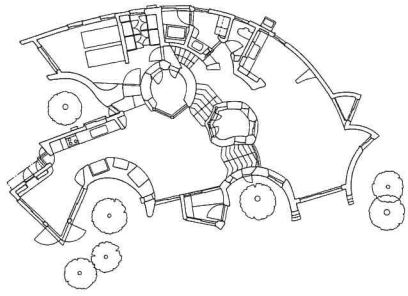
51 **Built space founded on a natural object-place.** Atelier Zo: entrance court, Tata House, Shizuoka, 1991

Whether or not the residents of the Hanegi Forest apartments believe the local *kami* have been successfully placated, making it an auspicious place to live, or simply appreciate the fact that nature has been preserved, they almost certainly feel more at home in such an environment than in the kind of building which in the process of occupying a place erases its distinguishing features. Here, in contrast, there is a real sense of people and trees cohabiting the land on equal terms, which seems appropriate given the close relationship these two forms of standing column have traditionally shared in Japanese culture.[47]

The external wall of Atelier Zo's Tata House was similarly sculpted around the trunks of several existing trees (Figures **51**, **52**). While in this case the trees are not actually included within the perimeter of the building, the house employs another means of effectively rooting itself in the locality, by incorporating the local soil into its fabric. As Hiroyasu Higuchi explains:

> . . . the true Japanese earth wall is always local in origin. That's why we used local soil in the three houses we made, the KIVA, TATA, and DOMO KINANA. We explored the areas to find the best local materials with which to express our attitude about materials and locale. We used local earth, as well as sand, gravel, and rocks.[48]

Zo, the core of the loose association of independent practices which make up the unique organisation which is Team Zoo, take what they describe as a *hakken-teki*, or 'discovery-like,' approach to design, which involves searching for the particular characteristics inherent in each programme and site, rather than imposing preconceived ideas. This essentially responsive attitude to design was encouraged by one of their early mentors, the architect and educator Takamasa Yoshizaka (1917–1980), for whom the founders of Atelier Zo—Koichi Otake, Reiko Tomita and Hiroyasu Higuchi—all worked during the late 1960s at the practice known as U-ken.[49]



52 **Tata House, ground-floor plan.**

47 Because of the close link between *kami* and standing columns in Japanese mythology, the same word, *hashira*, was used to count both, as well as important people. On this topic, see *The Kojiki*, trans. Basil Hall Chamberlain, p. 34 n. 11, and Mitsuo Inoue, *Space in Japanese Architecture*, p. 11.

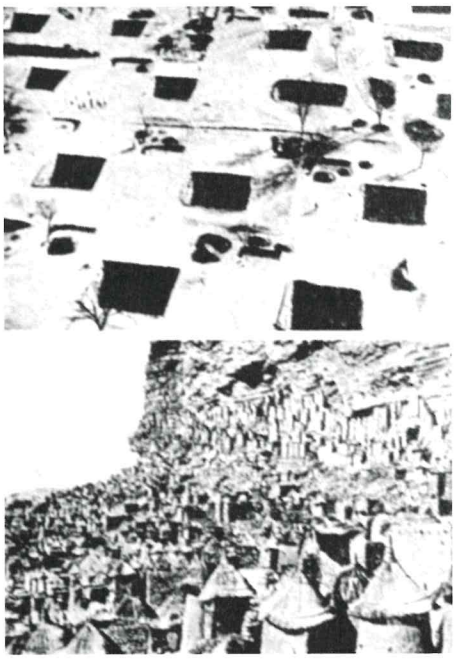
48 Hiroyasu Higuchi and Akira Kusumi, "Expressing Earth," in "The Dark in the Service of the Light," Atelier Zo Special Issue. *Kenchiku Bunka*, 48, no. 557 (March 1993): p. 94.

(*See opposite page for n. 49.*)

Yoshizaka's teaching at Waseda University emphasised the adaptation of architecture to its natural surroundings and was summed up in his best-known publication *Kankyou to Zoukei* or "Environment and Moulding" (1955) (Figure **53**).[50]

Hiroyasu Higuchi's account of Zo's design of the Jomon Mawaki Spa on the Japan Sea coast is indicative of Yoshizaka's influence:

> We began by looking at the form of the land .... Some walls were made of vertically cut pieces of the local earth thus revealing the geological patterns of the soil. Local landforms are also exposed in the roofed lobby area. Tatami mats in the rest area are precisely lined on the axes of the path to the sea and the grid of the rice paddies. These prayers to nature and the forces of the land themselves give validity to the building.[51]

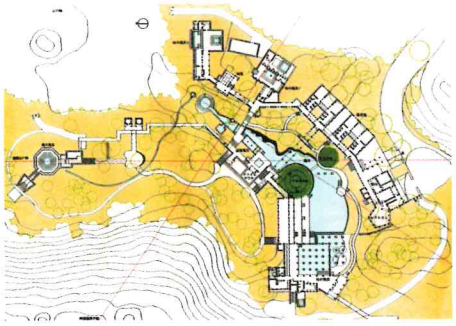


53 Underground houses in Honnan, China, and Dogon cliff-dwellings in Sudan, used by Takamasa Yoshizaka to illustrate built responsiveness to place. Takamasa Yoshizaka, *Kankyou to Zoukei*, 1955

Framing Features in the Surrounding Environment

Inspired by indigenous Shinto geomancy and Chinese Feng Shui, Atelier Zo's *jiku* method of orientating buildings according to significant features in the surrounding landscape stems from the same desire to respond to the existing natural order of places. The site plan of their Kannabe Spa Resort in Hyogo, for example, is typical in being set out according to axes taken from a series of nearby mountain peaks (Figure **54**). Although it was not an issue with the land at Kannabe, which is actually brimming with natural features, this device, of looking beyond the immediate limits of a site for the means of fixing a building in its location, would seem especially useful in situations where the ground to be occupied lacks distinctive natural characteristics, which is frequently the case on urban sites.

In his House at Itoshima in Kyushu, Kazuo Shinohara made use of a similarly traditional device to connect a building to its natural context. Here a small offshore Island is tectonically framed to become part of the entrance approach to the dwelling. While the depth of the intervening space between the house and the island is gradually revealed as one approaches, making it not quite 'borrowed scenery' in the strict sense, the island nonetheless acts as an anchor for both the house and its

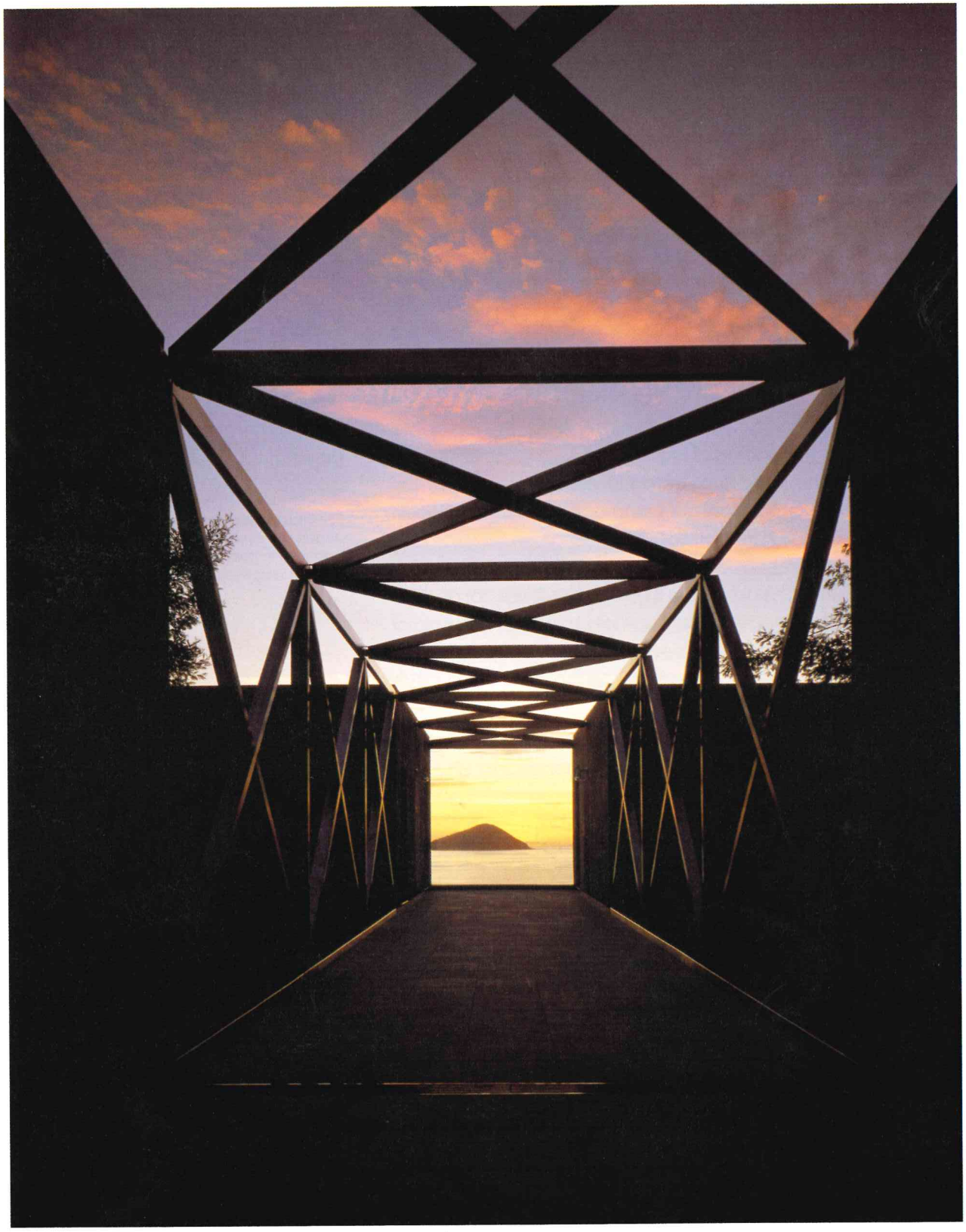


54 Built space defined by axes drawn from features in the natural surroundings. Atelier Zo: Kannabe Resort Spa, Hyogo, 1994

49 Tomita, Higuchi and Otake all left U-ken in 1971. They initially shared an office and eventually founded a joint practice, taking the first letters of their names to form the acronym 'THO,' which was soon transformed to 'Zo' (elephant). Team Zoo was formed around Atelier Zo in the late 1970s when Tsutomu Shigemura and Keiko Arimura left the Tokyo-based Zo office to set up Atelier Iruka (dolphin) in Kobe. A series of virtually independent but cooperating practices, all with animal names, followed during the 1980s. The best*general coverage of the group in English is Manfred Speidel's *Team Zoo* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

50 Takamasa Yoshizaka, *Kankyou to Zoukei*, Zoukei Kouza Vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kawaide Shoubou, 1955), republished under the same title as volume five of the series *Yoshizaka Takamasa Zenshu*, ed., Tsutomu Shigemura (Tokyo: Keiso Shoubou, 1986).

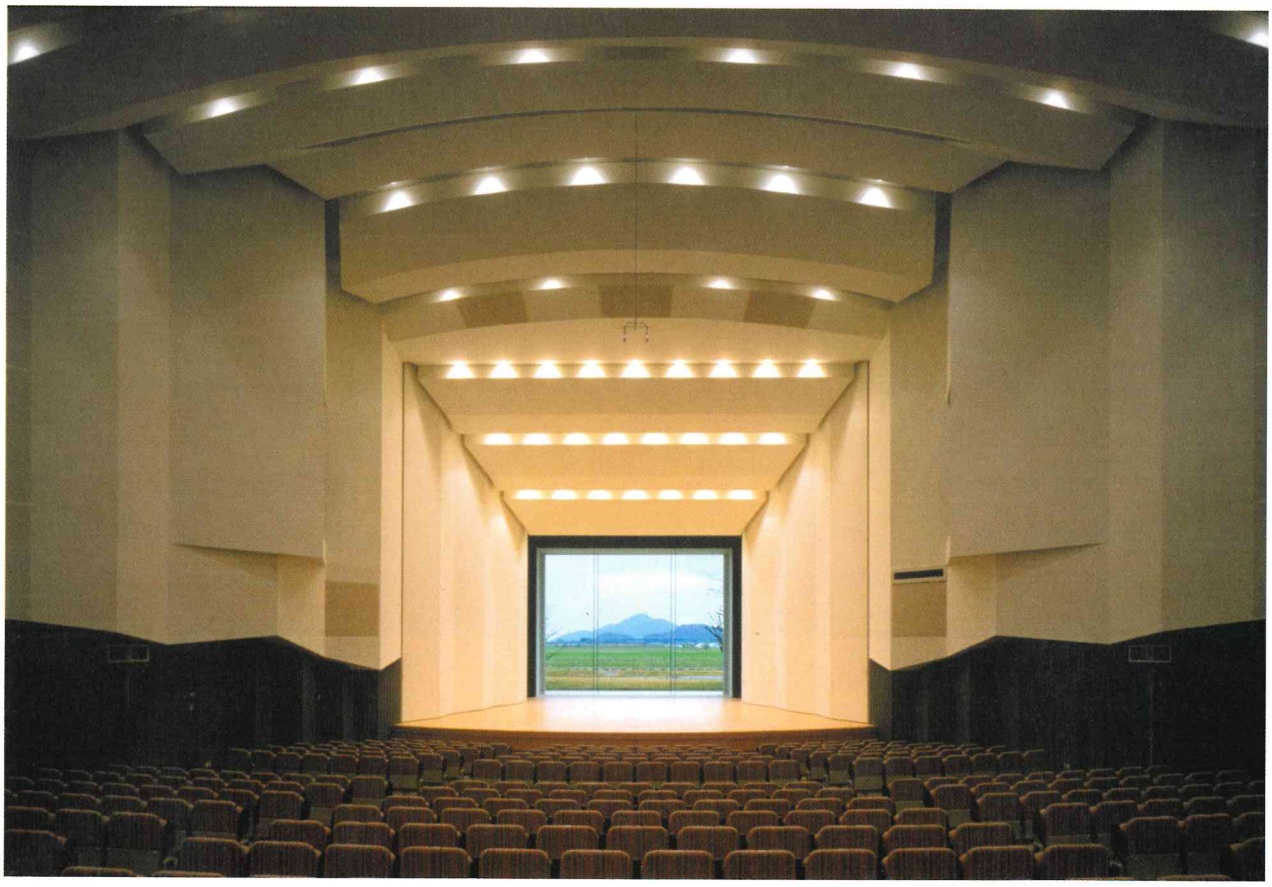
51 Hiroyasu Higuchi, "Jomon Mawaki Spa," *Kenchiku Bunka*, 48, no. 561 (July 1993): p. 46.



55 Habitable space anchored on a natural object-place. Kazuo Shinohara: House in Itoshima, Fukuoka, 1976

occupants, effectively locating their position in the world and giving them a sense of belonging there (Figure **55**). There is also a sense in which the island's existence is likewise affirmed by the building, to the point where even when obscured by fog its presence remains almost palpable.

The same device was employed to equally dramatic effect by Kisho Kurokawa at the Chuzu-cho Community Centre in Shiga Prefecture. Here Mount Chomei-ji, two miles to the north of the building, is borrowed to form the 'live' background scenery to the stage in the main hall (Figure **56**). Because the stage is raised, from a seated position in the auditorium the middle ground between the proscenium and the distant mountains is obscured, creating the illusion that the latter is part of the built stage set. Not only does this succeed in rooting the building unmistakably in its particular location, but each unique event on the stage is made more memorable by the subtly changed scene behind it, which in effect integrates the local time—as well as the natural place—into the built form.



56 Local place and time integrated into built space as live stage scenery. Kisho Kurokawa: Chuzu-cho Community Centre, Shiga, 1992

57 Intervening space concealed to create apparent continuity between the tectonic and the natural. Communal bath overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Shimoda Prince Hotel, Shizuoka

58 Merging of the tectonic with natural context. Arukoa Kenchiku Kenkyu-jo: external hot-spring bath overlooking the Japan Sea, Daikan-so Ryokan, Niigata, 1995

A similar short-circuiting between a built foreground and a natural backdrop can often be seen in the communal baths of Japanese inns overlooking lakes or seascapes. By concealing the middle distance when viewed from within the bath the two bodies of water can be made to seem continuous, creating the delightful illusion of bathing in a warm ocean (Figures **57**, **58**).

By extending the built pool further from the observer, so that the effect of merging is retained even from a standing position, this device can be used as a means of connecting almost any kind of building to a natural marine context. Kengo Kuma's Water/Glass House overlooking the Pacific near Atami, for example, does precisely this, in what, after Bruno Taut, the designer describes as 'the framing of nature with nature' (Figure **59**).[52]

52 Taut was referring to the *shakkei* device of using 'built nature' to frame real nature, thereby seemingly merging the tectonic and the natural. See Kengo Kuma, *Kengo Kuma: Geometries of Nature*, with an Introduction by Stefano Pavarini (Milan: l'Arca Edizioni spa, 1999), p. 26.