

茶室

&

日本のデザイン

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CHASITSU & JAPANESE DESIGN



Introduction

THIS IS A STUDY of Japanese arts and design in relation to Japanese tea house (chashitsu, 茶室). The architecture of Japanese tea house or room, hereafter refers as Chashitsu, is designed to be used for tea ceremony (chanoyu 茶の湯) gathering. The architectural style that developed for chashitsu is referred to as the sukiya style (数寄屋). Typical features found in chashitsu are shoji (障子), tatami (畳) mat floor and tokonoma (床の間) with simple rustic subdued color and style. Materials used for construction were traditional sourced locally such as sugi (cedar, 杉), hinoki (cypress, 檜), bamboo and river stones. Very often, their original shapes and forms are preserved in order to conserve the originality and their natural beauty.

Tea houses are believed to be first appeared in the Sengoku period (戦国時代) (mid-15th century to early 17th century), a time in which the central government had almost no practical power, the country was in chaos, and wars and uprisings were commonplace. Many of the poor were eager to seek the salvation of the afterlife as taught by Zen Buddhism. Tea houses were built mostly by Zen monks or by daimyo (大名), samurai, and merchants who practiced tea ceremony. They sought simplicity and tranquility which is the central tenets of Zen philosophy. The acknowledgment of simplicity and plainness, which is a central motivation of the tea house, continued to remain as a distinct Japanese tradition in the later periods.

The origin of sukiya architecture style is thought to be created by a tea master, Sen no Rikyū (千利休), who was employed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉) as being an advisor on aesthetic matter. The chanoyu developed by Sen no Rikyū was latter branched out to three Sen families of school teaching (Omotesenke 表千家, Urasenke 裏千家, Mushakōjisenke 武者小路千家) and thus further developed into variations of chanoyu.

The design of sukiya architecture has no doubt creating great influence on Japanese design and arts. This leads to certain schools teaching sukiya style exclusively as its being a representation of traditional Japanese architecture and aesthetic. However, Japanese architecture and design is not all about sukiya style and chashitsu, there are other principle elements that makes Japanese design a unique class on its own. In this study, I will explore what are the underlying aesthetic and cultural roots that are essential on understanding Japanese design and their relation to the sukiya architecture style.



In 1587 Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98) employed the tea master Sen no Rikyū as his advisor on aesthetic matters. In the compound of Hideyoshi's imposing Jurakudai castle in Kyoto Rikyū designed an eighteen mat building known as the Coloured Shoin which was thought to be the first example of sukiya-zukuri architecture.

The style developed during rest of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1600) and was characterised by small rooms of usually four and a half tatami or even less that had a tokonoma and shelves. These buildings were normally entered through a garden often by means of an indirect curved or diagonal path that would not allow an instant view of the teahouse.

In Japanese tradition, architectural spaces designed to be used for tea ceremony (chanoyu) gatherings are known as chashitsu (茶室, literally “tea rooms”).

The architectural style that developed for chashitsu is referred to as the sukiya style (sukiya-zukuri), and the term sukiya (数奇屋) may be used as a synonym for chashitsu. Related Japanese terms are chaseki (茶席), broadly meaning “place for tea,” and implying any sort of space where people are seated to participate in tea ceremony, and chabana, “tea flowers”, the style of flower arrangement associated with the tea ceremony.

Typical features of chashitsu are shōji windows and sliding doors made of wooden lattice covered in a translucent Japanese paper; tatami mat floors; a tokonoma alcove; and simple, subdued colours and style. The ideal floor size of a chashitsu is 4.5 tatami mats.

The Japanese aesthetic is a set of ancient ideals that include wabi (transient and stark beauty), sabi (the beauty of natural patina and aging), and yūgen (profound grace and subtlety). These ideals, and others, underpin much of Japanese cultural and aesthetic norms on what is considered tasteful or beautiful. Thus, while seen as a philosophy in Western societies, the concept of aesthetics in Japan is seen as an integral part of daily life. Japanese aesthetics now encompass a variety of ideals; some of these are traditional while others are modern and sometimes influenced by other cultures.

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Chapter I



Katsura (桂離宮)

REFINED RUSTICITY IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

THE KATSURA PALACE (KATSURA Rikyū) is a pivotal work of Japanese Architecture, often described as the “quintessence of Japanese taste.” It provides an excellent path into an understanding of principles of Japanese design. It is widely regarded as the quintessential embodiment of the culture’s highly refined and understated aesthetic sensibility.

The buildings and surrounding areas radiate a quiet, graceful presence that illustrates how attuned the Japanese are to the beauty of nature, and how they are able to transform that beauty to their own perspectives. It finely constructed parts reveal the Japanese artisans’ careful attention to detail and sensitive, but calculated, use of natural materials.

Katsura consists of a series of interconnected residential buildings in a formal style called shoin (書院)、and several detached tea

houses in an informal style known as sukiya 数奇屋.



京都桂離宮の松琴亭茶室



Shokintei (松琴亭) is the most important teahouse at the villa. The ichinoma, or first room, has a blue-and white checkered pattern on the sliding door and tokonoma alcove. It demonstrates the genuine creativity, contemporary appeal and subtle departure of traditional patterns, but remain novel in sukiya class.



Chapter 2



Shibui (渋い)

SUBTLE ELEGANCE

THE TERM SHIBUI OR shibumi describes a distinct sense of beauty, understated and well crafted, exquisite but not overly sweet which is the opposite of showiness and frippery.

The word represents a sense of elegance and refinement, sophisticated simplicity, tranquility, natural imperfection, and modesty. It is closely associated with the wabi-sabi aesthetics of the Japanese tea ceremony of chanoyu.



Okura Hotel 2015

A classical example would be the lobby of the Okura Hotel. It was designed by Taniguchi Yoshiro and remained unchanged since the time of its design. The quietly elegant room, with its white paper Shoji screens accented with finely textured and patterned latticework, and pale wood ceiling and wall surfaces, reflect a contemporary representation of Shibui aesthetic in Japanese architectural design.

Chapter 3



Iki (粋)

STYLISH, SOPHISTICATED ELEGANCE

SHUZO KUKI ARGUES THAT the Edo ideal of iki or “chic” has a threefold structure representing the fusion of the “amorousness” (bitai) of the Geisha, the “valor” (ikuji) of the samurai, and the “resignation” (aki)

The work for which Kuki is best known, *The Structure of Iki*, is often regarded as the most creative work in modern Japanese aesthetics.

Reference: *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki*, Kuki Shuzo



The beauties of the present day – Kitagawa Utamaro (喜多川 歌麿)



Ase o fuku onna (Woman Wiping Sweat), Ukiyo-e, 1798



Women playing with the mirror, 1797

Chapter 4



Miyabi and Fūryū (雅 & 風諭)

OPULENT AND STYLISH ELEGANCE

UNLIKE SHIBUI, WABI, SABI and iki which represent the understated and restrained beauty, the flipside of these is a more opulent elegance often associated with Japan's elites and intellectuals. Thus, Miyabi represents the class of being "courtly elegance", which expresses the pinnacle of refinement and beauty wistfully contemplated in the expression of Mono no Aware. Fūryū implies a conspicuously rusticated elegance to Shibui. The class of Fūryū was greatly influenced by the Ming dynasty in Chinese evolution with aesthetic preferences of Japanese intellectuals and artists who abhorred the repressive policies of the Tokugawa military regime and held great admiration for Chinese. As a result, participating Chinese-style service of steeped green tea (sencha, 煎茶) was popular among intellectuals which was opposite to Chanoyu in wabi style.

There is not much association of Miyabi and Fūryū to traditional Chasitsu design because of Sukiya style of architecture is considered a main stream of Chasitus design which is dominated by Wabi-Sabi type of design.



Mono no Aware (物の哀れ)

Since Heian period, mono aware refers to the sensitive, exquisite feelings experienced when encountering the subtle workings of human life or the changing seasons. While aspects of mono no aware have long been part of the human experience, the concept and the sensibilities associated with it were refined during the Heian and Kamakura periods as part of the lifestyles of aristocrats associated with the imperial court.



Tale of Nezame

Tale of Nezame illustrates the retired emperor visits Ono to biew the Snowy Scenery. This picture scroll depicts the lives of courtly refinement enjoyed by aristocrats through the process known as tsukuri-e (作り絵), which was admirably suited to providing a visual representation of the deeply felt lyrical qualities of the narratives.



Tsukuri-e use of bright, opaque color and delicate brushwork to present the spaces within fukinuki yatai (吹き抜き 屋台), “roofless buildings,” and the human characters with their hikime kagibana, (引目鉤鼻) “slit eyes and hooked noses,” these scroll paintings are rich in emotional implications. Suma and Hashi hime, Scenes from the Tale of Genji Folding Screen

Chapter 5



Karei (華麗)

SUMPTUOUS ELEGANCE

THE FORMAL AND PUBLIC life of Japanese aristocrats and élite warriors between fourteen and mid-nineteenth centuries require the use of luxury objects and clothing befitting their social status. To express karei in every aspect of social life, objects such as clothing and theatrical costumes, residential furnishings, accessories and garments for military display, court display, and Shinto rituals were created in way to show off the aesthetic of karei which is about the feel and look of being sumptuousness and elegance. The aesthetic of karei has close association with Chinese arts evidenced by the use of bright and golden materials.



Chinese painting style and techniques had great influence among the class of Japanese aristocrats during fourteen and mid-nineteenth centuries.

"Three Friends of Winter": Pine, Bamboo and Plum Trees are often cherished by the Chinese Literatures.

Five Pines, By Li Shan, China, Qing dynasty, 18th century

Noh robe (縫箔 nuihaku), Edo period (1615-1868), second half of 18th century, Japanese Silk embroidery and gold leaf on satin



Noh Robe with design of butterflies, chrysanthemums, maple leaves, and miscanthus grass, Edo period (1615-1868), Silk embroidery and gold leaf on silk satin.

The gleaming beauty of this Nō (能) robe contributed to the aesthetic of stately Karei atmosphere of the Nō theatre.



Striding Lion: Mount for the Buddhist Deity Monju, Mid-13th century.
Japanese. Wood with traces of paint and crystal inlays, 26 3/8 x 34 inches.
Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust.

Iizuka Tōyō (飯塚桃葉), Tiered stationery box, makie (金蒔絵) lacquer over wood core, gold and silver inlays.

This richly decorated box expresses the elegant karei taste of the upper class of samurai family.



Noh costume (nuihaku), Edo period (1615-1868), second half of 18th century Japan Silk embroidery and metallic leaf on silk satin

Chapter 6



Kabuku and Basara (歌舞伎 婆娑羅)

OUTLANDISH ELEGANCE

IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH century and after the Tokugawa warriors took control of the country, urban commoner culture flourished as never before. Participants in this wave of cultural change included warriors forced to become masterless samurai (rōnin 浪人), who fought on the losing side of the recent civil wars, and commoners displaced by the conflicts. These individuals became assimilated into the ranks of the newly emerging urban commoner classes who participated en masse in popular Shinto shrine festivals, attend Kabuki theatre performances, and partook of other leisure activities, many of which took place in new red light districts of Japan's burgeoning urban centers, where banquet halls like the Sumiya. The new type of extravagant elegance was known as Kabuku, which symbolized rebellion against conventional social and artistic attitudes.



Okuni Kabuki (阿国歌舞伎)
Edo period, first quarter of 17th century
Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on gilded paper

Tsuji Nobuo, a distinguished Japanese art historian, was the first scholar to recognize a broad range of arts and artists whose works seem to have been inspired by a sense of heterodoxy and playfulness implicit in the word “kabuki”.



Basara is an older expression that expresses the climate of social upheaval in Japan. Tenmyouya hiashi (天明屋尚), a Japanese contemporary artist, described basara as “ the family of beauty that stands on the opposite end of the spectrum from wabi sabi and zen.. “



He advocated the concept of "BASARA" – named after the word basara used during the Northern and Southern Courts period of Japanese history as well as the Warring States (Sengoku) period's kabukimono – as a pompous and extravagant aesthetic current. By violating the traditional taboos on purpose, his works come as a true manifest for the pompous yet extraordinary spirit of Basara.



A boisterous dance

Chapter 7



Ma (間)

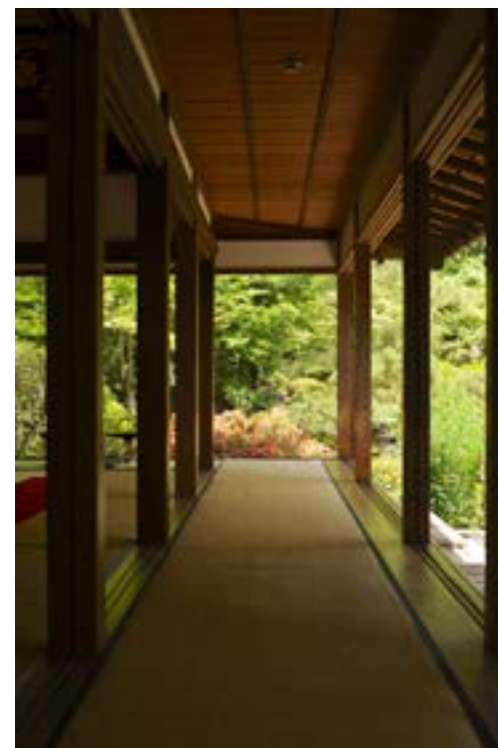
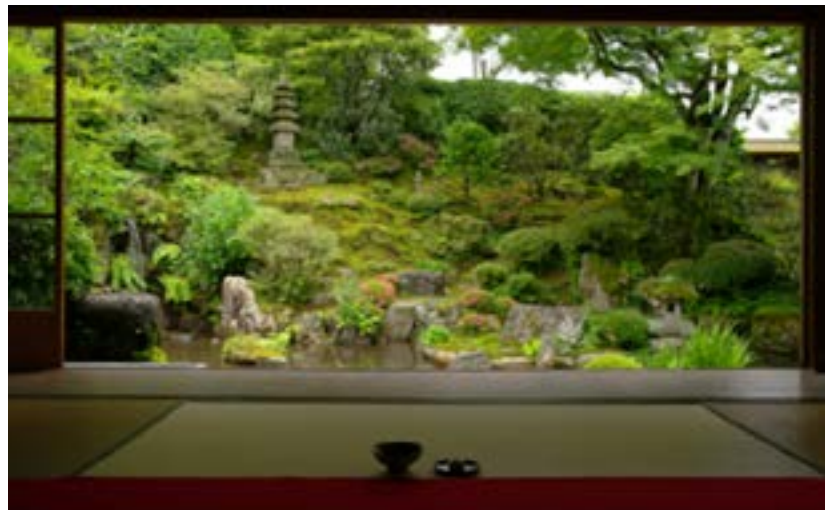
AN INTERVAL IN TIME AND SPACE

MA DESCRIBES THE PARTIALITY in Japanese design for empty spaces, vagueness, abstraction, symmetrical balance, and irregularly. It is a popular buzzword among architects and cultural critics for defining a whole cluster of Japanese aesthetics in the post-war period. Sukiya of Chasitsu design represents many aspects of the aesthetic of Ma, particularly in using the empty spaces and irregularities.

Ma, as being The Japanese Sense of Place, has its profound influence on designers searching for Ma's spirit. Arata Izozaki (磯崎 新), who is considered to be one of world's most illustrious architects, providing in-depth understanding on MA in an essay on his research "MA-The Japanese Sense of Place". The concept of MA represents the foundation of almost all aspects of Japanese life and he saw it as a uniquely Japanese perception of spatial and temporal reality that resonated with contemporary theories of the universe as defined by quantum physicists who understand space and time not as separate categories but as interdependent dimen-



Tokonoma alcove is an integral part of Chasitsu, the hanging scroll and flower arrangement serve not as ornament, but rather to give depth to the shadows.



In Japanese architecture, engawa (縁側) is a typically wooden strip of flooring immediately before the windows and storm shutters inside traditional Japanese rooms. Recently this term also come to mean the veranda outside the room as well, which was traditionally referred as a nureen (濡れ縁). In Engawa design, the emptiness of Ma is used to provide intrigue transient space between the nature and dwelling.



The space design of Engawa(縁側) acts as a stage for viewing the scenic surrounding.



Issey Miyake (三宅 一世) was one of the prominent avant-grade contemporary artists and designers who contributed to the landmark 1978 exhibition, MA Espace - Temps du Japon, about Ma. In his works, the abstraction and vagueness of Ma were being transformed into contemporary styles.





Jun Kaneko (潤 金子), a Japanese ceramic artist, quoted as saying that Ma “defines his entire practice as an artist – as painter, sculptor, designer, ceramist..”

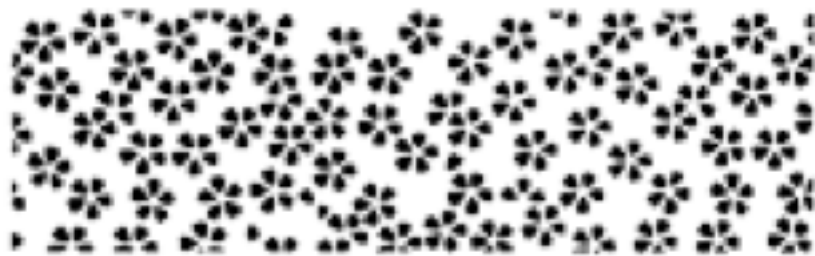
Chapter 8



Nōtan (濃淡)

THE DARK-LIGHT PRINCIPLE

NŌTAN IS NOT A class by itself invented by Japanese. However, this design principle is being incorporated into Japanese design in a unique way. In Nōtan design, it is about the dynamic interaction between dark and light values often in two-dimensional image. In Japanese' terminology, Nōtan is used to express "light-dark" as an element of design. In the West, positive space and negative space is the equivalent term for this.



The principle of this design is that dark shapes cannot exist without a surrounding area of white and vice versa.



The two elements are really one. This is an eastern concept of yin-yang (陰陽) that each is what the other is not.

Referecne: Art Café

Chapter 8



Mingei (民芸)

JAPANESE FOLK CRAFTS

THE RUSTICITY AND UNPRETENTIOUS ruggedness, which were associated with the dwellings and functional objects used by Japanese farmers, was recognized by early Chanoyu tea masters. Medieval period tea masters incorporated this aesthetic into their new wabi-style tea ceremony in preferences for rough, unglazed stoneware ceramic tea utensils and unpaid, wood framed, thatched roof tea houses. Tea masters only valued arts that associated with their ideas about Chanoyu, but it was Yanagi Soetsu 柳 宗悦 who discovered and promoted appreciation for a much wider variety of inexpensive, utilitarian, handmade crafts by and for commoners.

He believed that the anonymous artisans who made these objects utilized natural materials and pre-modern production methods to create practiceal, functional products filled with and unconsciouss spiritual beauty that revealed an elevated moral or social conscious-ness superior to objects created as luxury goods for the wealthy class of society. He considered these arts reflective of the true aesthetic expression of the Japanese people



Quoted from Yanagi Sōetsu (柳 宗悦) (1889-1961) who was a Japanese philosopher and founder of mingei movement in Japan saying that “If the repetition of a machine is the death of all art, the manual repetition by a craftsman is the very mother of skill and skill is the mother of beauty.”



Yoshihiro Takishita, president and founder of The Association for the Preservation of Old Japanese Farmhouses (APOJF), is an architect and art collector.

Takishita has made a career of saving old minka (farmhouses) from demolition by moving those that cannot be preserved in situ and using their skeletal framework to create comfortable modern houses for himself and clients worldwide.

Chapter 10



Rinpa (琳派)

DECORATIVE ART OF THE KŌRIN SCHOOL

RINPA (琳派 Rinpa), is one of the major historical schools of Japanese painting. It was created in 17th century Kyoto by Hon'ami Kōetsu (本阿弥 光悦) and Tawaraya Sōtatsu (俵屋 宗達). Roughly fifty years later, the style was consolidated by brothers Ogata Kōrin (尾形光琳) and Ogata Kenzan (尾形 乾山).

The term "Rinpa" is an abbreviation consisting of the last syllable from "Kōrin" with the word for school (派 ha?) (with rendaku changing this to "pa"), coined in the Meiji period. Previously, the style was referred to variously as the Kōetsu school (光悦派 Kōetsu-ha?), or Kōetsu-Kōrin school (光悦光琳派 Kōetsu-Kōrin-ha?), or the Sōtatsu-Kōrin school (宗達光琳派 Sōtatsu-Kōrin-ha?).

The subjects and styles of Rinpa art recalled the courtly culture of the Heian period and often featured ancient waka (和歌) poetry, its greater abstraction and bolder colors imparted a modern flair to these arts.



Waka Poetry - the Kokin Wakashū (古今和歌集) is generally regarded as the definitive anthology of waka poetry.



Hon'ami Kōetsu (本阿弥 光悦), the leader of a small group of independent minded artists, who found the artistic style known as Rinpa in the old imperial capital of Kyoto during the early seventeenth century. He is a calligrapher from a well-connected samurai family of sword polishers who immersed himself in various arts at an artist's colony he founded.

John Carpenter

Rinpa is a modern term that refers to a distinctive style of Japanese pictorial and applied arts that arose in the early 17th century and has continued into modern times. Literally meaning "school of Korin," Rinpa derives its name from that of the renowned artist Ogata Korin (1658–1716). It embraces art marked by a bold, graphic abbreviation of natural motifs, frequent reference to traditional court literature and poetry, lavish use of expensive mineral and metallic pigments, incorporation of calligraphy into painting compositions, and innovative experimentation with brush techniques.

The Rinpa Aesthetic embraces bold, exaggerated, or purely graphic renderings of natural motifs as well as formalized depictions of fictional characters, poets, and sages. Underlying Rinpa design sensibilities is a tendency toward simplification and abbreviation, often achieved through a process of formal exaggeration. Rinpa is also celebrated for its use of lavish pigments, conspicuous or sometimes subliminal references to



八橋図屏風
Irises at Yatsubashi (Eight Bridges)
Artist: Ogata Kōrin (Japanese, 1658–1716)



Part of a series of episodes
about the Ise Stories (Ise
monogatari) 伊勢物語

“ I wear robes with well-worn hems,
Reminding me of my dear wife
I fondly think of always,
So as my sojourn stretches on tabi
Ever farther from home,
Sadness fills my thoughts. ”—Trans. John T. Carpenter

Chapter II



Kazari (飾り)

MODES OF DECORATION AND DISPLAY

THE AESTHETIC OF KAZARI can be seemed as a gradual evolution of Japanese design tradition and it often contains multiple modes of equal importance being presented simultaneously within the multitude of social contexts. These varied modes can generally be described with the word “kazari” which is literally translated as being decorative, ornamental and adornment.



Curtain (noren) in hemp and cotton with tsutsugaki(筒描) dip-dyed in digo and brushed sum ink, Meiji Period

Sherman Emory Lee (1918-2008) was an American Academic, a distinguished and respected writer and art historian specializing in far eastern arts. In this book “The Genius of Japanese Design,” he described the Japanese eye delights in asymmetry, intuitive placement, subtle shades and combinations of colors, as compared to the Chinese proclivity toward balance, rational sequence, and purity and separation of colors. The vocabulary of Japanese design is distinguished by the dominance of asymmetric composition, the dominance of the material over the carefully reticent hand of the artist, the dominance of pattern and of motif, often traditional and with literary overtones.



The architecture design of Chasitsu typically has windows of different sizes with different height placements in respect to certain perspective views. This asymmetric style has been used on various design disciplines throughout the history and can be found in many applications on contemporary design.



Use of minimalist, the monochrome concrete buildings designed by Tadao Ando shows a feeling of austerity: Tadao Ando’s designs are often influenced heavily by Zen Philosophy that is understated, but yet elegant. Quoted by his saying, “I have always been very impressed by traditional Japanese architecture. I very much appreciate the delicacy of Sukiya and Japanese tea houses, I am also amazed by the scale and power of traditional structure such as Itsukushima Shrine, Todaiji Temple and many others.

Chapter 12



Wabi-Sabi (侘び 寂び)

RUSTIC AND WITHERED ELEGANCE

The aesthetic of Chanoyu tea ceremony is closely linked to the words wabi and sabi. The preference of using inexpensive tea wares over finely wrought Chinese utensils known as wari-suki by the Chanoyu founder, Murata Jukō (村田珠光), has made wabi-sabi as basic design concept on Chasitsu.

Wabi and sabi, often together with shibui and suki represent the “essence of Japanese beauty”. The word wabi refers to desolate or lonely, and embodies appreciation of a rustic beauty in natural imperfection and celebrate the noble spirit of poverty and humility. Sabi refers to rusted, lonesome, or dreary, and aesthetically evokes sorrow for the fragility of life. The design of chasitsu is a classic representation of being wabi sabi with its use of materials that are being natural, imperfect, minimal and fragile together with subtle and rustic construction. There are many interpretation and use of Wabi-Sabi in the design world.



Elizabeth Gordon, the influential editor of House Beautiful magazine for more than 20 years, wrote an essay in 1960, "We Invite You to Enter a New Dimension: Shibui," extolled the principles of understated resonance and serenity in design and is credited with introducing traditional Japanese design ideas to the American public. She explained wabi and sabi as underlying principles of shibui in gardens. In her terms, the presence of sabi in gardens that process a "tranquil and serene atmosphere," and wabi as a design concept in which "nothing is over-emphasized or extravagant or exaggerated." Nowadays, these words have been applied to a wide variety of crafts, fine arts, commercial products, architectural designs and even interpersonal relationship when association is made to products or designs that are created from rustic and tactile, seemingly old, natural materials.



My thought about Japanese Design Aesthetic



My thought (私の考え)

My thought about the relationship between chasitsu and Japanese design has two folds. The architectural design of chasitsu has no doubt for its influence on the Japanese design aesthetic. As illustrated in the preceding chapters, it is evidenced that many Japanese design aesthetic elements can be found in Chasitsu. However, many institutions regards the architecture of chasitsu is wholly representation of Japanese architectural design and make teaching chasitsu exclusively.

In order for one to understand the Japanese aesthetic and architectural design, one has to be thinking out of the box and to explore the many other aesthetic design elements that have profound contribution to the world of Japanese design aesthetic. Kabuku, Basara and Rinpa are classic movements that have set out a new wave on Japanese design.

Dobie Cheung



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