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# Identity analysis of contemporary Japanese architecture

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## Introduction

Today, the shape and image of the contemporary city of many countries has shifted to a global and modern city. One of the most important constructive elements of the city are single buildings, by being together, the image of the city view is formed. Studing architectural solutions and how to extract the foundations of identity in the architecture of successful countries due to having a identity contemporary architecture can be a guide for Iranian architects to be able to bring contemporary Iranian architecture closer to the original identity of Iranian architecture. By observing the identity of Iranian architecture in each building, the image of Iranian cities will narrate the different dimensions of Iranian identity.

In the present article, contemporary Japanese architecture, which has a special identity, is analyzed in terms of identity. Ancient countries such as Japan, which have a long history of architecture, if move away from their past architectural and move towards globalization. The identity of the region, the cultural, social, religious and artistic traditions of their society are forgotten. In Japan, the principles of religious rites are composition with people's lives, and its identical architecture is based on the same principles.

Japan's artistic creativity began in prehistoric times, around 7000 AH. Thus, it is very old. Japan has different religions that have greatly influenced its traditional architecture. Traditional Japanese architecture includes several identification factors. Traditional architecture and identity in Asian countries, where the effects of modernism have torn the country apart from its past and have had significant and fundamental effects on the high rate of urban population growth and the development and sudden influx of technology, traditional architecture has a special meaning. How to connect with the architecture of the past in lands that have a long history of traditional architecture has always been one of the concerns and in other words the challenges of contemporary architecture in such lands. Variability and Cultural ease, along with preserving the core and nature of Japanese culture, are the basis of Japanese culture. An examination of identical buildings in contemporary Japanese architecture shows how they relate to past architecture in this land, which will serve as a model for future architects to continue on this path. It is hoped that identity design in countries with an ancient history will prevent anonymity, modernization, irrational perceptions of Western architecture, globalization and meaninglessness. Take away that ancient land. Just as the customs, lifestyles, rituals and traditions of each country and nation are different, the architecture of buildings in each region must be specific to that area in order to have



different beauties, identities and show the originality of the countries. In the present study, is tried to introduce the identity architecture of Japan by examining the identity factors in contemporary buildings in order to examine the identity of the city in terms of architecture.

# **Matherials & Methods**

In order to examine the identity of Japanese architecture, in the first step, the identity factors that were defined and discussed in different sources were examined and among them, factors related to Japanese identity concepts were selected. Data collection And the theorists' theories is done using library texts and documents. In the second step, their content analysis is analyzed with qualitative analysis. In this regard, after Terminology and the expression of meanings, the word identity and its types were defined. Identity characteristics included 8 categories: semantic identity. symbolic identity, functional identity, formal identity and proportion, decorative identity, emotional identity, identity in relation to nature and identity of texture and materials. In the third step, buildings with Japanese identity and historical value were selected. Also, Japanese buildings, which were designed and built in the last century to be architecturally famous, were designed by world-renowned architects and eventually had postmodern style and identity features. Their number reached 22. In the fourth stage, a comparative comparison was made based on the achievements of the second stage and the research conducted in this field to identify the characteristics of Japanese architectural identity. For this purpose, a variety of features the architectural identity of the 22 selected buildings was carefully examined and they were compared to the image of Japan's historic buildings. In general, this article has been done by descriptive, analytical and deductive research methods.

### **Discussion of Results**

The concept and principles of identity building in architecture according to some theorists was studied and was summarized as follows;

Chris Abel; Adaptation to texture, Adaptation to climate, Adaptation to culture, Adapted to human needs, Adaptation to the spirit of time, Adapt the form to technology and materials.

Rapport; Adapted to human needs, Adaptation to culture, Customizability (Flexibility), Adaptation to texture (Readability)

Kent Frampton; Keeping up with the spirit of time, Adaptation to culture, Adaptation to technology and materials, Creativity and innovation, Adaptation to climate

Charles Correa; Continuity, Customizable, Adapted to human needs, Adaptation of form to technology and materials, Adaptation to climate, adaptation to culture, adaptation to the spirit of time

John Lang; Adaptation to the spirit of time, Adapted to human needs, Customizable, Adaptation to texture, Adaptation to culture, creativity and innovation

Kevin Lynch; Form and function conformity (transparency), Adaptation to (readability),

Compatibility, (compatibility), Adaptation to the spirit of time, Customizable, Adapt to human needs.

Nuremberg Schultz; Form and function adaptation (transparency), texture adaptation (readability), Adaptation to Culture, Adaptation to the spirit of time, Customizable, Adapt to human needs.

From the study of texts related to identity, various types of identity in architecture were classified

## Identity analysis of contemporary Japanese architecture, Vahdaneh Fooladi, Mahsa Pishdar



into the following 8 items;

- 1. Semantic identity; the meaning of a designer's work is to adapt it to the traditions and principles that are ultimately presented using standard language.
- 2. Symbolic identity; the symbolic and cultural expression of symbols or archetypes is on the building.
- 3. Functional identity; if the use of an environment or objects similar to its use in the past involves functional identity.
- 4. Form identity and proportion; be it the original shape, size or proportions of the past.
- 5. Decorating; the decorations of the building are similar to those of traditional buildings.
- 6. Emotional; the product is to communicate, to enjoy and to value phenomena.
- 7. Communication with nature; Includes if found in conjunction with one of the natural elements.
- 8. Textures and Materials, Used materials or structures similar to traditional monuments of the past.

Selected samples of contemporary Japanese buildings and the most significant feature of their architectural identity in comparison with historical examples were summarized as follows;

- 1. Imperial Hotel Tokyo; form identity
- 2. Church Of Light; Functional identity
- 3. Fuji Television Center; Formal identity (Fit)
- 4. Hangie Forrest; Respect for the natural environment
- 5. House without walls; Functional identity
- 6. Paper House; Respect for the natural environment, Environmental Protection, Early form identity
  - 7. Yokohama International Terminal; Respect for nature, sensory and emotional identity
- 8. TOD building; Functional identity, Outbound communication, Transparency and extraversion
  - 9. Traditional Japanese teahouse; Primitive and identity form
- 10. Commercial office building Hulic; Make visual connections, inside and out Functional identity, Emotional identity
  - 11. Fuji World Heritage Collection; Early form identity, Native materials
  - 12. Nagano Japanese Cultural Collection; Functional identity, early form identity
  - 13. Office in Japan; Early form identity, Symbolic identity
  - 14. Asahiko Clinic; Functional identity, Elemental and symbolic identity
  - 15. Japan Cultural House; Respect for nature, Use of native materials
- 16. Church On The Water; In relation to the natural element of water and transparency and in and out
  - 17. Yogi National Stadium; Symbolic identity
- 18. Kenzo Tange House; Symbolic identity, Semantic Primary and Formal, Textures and Materials
  - 19. The Tokyo Skytree; Symbolic identity, Shape and fit
  - 20. Water Temple; Symbolic identity, Semantic identity, Communication with nature



- 21. Sandai Cultural Media Center; Semantic identity, Communication with nature
- 22. Nara City Convention Center; Functional identity, Textures and Materials, Semantic identity, Communication with nature

## **Conclusions**

How to connect with the architecture of the past in Japan, which has a long history of traditional architecture, has always been one of the concerns and challenges of contemporary architecture in this country. According to the background of the research and studies of postmodern Japanese buildings. Some of the factors that link contemporary architecture with ancient Japanese identity and traditions have been used more in buildings, and also in buildings with different uses, a different number of identity factors have been used. Semantic identity has been used most in identity buildings and is seen in all selected buildings. In this way, all the selected buildings are compatible with the ancient Japanese traditions. In the second place, 11 buildings are related to the past in terms of form or proportions. In Japanese architecture, the unit of measurement called "Ken" is used not only to measure dimensions and spaces, but also as a beautiful module in the structure, materials and facade of architecture and regulates them. Symbolic identity and connection with nature were also seen in 10 buildings. This means that a large number of selected buildings have a symbol of the past and are clearly related with the outdoor nature. 9 buildings also impress the viewer emotionally. 9 Buildings also have materials or structures similar to those of traditional buildings. Finally, 9 buildings have been linked to traditional Japanese architecture using space or similar objects in the past. Only 2 buildings have a common decoration with the past. As a result, with the exception of semantic identity, which was visible in all cases, and the use of past decorations seen in only 2 buildings, the rest of these identity factors were almost equally valuable in contemporary Japanese architecture.

**Keywords:** Identity, Japanese architecture, traditional architecture, semantic Identity



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