







The Center embodies a new minimalist architectural paradigm what Nishizawa then repeated in his much smaller, yet equally amazing Hiroshi Senju Museum of 2011 in Kiriazawa, where the glass-enclosed small courtyards with plants bring the presence of nature face to face with the art inside the building of sloping and undulating floor (fig.22).

Unlike SANAA's highly conceptual work, Kuma has developed his minimalist architecture in another and rather different direction. His designs concentrate on the concreteness of human experience, which extends to all faculties of human perception, especially tactility. In contrast to a stripped down and sterile minimalism, Kuma's multisensory architecture is rich in vibrant and sensuous surfaces with varied transparencies, shifting patterns of light, and subtle details, which altogether endow his spaces with a sensible ambiguity both inside and out. This is seen for example at the delicate screens of thin bamboo strips in his Ginzan Onsen Fujiya Ryokan (2006) in Obanzazawa and at the Prostho Museum and Reseach Center (2010) in Kasugai, whose exterior is loosely defined with a "fuzzy" wooden framework. Many of these qualities derive from Kuma's strong and particular emphasis on architecture's materiality, the craftsmanship of construction, and tectonic precision (fig.23-24). Although materials receive growing attention from Japanese architects today, no one experiments with as broad range of them as Kuma does. Making practically every design of his different, his use of materials encompass wood, bamboo, paper, vines, plants and stone, then plastic, synthetic fabric, vinyl, metals, glass, and others. However, whatever the material, he is intent on finding ways to turn it into small "particles" and then into multiple layers of permeable membranes or screens that lightly envelop rather than solidly and clearly demarcate the boundaries of his buildings or spaces, thereby filtering both light and the environment in variable ways into the realm of architecture.<sup>11</sup> The facades of his Lotus House (2005) in Zushi are designed with a lacy curtain of thin stone plates hung from the eaves by hidden chains. In turn, his architecture seems to lose its object-like disposition and blend into its surroundings. At the Ando Hiroshige Museum (2000) the glass surfaces of the simple building are completely covered both outside and inside by densely spaced wooden slats, while other partitions are of the Japanese washi paper with a thin plastic sheet behind (fig.25).

Kuma studied under Hiroshi Hara at the University of Tokyo while Maki was one of his mentors. Both of these outstanding architect-academicians have been intensely involved in researching vernacular architectures around the world by which their designs have been influenced. Kuma shares the sentiment of his elders for the vernacular, yet he is less inclined to follow Hara's somewhat decorative renditions and Maki's crisp, neo-modernist paradigm. Instead, he is interested in reflecting on, and benefitting from the principles of design, the spatial and material qualities of local architectures and cultures in general, wherever his buildings might be located. The material of a small Museum of Wooden Buddha (2002) is locally produced adobe, then the Xinjin Zhi Museum (2011) in Chengdu, China is clad in the breathing façade of loosely arranged traditional Chinese roof-tiles suspended on steel cables. Kuma's architecture connects to various local and traditional models, most especially the Japanese, while forwarding well-articulated environment-friendly solutions (fig.26).

These intentions can be seen as an attempt to nurture a contemporary or "modern" version of the ephemeral Japanese space, with the simultaneous intention to shun the traps of commodifying the past or, rendering it merely a "consumable" image. In other words his dialogue with traditions is not the mimicking of any emblematic historic style (fig.27). In fact, he has no preference for any particular style, and among his works one can find an extensive variety of experimentations with architectural/artistic expressions ranging from the tiniest tearooms such as the Fuan Teahouse (2007) using Super-Organza, to the large and high-tech-intensive Asahi Broadcasting Corporation's Osaka Headquarters (2008).<sup>12</sup> Yet his buildings, always incorporating elements of nature, water and plants, as well as manifesting a deep respect for the site, are sensual, "soft and warm," while SANAA's are cerebral, sharp, and "cool." Kuma's minimalism then stems primarily from a self-effacing attitude in design, which steers clear of the spectacular or a formalistic exhibitionism. His buildings are shaped unfailingly with very simple forms, whose "hidden" architectural qualities can only be fully appreciated through a time-consuming human experience (fig.28).

Post-bubble Japanese architecture could also be discussed according to another categorization that distinguishes between "white" and "red" architectures. The recently re-emerged use of "white school" and "red school" in Japan is attributed to Terunobu Fujimori, an old-generation historian turned architect, whose amateurish and occasionally humorous vernacular architecture is leading the "reds."<sup>13</sup>

The first school can be characterized as purist, which denies or reduces tectonics and materiality to a minimum, relies on unadorned, smooth and blank white surfaces, and is highly conceptual, often high-tech and even scientific in nature. The second school, on the contrary, is rough, robust, folksy and energetic, with local and sometimes "primitive" craftsmanship. These dichotomies in design, defying generational boundaries, have a rich history in Japan's modern architecture.

It is clear that SANAA's and its partners Sejima's and Nishizawa's individual architectures epitomize the White School, which encompasses the majority of works produced by such other architects as Ban, Aoki, Tezuka Architects, Fujimoto, Ishigami, Yokomizo, Waro Kishi, and others. In addition to Fujimori, among the better-known representatives of the "real" Red School would include Team ZOO and its smaller ateliers, then Hiroshi Naito, Atsushi Kitagawara, Osamu Ishiyama, Kazuhiro Ishii, and Itsuko Hasegawa.<sup>14</sup>

Needless to say, between the two Schools the range that includes Atelier Bow Wow as well is practically endless and there are many "white" architects, who occasionally cross over to the "reds" like Maki, Aoki, and Ryoji Suzuki (fig.29). Then the question should arise: where is Kuma's place in this classification? Well, Kuma's versatile architecture is difficult to put into any one category. While on the one hand his architecture approximates the Red School, on the other, it is also contrary to it in significant respects. More precisely, although Kuma's buildings are rich in usually local materials and craftsmanship, and set to enhance the local spirit of place, they are also simple in forms, minimalist in rendition, and unobtrusive in appearance. Moreover, his designs are always elegantly restrained and meticulously executed.

These discussions about the diverse directions what generations of contemporary architects pursue today, must now take us back to the predicament of their limited conditions in post-bubble Japan, namely the "disappearance" of architectural jobs.

Large, corporate type design offices still have work, but the number of projects done by them is now reduced. Younger architects have the least commissions and they generally fall within the area of private residences or other small structures.

However, even the most prominent and leading architects have few jobs, if at all, in Japan today. If they do, these projects too are relatively small, such as Kuma's most recent Asakusa Visitors Center (2012) in Tokyo or Ito's Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture (2011) in Imabari. Although Kuma might still be active at home, at least partially, others, such as Isozaki, Ando, Ito, Ban, Maki, SANAA, Yamamoto, to mention but a few, complete practically all or most of their current work abroad, where many run branch offices as well, in China, the Middle East, Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. Even Kuma's largest and most significant projects are now done outside Japan.

The reasons behind this relatively new phenomenon are complex and can be explained only to a limited extent by the reduced number of work in Japan. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing new political climate along with the information revolution and globalization of the world economy have opened up for architects too an expanded marketplace way beyond their own country. Architects can now work, like their counterparts in Médecins sans Frontières, without borders.

In Japan this new engagement with foreign clients is fostered also by the worldwide recognition of its architecture and the reputation what Japanese designers have achieved particularly since the 1980s. The result now is not only that a growing number of major commissions are completed abroad, but also that the majority of these constitute the most significant accomplishments of these architects today. In conclusion it is safe to say that while Japanese architecture in the era of post-bubble Japan continues to face serious limitations and challenges, it also benefits from the new realities by better recognizing its own responsibilities toward both society and the environment as well as realizing that these do not necessarily hinder artistic creativity; there is also power in limits after all. And this still evolving attitude now seems to propel much of this architecture's expanded role as it impacts more and more the world also beyond Japan. However, the question still remains as to what extent the working of Japanese architects on the global marketplace could foster quality and sustainability not merely in the measurable or technical terms, but also in regard to the "immeasurable" aspects of sustaining architecture's capacity to remain a creative force in and of a particular local culture. Addressing this issue however would take the length of another long essay, which needs to be written in the times to come.

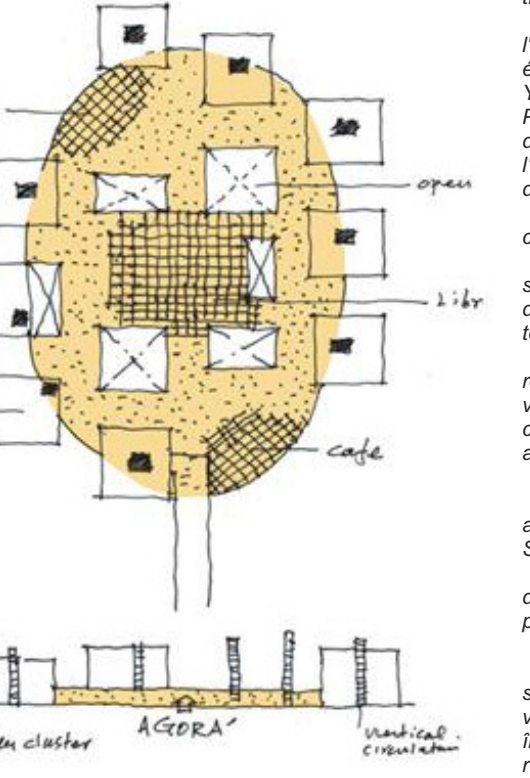
- Kenzo Tange received the Pritzker Prize in 1987, Fumihiko Maki in 1993, and Tadao Ando in 1995. (More recently, in 2010, the Partnership of Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa or SANAA won the prize).
- In contrast, during the bubble economy many such public projects, with no real or functional need for them, have had practically no other purpose than keeping the construction companies busy or have been produced as a result of political considerations. One could come across projects, which, after completion, had no actual use; many museums and galleries, for example, had not much or nothing significant to exhibit. The Zeus Museum in Nima (1990), designed by Shin Takamatsu, exhibited sand for example.
- The percentage of the elderly (over 65 years of age) in Japan was 14% in 1995, and is predicted to be 24% in 2015, and 26% in 2030. Birthrate or fertility rate (number of live births per woman) in 2002 reached 1.32, the lowest ever recorded, and the situation is improving only very slightly. (These data are quoted from Japan: *An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993; and the website of the Japanese Statistical Bureau <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/1431-02.htm>.)
- Today, with more than 2,000 employees, Nikken Sekkei Ltd is also one of the world's largest architectural firms.
- Kengo Kuma, "Digital Gardening" in a special issue on *Kengo Kuma of SD Space Design* (Nov. 1997); p.6. The actual intention behind Kuma's dramatic statement of "I want to erase architecture" is to conceive of his buildings as an anti-objects and non-monuments, which blend into their environments so seamlessly as to "disappear."
- Atelier Bow Wow (established in 1992) in cooperation with the Tsukamoto Lab at Tokyo Institute of Technology wrote a small book *Pet Architecture Guide Book*, which was published by World Photo Press in Tokyo in 2001. Both Tsukamoto and Kajima are also involved in teaching and so combine academic research with practice wherein the two mutually benefit from each other.
- Another book by the partnership is *Bow Wow from POST BUBBLE CITY*. Tokyo: INAX Publishing, 2006.
- In the original group of Metabolist architects Kisho Kurokawa died in 2007, Masato Otake in 2010, and Kiyonori Kikutake in 2011.
- Maki, in his 1964 booklet *Investigations in Collective Form* distinguished among three paradigms of urban formations: compositional, mega-structural, and group forms; in his architecture, based on the latter type, he was exploring the benefits of a sensitively clustered built fabric, wherein inside and outside spaces in close relation mutually define each other (Saint Louis, MO: Washington University School of Architecture publication).
- In addition to being partners in SANAA, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa maintain their independent offices as well.
- Kuma uses the term "particizing" in relation to his architecture in "Relativity of Materials" *JA, The Japan Architect* 38, special issue on *Kengo Kuma* (Summer 2000); p.86.
- Most of Kuma's numerous teahouse projects are temporary installations, and opportunities for Kuma to experiment with various materials. The space of the Fuan Teahouse was created by using a large helium-filled balloon floating in mid-air, from which the feather-light and gauzy fabric is suspended while surrounding a small, three-tatami platform.
- Fujimori is quoted in Dana Buntrock, *Material and Meaning in Contemporary Japanese Architecture: Tradition and Today*. London: Routledge, 2010; p.15.
- Dana Buntrock in her book *Material and Meaning in Contemporary Japanese Architecture: Tradition and Today* (London: Routledge, 2010; p.15) discusses the Red School and its occasional sympathizers at length.

## L'ARCHITECTURE AU JAPON APRÈS LA "BULLE" : limites et possibilités

*Au cours de la dernière période des années 80 et la plupart des années 90, alors que l'économie, ainsi que le développement urbain dans le pays, accélère à une vitesse vertigineuse, l'architecture japonaise à eu une grande floraison. Il y avait des investissements dans tous les types de construction et il a été construit trop, y compris de nombreux mégaprojets. ....*

## L'ARCHITETTURA GIAPPONESE DOPO LA "BOLLA": limiti e possibilità

Durante l'ultimo periodo degli anni '80 e la maggior parte degli anni '90 del Novecento, quando l'economia, insieme con lo sviluppo urbano del paese, accelerava a velocità vertiginosa, l'architettura giapponese ebbe una grande fioritura. Ci furono investimenti in tutti i tipi di costruzioni e fu costruito troppo, inclusi numerosi mega progetti.....



- cover** SANAA: Kanazawa 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, 2004, plan
- Nikken Sekkei Ltd.: Tokyo Sky Tree, Tokyo, 2012
  - Kumiko Inui: Hibiya Kadan Flower Shop, Tokyo, 2009
  - Toyo Ito: Home for the Elderly, Yatsushiro, 1994
  - Riken Yamamoto: Saitama Prefectural University of Nursing, Koshigaya (1999)
  - Kazuyo Sejima: Gifu-Kitagata "High-Town" Housing complex, 2000
  - Nikken Sekkei Ltd.: Izumi Garden Office Tower, Tokyo, 2002
  - POLA Art Museum, Hakone, 2002
  - Tadao Ando: Lee Ufan Museum, Naoshima, 2010
  - Kengo Kuma: Lotus House, Zushi, 2005
  - Shigeru Ban: Centre Pompidou Extension, Metz, 2010
  - Atelier Bow Wow: Gae Residence, Tokyo, 2004
  - Sou Fujimoto: Musashino Art University Library, Tokyo, 2010
  - Kazuyo Sejima: House in a Plum Tree Grove, Tokyo, 2004
  - Fumihiko Maki: Republic Polytechnic, Singapore, 2007
  - Republic Polytechnic, Singapore, 2007, diagrams
  - Yoshio Taniguchi: Marugame Genichiro Inokuma Museum of Art, Marugame, 1991
  - Tadao Ando: Chateaux la Coste Art Center, Aix-en-Provence
  - Toyo Ito: Sendai Mediatheque, Sendai, 2001; and axonometry of structures
  - Taichung Opera House, Taiwan, 2013
  - Kazuyo Sejima: Shibaura House, Tokyo, 2011
  - SANAA: Kanazawa 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, 2004
  - Rolex Learning Center of Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne, Switzerland, 2010
  - Ryue Nishizawa: Hiroshi Senju Museum, Karuizawa, 2011
  - Kengo Kuma: Ginzan Onsen Fujiya Ryokan, Obanzazawa, 2006
  - Prostho Museum and Research Center, Kasugai, 2010
  - Ando Hiroshige Museum, Bato, 2000
  - Xinjin Zhi Museum, Chengdu, China, 2011
  - Jugetsudo Teashop, Paris, 2009
  - Yien East / Archipelago, Kyoto, 2007
  - Ryoji Suzuki: Kompira Shrine Visitors Center and Administrative Facilities, 2004

Ce numéro sur l'Architecture japonaise est un brillant essai de Botond Bognar : **Architecture japonaise après la "bulle": limites et possibilités** ; préparé avec une très grande attention par Kaisa Broner-Bauer dans le choix des images et des textes dans la seule langue d'origine pour éviter toute réduction, avec une traduction intégrale en français et en italien sur le site renouvelé du CB. Après le numéro sur la stratification qui caractérise la jeune architecture contemporaine japonaise, cet article nous offre une intéressante comparaison entre l'architecture des grandes stars, une pression croissante pour chercher du travail conséquent au dehors du pays, et les efforts déployés par les jeunes architectes à réduire leur besoins et attentes pour rester au Japon, même avec des projets de petite taille et faible coût, mais à la recherche de solutions en mesure de répondre à la nécessité de flexibilité et de réduction des besoins, atteignant les objectifs architecturaux les plus importants d'un pays cherchant à retrouver son avenir.

*Au cours des années '80 et de la plupart des années '90 du siècle passé, alors que l'économie accélère à une vitesse vertigineuse, une grande floraison d'architecture se manifeste : l'on construit trop, trop de mégaprojets*

Bien que la majorité des réalisations soit le résultat d'une consommation à outrance, l'investissement concentré sur l'image a donné lieu à de nombreux exemples de créativité de niveau élevé, qui a attiré l'admiration du monde entier. Des architectes tels que T.Ando, A.Isozaki, F.Maki, Y.Taniguchi, T.Ito, S.Takamatsu ont obtenu une reconnaissance mondiale, tous entre eux le Prix Pritzker d'architecture. Cependant, au milieu des années '90, l'écclatement de la «bulle» est devenu douloureusement évident dans le secteur de la construction, les conditions modifiées de l'architecture, et le Japon est entré en récession la plus longue et la plus grave, une période désormais connue sous le nom « décennie perdue ».

La nouvelle utilisation d'un large éventail de matériaux souvent communs, ainsi que le nombre croissant de nouveaux matériaux, a contribué à l'évolution récente de l'architecture écologique.

S.Ban est « bien connu » pour l'utilisation de tubes en carton dans ses bâtiments, y compris les structures temporaires et permanentes. Il a conçu une «architecture en papier» pour les installations d'urgence pour fournir des logements immédiats au grand nombre de victimes de tremblements de terre et tsunamis.

L'utilisation de plaques de métal comme matériau de construction et les surfaces extérieures se répand parmi les jeunes architectes japonais: un grand nombre d'architectures « environnementales » va dans le sens d'une réponse aux conditions urbaines, une reconnaissance plus concrète de la ville cadre commun que les jeunes architectes acceptent, sont prêts à utiliser, avec seulement des améliorations limitées.

Les réalisations les plus diverses sont présentées par la troisième génération, peut-être les architectes les plus actifs internationalement reconnus comme Kuma, Sejima, Nishizawa, puis SANAA, Ban et Aoki.

La diversité des projets et des types d'architecture, classés comme minimalistes, montrent des différences significatives. La meilleure façon d'introduire les adresses que la génération post-bulle poursuit est de partir de deux contraires: l'architecture de SANAA et Kuma.

La première est une combinaison curieuse du travail de deux créateurs très talentueux.

Leur premier grand succès fut l'achèvement du Musée d'art contemporain de Kanazawa au 21e siècle (2004). Ici, une plaque cylindrique dure de 112,5 m. de diamètre, le tout enveloppé dans du verre, est remplie, dans une façon apparemment aléatoire, des boîtes rectangulaires comme des îles qui forment les espaces d'exposition et les courts à la fois, laissant libre pour la circulation le réseau d'espaces qui forme un labyrinthe.

Bien que les matériaux fassent l'objet d'une attention croissante dans l'architecture japonaise d'aujourd'hui, il est encore recouru à des matériaux tels que bois, bambou, papier, plantes et pierres, puis plastique, tissus synthétiques, vinyle, métal, verre et autres. Cependant, quel que soit le matériau, il s'engage à trouver des moyens pour les réduire en petites «particules», puis en plusieurs couches de membranes perméables ou écrans qui enveloppent avec légèreté l'enveloppe de ses bâtiments et de ses espaces : le filtrage est si léger que l'environnement dans le domaine de l'architecture.

Une question reste ouverte : dans quelle mesure le travail des architectes japonais sur le marché mondial favoriserait-il la qualité et la durabilité non seulement en termes mesurables ou techniques, mais aussi pour les aspects "incommensurables" du soutien de la capacité de l'architecture à demeurer une force créative dans une culture locale particulière : cela nécessite un long essai, qui peut être écrit dans un proche avenir.

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révision des textes français : F.Lapied

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**abonnement**  
[www.lecarrébleu.eu/contact](http://www.lecarrébleu.eu/contact)

**édition**  
nouvelle Association des Amis du Carré Bleu, loi de 1901  
Président François Lapied  
tous les droits réservés / Commission paritaire 593  
"le Carré Bleu", feuille internationale d'architecture

**siège social**  
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