

TADAO ANDO ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES
TOYO ITO & ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS
SHIGERU BAN ARCHITECTS
KAZUYO SEJIMA & RYUE NISHIZAWA / SANAA
MAKOTO SEI WATANABE KISHO KUROKAWA
NORISADA MAEDA TED TOKIO TANAKA
NAYA ARCHITECTS MANABA + ARATA
SHIN TAKAMATSU ARCH. & ASSOCIATES Co., Ltd.
EDWARD SUZUKI KUNHIKO HAYAKAWA
NORHIKO DAN & ASSOCIATE
FUKIMIKO MAKI + MAKI & ASSOCIATES

TOP JAPANESE ARCHITECTS

May Cambert



TOP JAPANESE ARCHITECTS

CURRENT VIEW OF JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE

by Judit Taberna

To be able to understand modern Japanese architecture we must put it into its historic context, and be aware of the great changes the country has undergone. Japan is an ancient and traditional society and a modern society at the same time. The explanation for this contradiction lies in the rapid changes resulting from the industrial and urban revolutions which began in Japan in the Meiji period and continued with renewed force in the years after the second world war.

At the end of the nineteenth century, during the Meiji period, the isolation of the country which had lasted almost two centuries came abruptly to an end; it was the beginning of a new era for the Japanese who began to open up to the world. They began to study European and American politics and culture. Many Japanese architects traveled to Europe and America, and this led to the trend of European modernism which soon became a significant influence on Japanese architecture. With the Second World War the development in modern Japanese architecture ground to a halt, and it was not until a number of years later that the evolution continued. Maekawa and Sakura, the most well known architects at the time, worked with Le Corbusier and succeeded in combining traditional Japanese styles with modern architecture.

However Kenzo Tange, Maekawa's disciple, is thought to have taken the first step in the modern Japanese movement. The Peace Center Memorial Museum at Hiroshima 1956, is where we can best appreciate his work. From this movement onwards, modern Japanese architecture has evolved with new generations of architects, as we shall see in this book.

Among these new architects we focus on the figure Tadao Ando who is unquestionably the most relevant figure in Japanese architecture of modern times. In his work there is a very specific way of responding to society and urbanism. As he puts it, "The reason for creating enclosed areas with concrete is to create a place for the individual, a place for oneself without society. When the exterior environment requires a building to be enclosed, the interior must be specially complete and satisfactory". With the simplicity of materials and the controlled entrance of light the spaces Tadao obtains are ideal for quietness and meditation.

Japanese cities are conceived as being dynamic places, of rapid change and constant renovation of their elements along with a general tendency to volatile structures. Their organization is composed of the juxtaposition of different shaped buildings, types and materials. This apparent chaos has its own interior order, in how the city moves and responds to the necessities of its inhabitants. Train stations are where this order can be seen, in the punctuality of the trains and the rigorous order in which the people board and leave the train.

Toyo Ito reflects this concern for movement and people in his projects. He is the second most relevant influence in Japanese contemporary architecture, born the same year as Tadao Ando. Ito's architecture is concerned with society and the changes produced within it. According to Toyo Ito, "Buildings have to be open in all directions, converting their interior spaces into organic urban fabric as if they were part and parcel of the town square".

Kazuyo Sejima, who began her work with Toyo Ito, experiments with transparency, she tells us "I am looking for a kind of transparency without transparent materials. What I mean by transparency is not quite the same as being see-through. And to me, the Information Society is more related to not seeing". In fact, in her constructions what is most important is the relationship between the building and its surroundings in which the transition is a vital issue.

The Japanese have been building houses with wood and paper for a long time, materials which have to be renovated or renewed constantly owing to the degradation that natural materials undergo, but they are the best materials in absorbing the movements produced by earthquakes. The buildings made with these materials are not permanent, being vulnerable to the passing of time. The most important thing for the Japanese is the intrinsic value of the building, the materials and not their historical value. That is why it is very important to renew historic buildings made of wood and sometimes rebuild them.

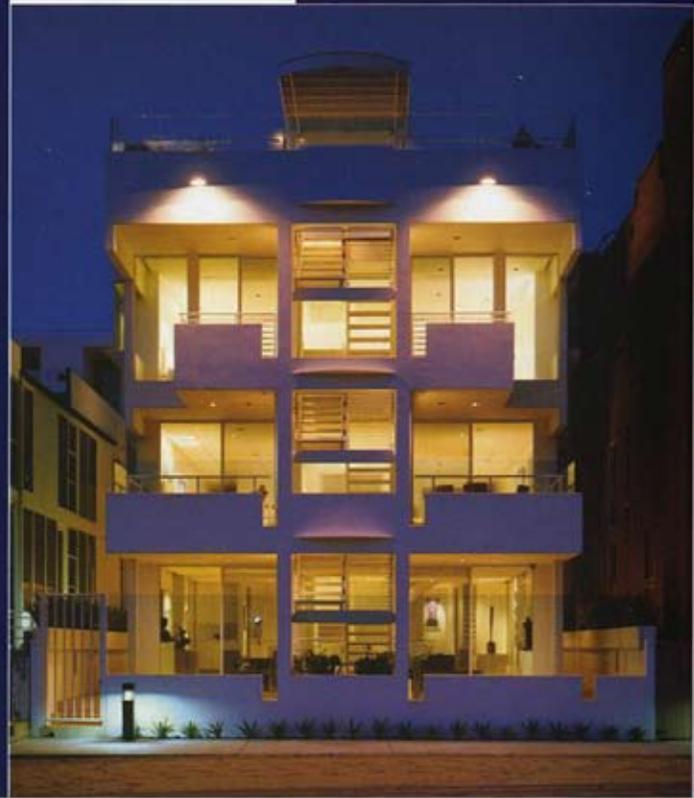
An architect who is very concerned about materials is Shigeru Ban, who is notable for his interest in seeking new materials and structural elements. In all his projects he is experimenting with new structures and new technologies. His structures made from round cardboard pillars, for example, are very well known.

Even today in the centre of Tokyo there are literally thousands of modern houses made of wood and paper as in traditional Japanese architecture. One factor which is changing in the design of houses, however, is their area. Owing to the lack of space in cities and the price of urban land, Japanese architects face a daily challenge in the need to design ever smaller houses. An outstanding example is the 4x4 house by Tadao Ando in Kobe. The floor area is 4x4m, out of which it has proved possible to produce a four-storey house with all the minimum requirements covered.

In Japanese architecture the concept of space is very important: the relationship that is set up between spaces and the way in which they relate to outside space. As Tadao says "I try to use the site where I am building to restore the unity between house and nature (light and wind included) a unity that was lost during the process of modernization of Japanese houses, during the rapid growth of the fifties and sixties."

The most important thing in a city so full of contradictions between traditional and modern elements is to achieve the universal form of which Norihiko speaks, "which has to achieve harmony with the setting, recover the natural surroundings and hut on the correct scale of things".

This book shows us the latest and most significant work of 14 of the most important modern Japanese architects, leading figures who have carried out projects in Asia, America and Europe. These architects are: Kisho Kurokawa, Norisada Maeda, Naya Architects, Makoto Sei Watanabe, Edward Suzuki, Kunihiko Hayakawa, Shin Tamakatsu, Ted Tokio Tanaka, Norihiko Dan, Fukimiko Maki, Toyo Ito, Tadao Ando, Kazuyo Sejima and Shigeru Ban.



TED TOKIO TANAKA

Tanaka was born in Japan, but at the age of 16 he and his family moved to Arizona where he studied Architecture at the Arizona State University in Tempe. After graduating he continued his professional career in Los Angeles working for various well known firms. In 1974 he created his own firm in Venice (Los Angeles). Tanaka has contributed a great deal to the urban landscape in Los Angeles. His buildings appear as pure geometric shapes, with lots of natural light, open spaces and a subtle fusion of architectural traditions from East and West. Ted Tokio has numerous houses which have won awards in Southern California and Japan. In 1994 he was given an award by the American Institute for Architects (AIA) in the design category which is the most prestigious award the organization has.

His main projects undertaken have been the improvement of the surroundings of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the urban landscaping and design for the last station in the Little Tokyo/Arts District subway station, as well as a station for the Los Angeles County metropolitan transportation system; he has also completed numerous projects for the improvement of campus areas at Los Angeles district schools community, La Torre apartment building for the Irvine Company, Banning's Landing Community Center in the Port of Los Angeles, Trowbridge Town Centre in England, the ski resort at Shirane Kogane in Japan.

Longitudinal Section



Zifkin House

Marina del Rey beach, California, EE.UU

Project
2001-2004

Area
8.200 m²

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - LAX



LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - LAX

Entrance / Approach and Improvement projects

Los Angeles, California, EE.UU

Project
1998-2000

View from beach



View from the passage



HOUSE ZIFKIN

Marina del Rey beach, California, USA.

Ted Tokio Tanaka

ZIFKIN House, Marina del Rey Beach, California, USA. Ted Tokio Tanaka

Project

2001-2004

Area

8.200 m²

DESIGN CONCEPT

This architectural project is at Marina Del Rey beach, California, consisting in reformation of the house designed by Tanaka in 1982. The original house was remodeled to be converted into a four-storey building in order to get panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean from each floor. The vivid blue of the Pacific Ocean and the luminosity of the sunshine in Southern California are the key themes in Tanaka's design. His intention was to merge the building and its natural surrounding landscape into a spacious architectural whole, doing so with the use of clear, transparent materials, skylights and windows. Simplicity is emphasized in the design of the interior spaces rendering it able to contain the client's large art collections. Spacious floors were integral to the project and solar protection elements were installed to control the entrance of natural light, thus ensuring the protection of the works of art on the premises. Tanaka's vision was to create a private gallery where one could maintain day-to-day interaction with works of art.



Ted Tokio Tanaka TTTA



The entrance to the house is on the first floor, with car access via a passage. Entrance is through a central area, where the interior staircase and lift are situated. The living room leads out to an exterior patio at beach level, from which it is separated by the fire escape. The service area is on the opposite side of the house.



The dining room is situated on the second floor in the central part of the house. In order to have natural lighting for this room Tanaka had overhead light enter through the ceiling of the third floor taking advantage of the large slanting glass skylight



The studio on the third floor shares the fine illumination of the natural light throughout the central part of the house, on the second and third floors. This radiant light is increased by the smooth white walls and the metal structure.

View of the Pacific Ocean from the terrace



The house's surroundings



On the third floor one comes across the main room which leads outside onto two balconies. In the central area we have the vertical communication channel, the bathroom and two dressing rooms.

On the passage side there is a bathroom, the guest room and the study-library-gym with natural light coming in from the two solar tubes in the ceiling.



LAX. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Ted Tokio Tanaka, TTTA

LAX Los Angeles International Airport, Entry and Improvement project
Los Angeles, California, EE, UU

Project
1998-2000

DESIGN CONCEPT

This project was undertaken to improve the aesthetics, flow and use of the main entrance to Los Angeles International Airport, through the use of architecture, graphics, landscape, light, and public art. This new original urban project has transformed a public installation into a landmark which reflects Los Angeles' unique cultural identity.

To carry out this major change in the landscape, the project was divided into different stages. The first stage involved taking stock of the situation in Los Angeles at that given moment, identifying all the problems, design and establish a list of priorities to improve the airport's image and function and write two reports once the work was done. The second stage led on to the design and construction of the project.

The central idea was to give character to Century Boulevard – until then it had been nothing more than a road carrying busy traffic, devoid of interest and amenities. The boulevard was converted into a multicoloured roadway lined by great glass pylons, as a direct response to the topography of Los Angeles.

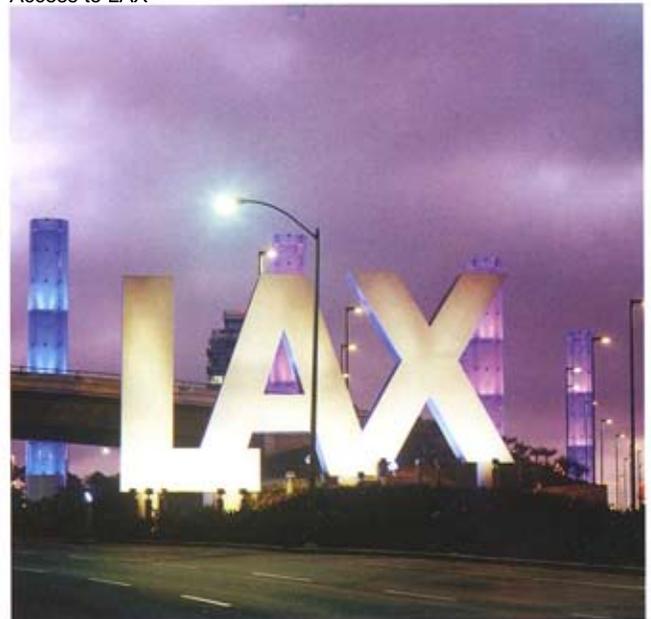


Los Angeles, California, USA Ted Tokio Tanaka, TTTA

Aerial view



Access to LAX





Circle formed by columns of light.





The height of the 11 multi-coloured glass columns varies from 25 to 100ft, running alongside Century Boulevard. Their vertical dynamics generate the serenity of ancient temples. At the end of the line of columns there are 15 100ft high columns forming a large circle evoking the mysterious stone circle of Stonehenge. Light technology allows for 300 different colours to be obtained within a period of 3 hours, these multi-coloured lights represent the multicultural richness that characterizes the city of Los Angeles.



The new serie of **ATRIUM**, dedicated to architecture worldwide, presents in this second in the serie volume a selection of the best architects from **Japan**

Together with renowned names such as

TADAO ANDO ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES, TOYO ITO & ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS, SHIGERU BAN ARCHITECTS, KAZUYO SEJIMA & RYUE NISHIZAWA / SANAA, TED TOKIO TANAKA, SHIN TAKAMATSU ARCH. & ASSOCIATES Co. Ltd., NORIHIKO DAN & ASSOCIATE, FUKIMIKO MAKI + MAKI & ASSOCIATES

we present new names, professionals emerging in the actual architectural scenario of this country. This book offers a general vision of the work, biographical review and a study of the latest work of the architect. Pure pleasure for the lovers of this Art.