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SUSTAINABLE JAPAN MAGAZINE

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Architecture for the ages:
Preserving past for future

FROM THE EDITOR

By YOSHIKUNI SHIRAI / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Modern master Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the architects who had a profound influence on Japanese architectural culture.

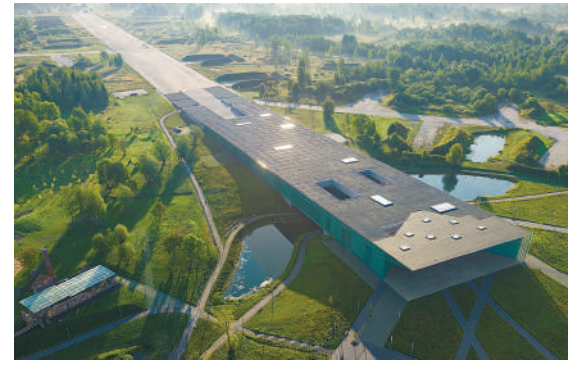
His most famous buildings were the Guggenheim Museum in New York (1959) and the private residence Fallingwater (1937), but the former Imperial Hotel (commonly known as the Wright Building) in Hibiya, Tokyo, was a masterpiece that should not be forgotten. The reception to celebrate its completion was held on Sept. 1, 1923, the very day of the Great Kanto Earthquake, but while many of the surrounding buildings

collapsed, the Imperial Hotel Wright Building came out almost unscathed, further burnishing his reputation.

Nevertheless, the building was eventually demolished, in 1967 and 1968, 45 years after its completion, due to deterioration and other reasons. So why was the precious Wright Building allowed to be destroyed, and how has Japan sought to preserve its cultural assets?

In this special issue we delve into the story of Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan, architectural preservation and how architectural heritage might be preserved for future generations.

フランク・ロイド・ライトは、日本の建築文化に影響を与えた建築家です。〈グッゲンハイム美術館〉(1959年竣工)などが有名ですが、旧・帝国ホテルの通称ライト館(1923年竣工)も忘れてはならない代表作です。しかしこの建築は1968年に取り壊されてしまいました。なぜ貴重なライト館は解体されたのか? 今回は、建築保存の問題、建築文化を次世代にどうつなげて伝えていくかについて考えてみたいと思います。



Completed in 2016, the Estonian National Museum project was the catalyst for Tsuyoshi Tane to go independent. The museum's roof rises up like an extension of the runway at the former Soviet military base on which it is built.

© PROPAPANDA/COURTESY OF DGT.

Feature ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

ARCHITECT

Fourth Imperial Hotel will build on many pasts

By JUN ISHIDA

TSUYOSHI TANE

Tsuyoshi Tane is a Japanese architect based in Paris. He founded Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects in Paris after being co-founder of DGT. Tane's work is guided by the concept of building the future from the memories of a place — "Archaeology of the Future." He is best known for the Estonian National Museum (2016), the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art (2020) and the Al Thani Collection (2021) and currently is working on the fourth incarnation of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, to be completed in 2036. See www.at-ta.fr



Tane at his Paris office. Behind him is a model of the Imperial Hotel Tokyo's new main building, for which he has been appointed the design architect. Its staircase-like shape is a key feature of his design.

PHOTO: YUJI ONO

● Summary

F.L. ライトの意志を引き継ぎ蘇る、帝国ホテルの建築。

現在の帝国ホテルは、1970年に竣工した3代目の建物。これに続く4代目ホテルのイメージが発表された。デザイナー・アーキテクトはパリ在住の建築家、田根剛。そのイメージは高さ31mの基壇部とセットバックしたひな壇状の高層部から成るものだ。様々な文明の宮殿をリサーチしデザインしたと言う外観は、マヤ文明の影響を色濃

く残すライトによる2代目帝国ホテルに通じるものがある。〈博物館明治村〉に移築されたライト設計の帝国ホテル玄関部分に対して聞くと、意外にも明治村を訪れたのはコンペに勝った後だったそうだが、このライト設計の建物を初めて見て、田根は驚愕したという。「ライトは、ローカルな素材を使ったり、自然循環(パッシブエネ

ギー)を取り入れるなど、今建築界が試みていることに、100年前から取り組んでいる。ライトの建築が古びないのは、新規性を求めていなかったからだと思います。新しいものはいつか古くなり、人は忘れてしまう。過去にあったものを継承し、記憶から未来を作ってゆく。そうして出来た建築物にこそ、時代を超える力があります。



日本語全文はこちら



Shown here is Tane's conceptual perspective drawing of the new main building. The final design is still at the discussion stage and may yet change, but the rebuilding is scheduled to take place between fiscal years 2031 and 2036.

©ATELIER TSUYOSHI TANE ARCHITECTS

It was in 1890 that the Imperial Hotel first opened in Tokyo's Hibiya district. Financed by the Meiji government and a group of powerful business leaders, among them pioneer industrialist Eiichi Shibusawa, the hotel was designed as a symbol of the imperial capital's ambition to Westernize by Yuzuru Watanabe, who had studied architecture under Josiah Conder, designer of numerous public buildings in Tokyo.

A new building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright opened on the site in 1923. The Great Kanto Earthquake struck on the very day of its opening, Sept. 1. As the ground on which the hotel stood was soft, Wright had adopted a unique construction method known as a "floating foundation." Thanks to this foresight, the structure suffered minimal damage.

Despite this rocky start, the second incarnation of the Imperial Hotel was extolled as the "jewel of the East" and hosted distinguished guests from across the globe. Between 1923 and its demolition in 1968 to make way for a new building, it welcomed countless notable visitors, including Babe Ruth and Marilyn Monroe. The lobby and courtyard of the Wright-era hotel can still be seen today, as its materials were used to re-create the central structure at Museum Meiji Mura in Inuyama, Aichi Prefecture.

Wright's design used carved Oya stone and *sudare* bricks fired in Tokoname for both the interior and exterior. Now able to be viewed in its entirety only in photographs, the architectural style is reminiscent of remains from the Maya civilization, which Wright was fascinated with at the time he was designing the hotel.

The third and current Imperial Hotel building, designed by Teitaro Takahashi, was completed in 1970. And illustrations for the fourth generation of this Tokyo institution have now been unveiled. Paris-based architect Tsuyoshi Tane has been appointed as the design architect. Aged just 42 — considered young in the world of architecture — this will be Tane's first major building in Tokyo.

Tane was 26 when he came to prominence in the architectural world. In 2006, while working for British architect David Adjaye's firm, Tane won the Estonian National Museum competition in partnership with Dan Dorell and Lina Ghotmeh, who were both employed at another architectural firm. Their design for a building that seems to rise out of the runway of a former Soviet military base became a talking point and was the catalyst for the three architects to go independent and set

up their own firm. In 2012, Tane reached the short list of the process to select the new National Stadium of Japan for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, with a design inspired by Japan's ancient *kofun* tombs. The plan, which would have seen an immense verdant forest planted in the outer precinct of Meiji Shrine, stunned even the Japanese architectural community and brought Tane's name to prominence in Japan. Tane set up his own firm, Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects, in 2017. Since then, he has been involved in numerous projects, mainly in France and Japan, including the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art, which opened in the Aomori Prefecture city in 2020.

Tane's design for the Imperial Hotel's fourth incarnation, revealed at a news conference last October, features a staircase-like setback tower atop a 31-meter-high base that serves as a platform. The exterior — the product of research into the palaces built by a variety of civilizations — introduces elements that hark back strongly to the Maya influences of Wright's second-generation Imperial Hotel. Guided by the concept of building the future from the memories of a place, Tane develops his designs on the basis of "archaeological research derived from objects and anthropological research focused on legends that leave no physical form," he said. For this particular project, Tane zeroed in on the history of both palaces and high-rise architecture in his research.

"The Imperial Hotel was built in the Meiji period as a state guesthouse to welcome visitors from across the globe, especially Western countries, at a time when Japan had just emerged from centuries of national isolation under the shogunate," Tane explained. "Rather than being merely an accommodation facility, it was a place for entertaining guests, engaging in social interaction and holding an array of events. To consider the visuals of a place that would fulfill those roles, I researched palaces of all kinds throughout history, from the ancient Mesopotamian and Mayan civilizations to modern Europe. I also investigated the history of high-rise architecture. Tall buildings began to mushroom between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, with the Chicago School — characterized by external walls made of stone — initially holding sway. One leading exponent of the Chicago School was Louis Sullivan, who was also Wright's mentor. For this project, I went back and conducted in-depth research into the ori-

gins of high-rise architecture, in whose construction the use of stone has now come to an end."

Asked what kind of research he undertook concerning the Museum Meiji Mura's reconstruction of the Wright-designed Imperial Hotel lobby, Tane disclosed that he actually only visited Meiji Mura after winning the competition. When he saw Wright's building for the first time, he was astonished.

"I can only say that its architecture is nothing short of miraculous," Tane enthused. "It defies understanding that a single architect could create something like this. I can't describe it as anything other than a marvel. I was overwhelmed by Wright's architecture as an experience something akin to a symphony, with its dramatic spatial composition and use of light and furnishings."

Tane also noticed the modernity of Wright's design.

"Wright was ahead of his time with his use of local materials and incorporation of natural cycles (passive energy) into the design — these are all things that the architectural world is now trying to do today, 100 years later. The Wright Building integrates structure with fixtures. In contemporary architecture, air-conditioning systems and lighting are installed in ceilings and walls afterward, but Wright solved this problem by integrating lighting, ventilation hatches, wiring and piping into decorative pillars. While Wright's architecture has a fierce individuality, his approach was based on giving each building its own distinctive characteristics, rather than forcing the architect's style on them, and that's something that carries through to architecture today."

While he did not use Wright's design as a point of reference, Tane shares his fore-runner's interest in ancient civilizations, taking inspiration from them and using them as the starting point for considering the building.

"I think the reason why Wright's architecture doesn't get old is that he wasn't pursuing novelty in the first place," Tane explained. "The new will always eventually become old and be forgotten. To avoid that fate, we can uphold the legacy of the past and use those memories to create the future. Architecture created in this way has the power to transcend time."

The Tane-designed Imperial Hotel is due to be completed in 2036. We are already looking forward to seeing whether it will eclipse even Wright's design.

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COVER PHOTO



The entrance to Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel, which was relocated to Meiji Mura in Aichi Prefecture. After the building was demolished in 1968, part of it was relocated and restored, and it has been on display to the public since 1985.

PHOTO: YUMIKO KINOSHITA

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The entrance of the Imperial Hotel, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.
COURTESY: IMPERIAL HOTEL

CHRONOLOGY

1867	Born in Wisconsin, U.S.
1905	First visit to Japan. Travels extensively not as an architect, but as an ukiyo-e dealer and collector.
1913	Second visit to Japan. Purchases large number of ukiyo-e.
1917	Visits Japan to design the Imperial Hotel.
1919	Construction of the Imperial Hotel (commonly known as the Wright Building) begins.
1922	Wright is effectively dismissed as hotel architect due to construction delays and budget overruns. His disciple Arata Endo succeeds him.
1923	Imperial Hotel Wright Building completed. The Great Kanto Earthquake occurs the day of the completion reception party.
1959	Passes away, age 91. The Guggenheim Museum in New York is completed after his death.
1967	Demolition of The Imperial Hotel Wright Building begins.
1985	Relocation and restoration of the entrance of the Imperial Hotel Wright Building completed at the Museum Meiji Mura.

The location is Hibiya, Tokyo, very close to the Imperial Palace. Here stands one of Japan's leading hotels, the Imperial Hotel. Its founding dates back to 1890, when political and business leaders set out to create a guest house fit for a proud modern nation.

The hotel's current building dates back to the early 1970s, but before then the hotel was housed in a palace-like structure, the design of which seemed neither Japanese nor Western. It was the handiwork of master architect Frank Lloyd Wright and was commonly known in Japanese as Raito Kan, the Wright Building.

So how did Wright, an American, come to design Japan's leading hotel? We'll start the story there.

Wright began his career working for architect Louis Sullivan, a leader of the Chicago School. Roughly six years later he established his own office and started creating buildings, mostly houses, that emphasized horizontal lines and were closely integrated with the earth. The work became known as the Prairie School style. But, in addition to being an architect, Wright wore another hat, that of a buyer of Japanese *ukiyo-e*. And it was this that provided his connection with the Imperial

Hotel. When Aisaku Hayashi, who had previously been an Oriental art dealer in New York, was appointed as the seventh manager of the Imperial Hotel, he tapped his old ukiyo-e dealer acquaintance Wright to design the new building.

At the time, Wright's jobs in the United States were drying up, after several high-profile scandals involving his personal relationships. For the architect, the Imperial Hotel job in Japan no doubt appeared like a chance at redemption. In it, he set about creating a new type of architecture fusing East and West, ancient and modern. The symmetrical appearance of the guest room wing was reminiscent of the first Japanese architecture that Wright



People gathering in the courtyard of the Imperial Hotel.
COURTESY: IMPERIAL HOTEL

Feature ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

A HOTEL'S STORY

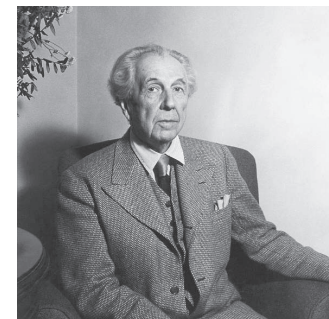
Frank Lloyd Wright and the Imperial Hotel

By TOSHICHIKA IZUMI



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Along with Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright is considered one of the three masters of modern architecture. Born in Wisconsin in 1867, he designed over 800 buildings during his lifetime. His best-known works include Fallingwater (1937) and the Guggenheim Museum (1959). In Japan, in addition to the Imperial Hotel entrance (1923), which has been relocated and restored in Aichi Prefecture, his extant buildings are Jiyugakuen (1922) in Tokyo and the Yodoko Guest House (1924; formerly the Yamamura residence) in Hyogo Prefecture.



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Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel, as seen from the air on the Hibiya Park side in the 1960s. The two guest wings protrude on the left and right.
COURTESY: IMPERIAL HOTEL

had encountered: a re-creation at the 1893 Chicago Expo of the Phoenix Hall from Byodoin Temple in Uji, Kyoto. The low-lying building is firmly planted in the ground, as in the Prairie School style, and the building is clad in Oya (a gray-green lava stone mined in Tochigi Prefecture near Tokyo) with a geometric pattern similar to a Maya ruin. This amalgam was born from Wright's insistence on not making copies of existing Western architecture. However, the strength of that passion was also his undoing. Due for completion in 1921, the building faced significant delays, and costs almost doubled from the original budget. Hayashi defended Wright, but in April 1922, when the original building burned to the ground in an accidental fire, he ended up resigning as manager. Having lost his major backer, Wright returned to the United States three months later and never returned to Japan again.

The hotel job was taken over by Wright's disciple Arata Endo and was successfully completed in 1923. On the day of the opening reception, the Great Kanto Earthquake struck, but Wright's unique construction method, which he called a "floating foundation," which shortened the foundation piles to absorb vibration, proved effective on Hibiya's soft ground. The building was unharmed, and Wright, who was by then back in the United States, proudly played up the seismic resistance of his architecture in his autobiography. The Imperial Hotel was known as the "Pearl of the East" and went on to entertain many guests as one of Japan's

leading hotels. The building survived the Pacific War, and during the postwar Occupation was even requisitioned for use by the Allied Occupation forces.

We then jump forward to March 1967, when Japan was at the height of its rapid economic growth. With newspaper reports suggesting the old hotel would be rebuilt as a high-rise, a movement to secure its preservation was born. At its center was the Imperial Hotel Preservation Association, comprising Japanese architects who also lobbied politicians such as Prime Minister Eisaku Sato for the hotel to be preserved. In October 1967, Wright's wife, Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, visited Japan to lend her support to the movement, and what was rapidly becoming a bilateral U.S.-Japan issue was even debated in the Diet.

But although it was only 44 years old, the building was deteriorating badly. The floating foundation construction that had protected it from the earthquake was also a liability, causing the building's foundations to gradually subside. Just before the building was ultimately demolished, the first-floor office was already half underground, and the corridor of the guest wing was so buckled that trolleys could not be used. The hotel management remained focused on economic considerations and firmly committed to rebuilding. After much back-and-forth, it was decided that the hotel's entrance would be relocated and restored at Museum Meiji Mura in Aichi Prefecture. Meiji Mura was reluctant to take on the responsibility because of the huge cost, but after discussions between its first director, ar-



The Peacock Room, the hotel's main banquet room

COURTESY: IMPERIAL HOTEL

chitect Yoshiro Taniguchi and Prime Minister Sato, it was decided that the government would support the project.

And now, 50 years later, one can stand in Hibiya Park, looking across at the current building, and imagine what it would be like if even just the entrance of the old Wright Building were still in place. Go inside to the second floor and squint hard enough at the mural from the old building that adorns the hotel's Old Imperial Bar, and you might just get the feeling that you are in the old building. Meanwhile, the main building of another grand

hotel, the Hotel Okura Tokyo, which was completed in 1962 by Taniguchi, went through a similar process — closing in 2015, becoming the subject of international calls for its preservation and then eventually being demolished and rebuilt in 2019. In that case, only the former lobby area was retained and restored. While one hopes that Japan finds other ways to address architectural preservation beyond scrapping and rebuilding, the tale of the Imperial Hotel shows just how hard it can be to preserve a building while it remains in use.

● Summary

建築家F.L.ライトと、帝国ホテルを巡る物語。

東京・日比谷に日本を代表するホテル、帝国ホテルが建っている。創業は1890年。近代国家を目指す日本の「迎賓館」の役割を担う場として、政財界人らの働きかけによって生まれたホテルである。現在の建物は1970年代のものであるが、その前は独特のデザインをした宮殿のような建築が建っていた。それがフランク・ロイド・ライト

設計の今は無き、通称ライト館と呼ばれる建物だ。

時は日本が高度成長の絶頂期にあった1967年。新たな高層ホテル建設が報道されると、ライト館保存運動が展開される。ライトの妻オルギヴァンナも保存活動のために来日し、取り壊しは国会でも取り上げられた。だが建物は、完成から44年しか経っていないのに老朽化が進ん

でいた。建物の地盤沈下が激しかったのだ。

議論の末、玄関部分のみが愛知県（博物館明治村）へ移築・復元されることとなった。移築には莫大な費用がかかるため明治村も難色を示していたが、初代館長である建築家・谷口吉郎と佐藤栄作首相が面会し、政府協力のもと移築を進めるということで受け入れが決まった。



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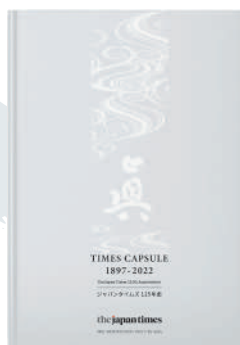
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Pieces of the original Oya stone, which was quarried at the city of Utsunomiya in Tochigi Prefecture, are on display and now show signs of deterioration.



The pillar in the foreground is made from original scratch brick. At the time, brick-makers made the grooves by hand. The pillar in the back is new.



It is believed that the symmetrical design and use of water reflections in the central entrance were inspired by a re-creation of the Byodoin Phoenix Hall (in Uji, Kyoto) that Wright saw when he visited the Japan Pavilion at the 1893 Chicago Exposition.

PHOTOS: YUMIKO KINOSHITA

Imperial Hotel central entrance (Meiji Mura).

After the Frank Lloyd Wright Imperial Hotel was demolished in 1968, the entrance portion was rebuilt in Meiji Mura and has been open to the public since 1985. It is designated an Important Cultural Property.

● 1 Uchiyama Inuyama-shi, Aichi Prefecture
Tel: 0568-67-0314
Opening Hours 10:00–16:00
Closed Irregularly.
Confirm if open before visiting.
Entrance Fee ¥2000
<https://www.meijimura.com/>



From a distance, the copper roofing resembles Japanese tiles, but when you go out onto the third-floor terrace, you can see how the copper plate has been folded to create the detailed patterns.

Feature ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

MEIJI MURA

Visiting the remnants of Wright's Imperial Hotel

By MIORI BABA

Meiji Mura is set among verdant hills on the outskirts of the Aichi Prefecture city of Inuyama. It is an open-air museum of roughly 1 million square meters that preserves and displays buildings once destined to be demolished. It was established in 1965 after architect Yoshiro Taniguchi, lamenting the loss of the famed Rokumeikan guest house in 1941, lobbied for the preservation and continued use of buildings from the Meiji Era (1868-1912) and eventually secured the backing of his old friend Motoo Tsuchikawa, then head of the Meitetsu railway company. The museum now includes 64 buildings that have been relocated and restored. Proceeding through the vast site to its northernmost corner, one arrives at a majestic building, the central entrance of the Imperial Hotel, which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and once stood in Hibiya. Despite it being just a part of the building, the dignified structure conveys the atmosphere of a com-

pleted work. Prior to relocation, the guest wings stood to its sides, and there was a large hall behind it.

It was in 1967 that it was decided the Imperial Hotel would be relocated to Meiji Mura. By then, the dismantling of the guest wings had already begun. However, as the building was made of reinforced concrete, dismantling proved difficult, so “style preservation” was adopted to preserve the quality and dimensions of the space. The reconstructed exterior was finished in 1976 and the interior several years later, and the building was opened to the public in 1985. A total of 18 years had been spent on the work. Yuko Nakano, the curator of Meiji Mura, explained, “The main source of revenue was admission revenue, and we couldn’t spend more than the money we were making.” While it was initially decided that the government would support the effort, it is believed that the government’s contribution only amounted to about ¥10 million (\$35,000 at the time).

And yet the reason to overcome such obstacles and preserve the building, even in part, is plain to see: It is an utterly unique space, into which Wright poured extraordinary passion. Enter the building, passing by a large pond, and climb the red carpeted stairs to reach the entrance hall, which opens up to the third floor. Intricately carved “pillars of light” gently illuminate the ceiling, and the interior is designed without interior walls to give depth to the view. As the sun moves, the light changes as though it were a living thing, and every moment is beautiful. Experiencing the space, with details resonating and fusing to create an overwhelming whole, you can’t help but envy the people who experienced the hotel in person. Currently, the parts of the building that have not been re-created are reproduced in virtual reality. Viewing them deepens the experience even more.

Just some of the original materials used at Hibiya have been reused: Oya stone and scratchbricks that had been used in pillars in the carport and lobby. Other original pieces of Oya stone, which are quietly displayed to the side of the building, have holes and stains. Oya stone was useful for Wright because of its ease of processing, but its speed of deterioration proved fatal. In the restoration, new materials were used instead, such as concrete or artificial stone for Oya, and resin for terra cotta.

Wright didn’t leave many comments on his architecture. He is said to have been inspired by the Byodoin temple’s Phoenix Hall for its symmetry, but this is just inferred from visits he is known to have made. People interpret the hotel as being influenced by Maya civilization, or Indian,

or Mexican, or say the pillars of light are reminiscent of a lantern. “The appearance changes depending on the viewer’s own background, and there are always new discoveries depending on the season, time and place. Every meeting is different, and everyone gets to experience their ‘own Imperial Hotel,’” Nakano said.

So this is the Imperial Hotel’s central entrance, which even today welcomes in visitors as they stroll the museum grounds. Its mission as Tokyo’s leading guesthouse finished, soon more than half of its life will have been spent here rather than in Hibiya. It seems to quietly ask why something that was possible in the past may be no longer.

The corners in the lounge, with high ceilings and ample natural light, were a popular place for women to gather. The furniture and tableware were also designed by Wright.



● Summary

移築され今も残る、帝国ホテル・ライト館を訪ねる。

愛知県犬山市郊外、自然豊かな丘陵地にある〈博物館明治村〉。取り壊される運命にあった建造物を移築・保存展示する施設だ。広大な敷地を最北まで進むとフランク・ロイド・ライト設計の〈帝国ホテル中央玄関〉が現れる。明治村に移築されると決まったのは1967年。空間の質や寸法体系を保存する「様式保存」が採用され、展示公

開は1985年。延べ18年が費やされた。ライトは桁外れの情熱をもってこの空間を生み出した。“光の籠柱”は優しい灯りを宿し、室内は壁のないつくりにより奥行きまで寝え、光は生きもののように変化する。多様なディテールが融合し、圧倒的な存在感を醸し出す。オリジナル材の再利用はわずか、車寄せやロビーの柱

などに用いられる大谷石やすだれ煉瓦などだけだ。大谷石は重宝されたが、劣化の速さが命取りとなった。この空間についてライトは多くを語らず、後世の人々は様々な解釈をしている。〈博物館明治村〉学芸員の中村裕子は「見る人のバックグラウンドで見え方が変わる。それぞれの中に“自分だけの帝国ホテル”がある」と語る。



日本語全文はこちら



Shihab Alfaheem

UAE Ambassador

URL: www.mofaic.gov.ae/

Hometown: Abu Dhabi

Years in Japan: 1

Shihab Alfaheem's current assignment as the United Arab Emirates' ambassador to Japan represents much more than just another stop in a diplomatic career. For Alfaheem, it marks the return to a country that inspired him as a child and formed his career.

Alfaheem's first encounter with Japan came at a young age watching Japanese animation programs such as "UFO Robot Grendizer," "Captain Tsubasa" and others that used to air on UAE TV channels.

The flow of cultural productions from Japan to Alfaheem's television and other households across the UAE was a byproduct of the cultural, economic and diplomatic exchange between the two countries that formally began in May 1972, six months after the unification of the UAE in December of 1971.

Alfaheem grew up amid this UAE-Japan exchange, which shaped his life's trajectory. What started as a fascination with Japanese animation gradually developed into a deeply personal relationship with the country where he now serves as ambassador.

Before assuming his current post in December 2020, Alfaheem worked as a diplomat in various capacities with the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which he entered in 2012. Prior to becoming a diplomat, he worked in the oil and banking industries, where he got his first taste of life in Japan. In 2003, Alfaheem's former employer, Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., stationed him in the city of Beppu in Kyushu for a one-year on-the-job training program. Over the course of that year, Alfaheem became so enamored with Japan that he made sure to come back and visit

Mission, the UAE's first interplanetary space probe, which launched from the Tanegashima Space Center last year.

Alfaheem noted that Japan is an important partner in the field of sustainable power generation. "Japan has played a significant role in our efforts to pursue renewable energy," he said, "and we're working on several different projects related to solar power and carbon capturing." Shipments of blue ammonia from the UAE to Japan illustrate this partnership. A low-carbon carrier fuel for hydrogen, blue ammonia is expected to significantly contribute to decarbonization efforts across multiple sectors. In August 2021, the UAE sent its first cargo of blue ammonia to Japan.

Last year, the UAE became the first country in the region to pledge to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. One might wonder whether a country with a historical economic reliance on oil exports can genuinely address sustainability. Alfaheem addressed this skepticism, explaining that the push for sustainability is not necessarily irreconcilable with the UAE's history as an oil country. "Even though we are an oil producing country, we are looking for sustainability. We want to celebrate the last day of sending a barrel of oil. We can only do that by being fully prepared."

As part of its energy strategy for 2050, the UAE intends to increase the proportion of clean energy in its total energy mix from 25% to 50% and reduce its carbon footprint of power generation by 70%. To this end, in 2021 the UAE government announced it will invest approximately \$163 billion in renewable energy. In line with these targets, the country's national oil

子島宇宙センターからの打ち上げに成功。エネルギー分野ではUAEが日本を持続可能な発電分野の重要なパートナーと位置づけ、太陽光発電など再生可能エネルギーの開発や二酸化炭素回収で複数のプロジェクトが進行中だ。昨年8月には、脱炭素化への貢献が期待されるブルーアンモニアのUAEから日本への輸出が始まった。

外交官になったのは母国に「恩返し」したかったから。「日本や他国との関係強化に尽力したい」。

Sumo and travel to 31 prefectures

Shihab Alfaheem is the United Arab Emirates' ambassador to Japan. Prior to assuming his current post in December 2020, Alfaheem served as chief of protocol in the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he had frequent encounters with Japan. Before becoming a diplomat, he worked in the banking and oil industries, which led to his first professional assignment in Japan in 2003, when the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. stationed him in the city of Beppu in Kyushu and Tokyo for a one-year training program. When he is not busy with diplomatic duties or traveling to different parts of Japan to give the UAE Cup in Sumo tournaments, a bimonthly tradition that began in 1979, Alfaheem enjoys traveling across Japan, exploring its sights and regional culture. He has been to 31 of Japan's 47 prefectures, with his favorite place so far being Aoshima in Miyazaki Prefecture.

Fascination with anime widened to respect for diversity, resilience

UAE Ambassador Alfaheem grew up with Japan

By JOE MUNTAL CONTRIBUTING WRITER

at least once a year. "I really like the diversity of Japan," he said. "Whether it's Osaka, Fukuoka or Kagoshima, each place shows a different face of the country. There is so much to explore, and I am very happy for the chance to serve here."

Alfaheem's decision to become a diplomat was inspired by his desire to "give back" to his country. "The contributions I can make as a diplomat to further enhance our relationships with Japan and other countries around the world inspires me to wake up every day," he said. "Last year the UAE celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding, and I want to do everything I can to ensure that my country continues to progress and improve its connections around the world."

Diplomatic relations between the UAE and Japan formally began in May 1972, but Japan has had a presence in the UAE since as early as 1955, when Toyota established its first distribution agreements in the region. In addition to trade, which has generally centered on automobile imports from Japan and oil exports from the UAE, the two countries have engaged in collaborative projects such as the Emirates Mars

company, Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (ADNOC), plans to completely rely on solar and nuclear power starting in January of this year (though it is important to note that, as recently as 2020, ADNOC received approval to develop new oil and gas deposits to boost crude oil production). Alfaheem observed that investments in solar power have been particularly successful, enabling the UAE to generate the world's cheapest solar power, at 1.35 cents per kilowatt-hour.

For the remainder of his assignment, Alfaheem hopes to continue enhancing UAE-Japan relations amid the push for sustainability. He explained that Japan's resilience is a source of inspiration that both countries can channel to achieve diplomatic solutions. "The ganbar (let's try our best) mentality of Japan is something you see all over the country. If there is a big earthquake, they rebuild and push forward," Alfaheem said. "This notion that one can always come back stronger is inspiring and mirrors the historical development of my own country, which began as a group of simple villages and has since developed into a wealthy nation."

● Summary

アニメで知った日本。エネルギーから宇宙開発まで連携強化

Shihab Alfaheem駐日アラブ首長国連邦(UAE)大使の日本との出会いは、幼い頃に自宅のテレビで見た日本のアニメ番組だ。日本とUAEは1972年5月に外交関係を樹立。その後始まった文化や経済交流の一環で輸入されたアニメ作品に夢中になり、日本への興味を深めたという。

自動車や石油を中心とする貿易以外にも、両国の経済関係発展に向けた連携は多岐にわたる。2020年7月、UAE初の宇宙探査機を搭載したロケットの種

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Jiyugakuen Myonichikan

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright while he was in Japan as a school building for a new school established by the couple Motoko and Yoshikazu Hani. The co-designer was Arata Endo. Completed in 1925.

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Feature ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

JIYUGAKUEN

School became model for 'dynamic preservation'

By MIORI BABA

Tokyo's Ikebukuro area is a place of rapid redevelopment and new high-rise buildings. And yet a few minutes' walk from the bustling station, Jiyugakuen Myonichikan stands in a residential area that, having escaped the bombing of World War II, retains remnants of yesteryear. It is one of the most complete examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, preserved in almost perfect condition. It was completed 101 years ago, in the interwar era of so-called Taisho Democracy.

Jiyugakuen is a girls' school that was founded by Motoko and Yoshikazu Hani, who had also established the magazine Fujin no Tomosha. They started the school when their third daughter began school, and proclaimed in their magazine that instead of cramming their students with knowledge, they would "provide an education necessary for women of the new era." The school building was designed by Wright, who was introduced to the pair by

their friend Arata Endo and who sympathized with their educational philosophy. Endo was working as Wright's design assistant for the Imperial Hotel, but for the school was employed as a co-designer. The construction proceeded at an exceptional speed. After Wright visited the site in January 1921 and signed the contract in February, construction started in March, and 26 female students gathered in the not-yet-completed school building on April 15 for the opening ceremony.

Wright kept in mind the couple's desire to "fill a simple external shape with the very best thoughts." The building in the Prairie School style, which has low eaves and extends across the land, would not look out of place in an idyllic countryside. The classroom wings form a U shape around a bright front yard that is open in four corners. Both teachers and students were free to come and go — the exact opposite of the imposing architecture of school buildings in Japan at that time. The

students enjoyed an autonomous and family-like life here, developing the ability to think for themselves. The central hall rises from the otherwise low ceiling into a large light-filled atrium. Wright, who saw the construction site and noticed that the ceiling of the dining room was too high, is said to have designed the light fittings overnight to make him feel comfortable when he sat down. Rich details that bring the space to life, such as the height of ceilings, the lighting and the rhythm of steps, are scattered everywhere.

However, Wright never saw the completed building. He was essentially dismissed from the Imperial Hotel project and promptly left Japan, leaving the remaining work to Endo. Endo, who at just 32 years of age had won Wright's trust, eventually completed the school building in 1925 and designed an accompanying auditorium in 1927. It is no exaggeration to say that Jiyugakuen was a collaboration between the two of them.

Over time the school grew, and its main campus was relocated to Higashikurume, a suburb of Tokyo. The original building was renamed Myonichikan, meaning House of Tomorrow, and was used by graduates. But, with some of its materials not suited to the climate, the building gradually deteriorated. At one time the situation was so grave that an advertisement calling for the school's preservation was placed in The New York Times. At the time, the school maintained that "it could not agree with the building being designated as an important cultural property if that meant it could not be used." After long discussions, the idea of "dynamic preservation," by which the building would be preserved while remaining in use, was recognized, and it was designated as an Important Cultural Property in 1997. After three years of preservation work, it started operation as a model of dynamic preservation in 2001.

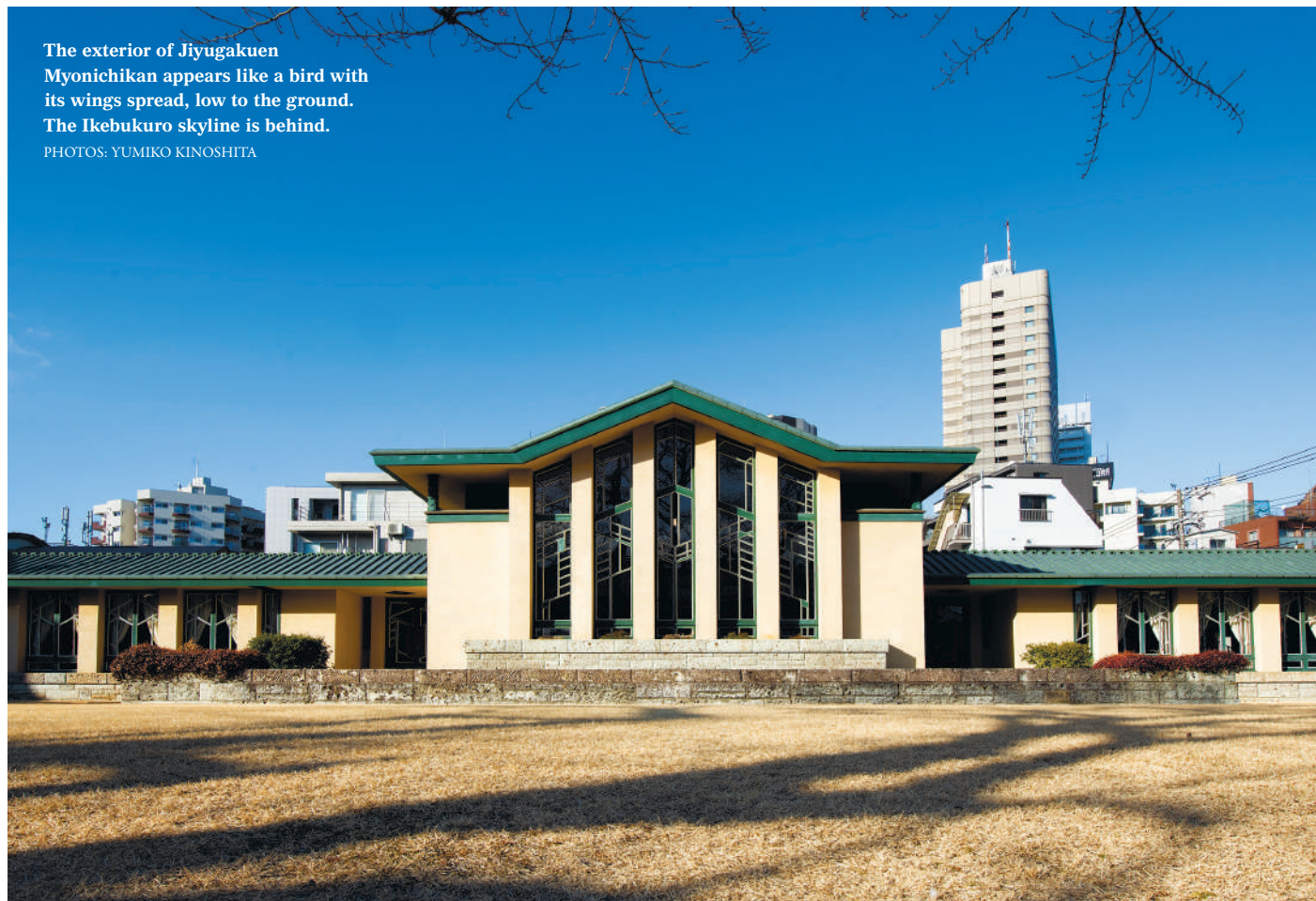
Even now, Jiyugakuen Myonichikan is widely used by people for tours, exhibitions, weddings and more. Its facilities are rented out as many as 1,200 times a year, with the profits contributing to the building's upkeep. Of course, with the building in use there is always risk of it being damaged. But it is also worth remembering the words of Wright at the time of school's completion: "The students look like flowers blooming in the school building. And, just as the tree and flower are one, here, the school building and students are also one." After all, architecture is only truly completed when it is actually put to use. And so, even today, Jiyugakuen Myonichikan continues to blossom amid an ever-changing cityscape.

The mural in the central hall was drawn by students to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the school's founding. During the war it had been covered by stucco and was only rediscovered after renovation work commenced in 1997.



Left: Lighting fixtures in the dining hall. Wright had initially planned for the hall to be lit at the corners only, but when he visited the site he decided hanging lights were necessary. The dining room was the center of school life, where the students both made and ate their meals.

Right: The south-facing windows of the central hall. In order to keep construction costs down, Wright did not use stained glass, but instead created a geometric pattern with the crosspieces of the wooden window frames.



The exterior of Jiyugakuen Myonichikan appears like a bird with its wings spread, low to the ground. The Ikebukuro skyline is behind.

PHOTOS: YUMIKO KINOSHITA



● Summary

建築を使いながら保存する「動態保存」の代表作。

再開発が進み新しい高層ビルが立ち並ぶ東京・池袋。第二次世界大戦の戦火を逃れて昔ながらの面影を残す住宅地に〈自由学園明日館〉はたたずむ。自由学園は雑誌『婦人之友』創設者の羽仁もと子・吉一夫妻が創立した女学校である。友人の遠藤新がライトを紹介し、ライトは快諾して遠藤を共同設計者とした。

「ブレイクスタイル」の校舎は大草原に建つ大きな家のように見え、天井高や彩光、床の段差のリズムで豊かな空間が生まれている。食堂の天井が高すぎると気づいたライトは座った時に心地よい照明を一晚で設計した。帝国ホテルの設計を事実上解雇されたライトは、その完成を見ていない。後を一任された遠藤が1925年に完成

させ、1927年には講堂を設計した。日本の風土に合わず老朽化が進み、解体の危機に瀕したが、建築を使いながら保存する「動態保存」が認められ、1997年に重要文化財に指定された。現在も〈自由学園明日館〉は見学会や展示会、結婚式などで市民に広く利用され、その収益で維持管理されている。



日本語全文はこちら

Roundtable



This article was published on Dec.20 in The Japan Times



Womenomics originator Matsui funds ESG startups

By LOUISE GEORGE KITTAKA CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attracted global attention in 2013 for drawing on womenomics — the idea that female economic advancement benefits the entire economy — as a cornerstone of his policies. However, it was Kathy Matsui who first introduced the concept early in her career as an equity strategist, informed by her own experiences juggling motherhood and a job.

In this interview, the former Goldman Sachs vice chair shares insights gleaned from more than three decades in the Japanese financial sector and tells us about her new mission to bring ESG to Japanese startups with MPower Partners, Japan's first ESG-focused global venture capital fund.

Bloom where you're planted

The daughter of Japanese immigrants, Matsui grew up in California, where her family ran a commercial flower nursery. The Matsui children helped out on the weekends as a matter of course. "I'd have on five layers of gloves, trying to grade roses and measuring the length of each stem in this machine. Despite all the layers, I'd feel the thorns, and I still have trauma to this day — don't even try giving me roses!" she said, laughing ruefully.

Later her family pivoted to growing potted orchids, selling them through supermarket chains, and today their business has a 20% share of the total U.S. orchid market. Although Matsui's parents did not attend university, they understood the

transformational impact of education on their own children, and set up the Matsui Foundation to provide college scholarships for immigrant children, offering other youngsters a path to a brighter future.

Following graduation from Harvard University, Matsui came to Japan on a two-year Rotary scholarship, and later returned for a summer internship at Mitsu Bank during graduate school.

She smiled as she recalled showing up for work in a business suit, while all the other female staff members were dressed in the bank's uniform. "After a few days a young woman gingerly approached me with a plastic bag: 'We prepared this for you ...' I loved it, as I had to commute in the middle of the humid summer. I could arrive in jeans and a T-shirt, put on my uniform in the locker room, then change back into to my own clothes when I left!"

During this time Matsui met her future husband, a fellow expat, and so she came back to settle in Japan. She began working at Barclays in 1990, then moved to Goldman Sachs four years later when invited to join its strategy team.

Making diversity compelling

Matsui had her first child in 1996. Returning to work following the four months of maternity leave that was offered at the time, she realized that many of her female mother friends quit work after giving birth because it was too challenging to balance a career and child care. While Matsui fully respects that some mothers prefer to stay home with their children, her analyst's mind began wondering about Japan's female labor participation rates and the effect of the loss of so many bright, capable women.

Hoping to make her clients reflect on an unfamiliar topic, she drew on her perspective as Japan's only female equity strategist and used data to show what could happen if more women remained in the workforce. Although her report attracted attention when it was published, the Japanese market was not yet ready for changes. "It was a novel idea, but back in 1999 the term 'diversity' was not part of the vernacular in Japan," she explained.

Fast forward to 2013. When she heard that Prime Minister Abe had selected womenomics as one of the drivers for his new economic policy, Matsui at first wondered if it was a joke. "I was not the only one who fell out of my chair!" she said candidly, but noted that it helped to give weight to the concept that diversity is imperative for growth.

"That economic argument made it much more compelling, and then businesspeople became interested. My whole point is, yes, Japan is still very far from where it needs to be. But first we need to change the mindset, so let's talk about it as a normal topic of conversation in a business context," she explained. "Let's first encourage more women who want to work outside the home to do so - even in part-time roles - then build their confidence that they can do more. Then over time I think we will see a healthy pipeline for getting more women into those top positions."

Tips from a trailblazer

Based on her own experiences, Matsui offers three key pieces of advice to younger women aspiring to move ahead in their careers:

Follow your heart: As a woman and a mother, you'll be getting a lot of unsolicited, if well-meant, advice about what a "good mother" should or shouldn't do. Do what makes you happy — and articulate that to those around you.

Create your own personal BOD (board of directors): This is a group of people who know you holistically and who will offer you sound, honest advice on everything from work situations to dealing with teenagers or aging parents. Moreover, investing in such relationships is a two-way process — you should support each other.

Find people who can be a megaphone for your career accomplishments: Whether you call them mentors, sponsors or coaches, have someone who can speak up about your performance in the workplace, giving you the confidence to set goals and aim for promotions.

After leaving Goldman Sachs in 2020,



Kathy Matsui, general partner of MPower Partners

PHOTO: YUICO TAINA FOR PHOTOMATE

Matsui formed MPower Partners Fund with Yumiko Murakami and Miwa Seki. The trio, who by chance all share the same birth year and month, have known each other for over 20 years. "It was actually Yumiko's idea to try a venture capital fund, because Japan desperately needs more innovation. They have the capital, talent and technology — so why is the venture capital market here one-sixtieth of that of the U.S.?" Matsui said.

Matsui notes that if ESG is embedded in a company's DNA when they are younger, it becomes part of its purpose and narrative in a very natural way. "In my experience working with large listed companies, it is much harder to 'teach old dogs new tricks.' Startups are simply more nimble," she pointed out. "The current generation of entrepreneurs is quite focused on ESG. The hard part for them is not 'why' but 'how.' As Japan's first ESG-integrated venture capital fund, our aim is to prove that ESG can drive value creation."



The founding trio of MPower Partners (from left): Miwa Seki, Matsui and Yumiko Murakami
PHOTO: MPOWER PARTNERS

Summary

「ウーマノミクス」提唱者、ESG重視のVCファンドを創設

2013年、当時の安倍晋三首相は経済成長戦略の柱の一つとして女性の活躍推進を打ち出した。この「ウーマノミクス」の概念を1999年に最初に提唱したのがキャシー・松井氏だ。時間はかかったが、日本政府が旗振り役となったことで企業の関心が高まり、経済成長のために多様性は不可欠であるという議論の説得力が

増したと評価する。ただ、「日本はまだあるべき姿からほど遠い」とも指摘。企業の意識改革を含め多様性を推進する労働環境の整備を引き続き求めるとともに、女性には「自分自身にもっと自信をもってほしい」と呼びかける。日本副会長およびチーフ日本株ストラテジストとして勤めた

ゴールドマン・サックス証券を2020年に退社し、村上由美子、関美和の3人で日本初のESG重視型グローバル・ベンチャーキャピタル・ファンド、MPower Partners Fundを設立した。社会的課題をテクノロジーの力で解決しようとする起業家を支援し、持続的な成長を促すことを目的とする。

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Located in Ashiya, a residential district between Osaka and Kobe, the Yodoko Guest House is Japan's only Frank Lloyd Wright residence that survives in its original form. Wright designed the house in 1918 but returned to the United States in 1922, so the final design details and construction oversight were entrusted to his acolytes Arata Endo and Makoto Minami. Construction was completed in 1924.

The finished building was shown in the opening feature of the second issue of the famous architecture magazine "Shinkenchiku" in 1925. In the accompanying article, Minami wondered about the master architect's reaction, writing, "What feelings will Wright have when he sees the building now?" The question conveys his esteem for Wright and dedication to the project, as well as the depth of the mentor-student bond.

The structure has attracted international attention as well. When eight of Wright's buildings were listed collectively as a World Heritage Site in 2019, the Yodoko Guest House was suggested as an additional candidate for inclusion. The residence is an early example of Wright's skillful incorporation of natural terrain in his designs. Architectural historian Yutaka Mizukami described the building plan, which angles like a chevron, as "a major turning point in Wright's planar composition methods."

Today, the Yodoko Guest House is open three days a week and visitors can freely explore the building for an admission charge of ¥500. But there have been twists and turns along the way, including a threat of demolition and a major earthquake. Originally built as the secondary residence of the eighth-generation sake brewer Tazaemon Yamamura, the house became the property of an entrepreneur in 1935

and was acquired by its current owner, Yodogawa Steel Works, in 1947. In the early years it was used to entertain guests from the political and business spheres; later it was rented out as a private home and used as a dormitory for Yodogawa employees. The structure deteriorated with age, however, and in 1971 Yodogawa

decided to demolish it and put up an apartment building in its place. Hearing about this plan, architects and others launched a campaign to preserve the residence. Discussions among the various parties bore fruit, and Yodogawa wisely decided to call off the demolition and replacement project. The building was preserved, and in 1974 it became the first reinforced concrete residence designated an Important Cultural Property of Japan.

Following the completion of repair and preservation work, the Yodoko Guest House was opened to the public in 1989 — but the Great Hanshin Earthquake struck in 1995. The building survived but was heavily damaged. According to Tadayuki Iwai, director of the residence, "The interior was a shambles, and there were various kinds of damage to the overall structure, including broken fittings and fixtures, shattered glass and splintered stone."

After three years of inspection and repairs, the guest house was restored, but its subsequent maintenance brought challenges. The mere presence of visitors causes stress and strain on delicate fixtures and decorative elements, including carved Oya stone and wooden fittings. Additionally, three decades after the building was opened to the public, roof leakage

had become a regular occurrence. Over a two-year period starting in 2016, the roof was waterproofed and other repairs were carried out in order to preserve the building. Interior and exterior Oya stone and cast-stone ornamentation was restored, and the structure was beautifully revived. Still, said Iwai: "Maintenance is labor-intensive. Rain and wind come in through spaces in the old fittings, and the Oya stone deteriorates and splinters." Nonetheless, he said, "We want many people to experience the house for themselves." For this reason, as much of the residence as possible has been made accessible to the public, including a balcony and other outdoor spaces as well as behind-the-scenes areas such as a servant's room, and spaces are arranged so that visitors can actually touch windows and interior fixtures.

"Surrounded by greenery, with a stream flowing nearby, the house has a wonderful feeling of unity with nature," said Iwai. "I'd like everyone to witness the changes in the light and wind coming in through the many windows — changes created by the seasons and time." To that end, he plans to continue overseeing the building's maintenance with meticulous care and spreading the word about its unique beauty.



The second-floor drawing room, flanked by a hearth and pillars of Oya stone. The window areas, featuring shelves and built-in couches, bring the outdoor landscape into the room. Near the ceiling are many small windows that open for ventilation.

PHOTOS: KIYOSHI NISHIOKA



Yodoko Guest House / former home of Tazaemon Yamamura

While living in Japan in 1918, Frank Lloyd Wright designed this residence as the secondary home of Tazaemon Yamamura, an eighth-generation sake brewer in Nada, Kobe. Completed in 1924.

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Feature ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

YODOKO GUEST HOUSE

Japan's only Wright residence survives doom and disaster

By KATSURA HIRATSUKA

● Summary

解体や震災を乗り越えた、日本唯一のライト住宅作品。

阪神間の邸宅街・芦屋にある旧山邑家住宅（ヨドコウ迎賓館）は、フランク・ロイド・ライトが設計した日本の住宅で唯一、竣工時の姿で現存する希少な建物だ。ライトは1918年に設計し1922年に帰国。実施設計は弟子の遠藤新と南信に託され1924年に竣工した。世界遺産のライト建築8作品への追加登録候補として注目される。

この建築は主に2つの危機を乗り越えた。最初の危機は1971年。オーナーの淀川製鋼所が解体を決める。しかし保存運動を受けて保存に転じ、重要文化財指定と保存修理工事を経て1989年から公開がはじまった。だが1995年、阪神淡路大震災という2度目の危機が訪れる。倒壊は免れたものの構造体が損傷する等、被害は

甚大。3年の調査・修理工事を経て復興した。近年も2016年から2年がかりの保存修理工事があった。彫刻された大谷石や木製建具など造作や装飾が繊細なので、見学者を受け入れるだけでも負担になる。しかし「多くの方に魅力を体験してほしい」と淀川製鋼所は寛大な公開と熱心な維持管理をつづけている。



The Japanese-style room (third floor). Though not a part of Wright's original design, the room is said to have been added by Arata Endo and Makoto Minami at the client's strong request.



日本語全文はこちら

Times Capsule



This article was published on Jan. 17 in The Japan Times

Perhaps the most well-known and well-loved Japanese tradition is washoku: Japanese cuisine, from multicourse *kaiseki ryōri* to cheap *B-kyū* fare and local delicacies. And there's no better place in the world to enjoy a wide range of fine dining than in Tokyo, which has of late been home to an impressive number of Michelin-starred restaurants. Over the decades, The Japan Times has served a variety of food- and drink-related features, reviews, interviews and recipes. We've explored the chef's kitchen and the home pantry, ate at high-end sushi counters and under the tracks, drank at *izakaya* and hole-in-the-wall bars, and visited breweries and distilleries.

Seasons to taste: Decades of delectable discovery

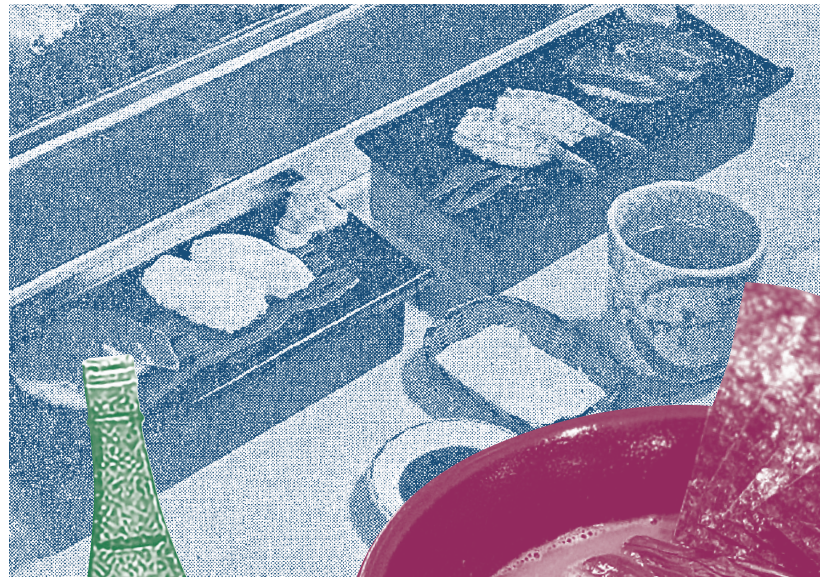
● Summary

「四季おりおりのおいしい日本」

和食は、最も広く知られ愛されている日本文化と言っても過言ではないだろう。懐石料理からB級グルメまで、あらゆるジャンルの和食を楽しむのに、世界で東京をしのぐ場所はない。最近ではミシュランの星が付いたレストランも増え、東京はますます魅力的な都市となっている。

何十年の間、ジャパントイムズは多岐にわたる料理特集を組み、批評やインタビュー、レシピを掲載し、有名シェフの厨房やパントリー、高級寿司店、ガード下の居酒屋、小さな隠れ家のようなバーなどを訪れたほかに、酒造りの現場をも取材してきた。

ごちそうさまでした。



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