
From Neutra in Japan, 1930, to His European Audiences and Southern California Work

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FROM NEUTRA
IN JAPAN, 1930, TO
HIS EUROPEAN AUDIENCES
AND
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
WORK

By Barbara Lamprecht

ABSTRACT: Richard Neutra, a principle figure in modern architecture on the southern California, U.S., and international scenes, visited Japan in 1930. He observed traditional Japanese aesthetics and contemporary architecture and culture with the eyes of a creative designer of functional living space and a key theorist of Modernism. His subsequent work in southern California reflects ideas nurtured during his visit to Japan.

Early twentieth-century Japan attracted a series of notable American and European architects who visited, observed, and reported their impressions when they returned home. The Viennese-born southern California architect Richard Neutra (1892–1970) was one of these early witnesses. His visit to Japan in 1930, made seven years after he immigrated to America, accelerated the quickening dialogue between early European Modernism and an old Japan that was also eagerly exploring its own new modernity. My paper principally explores his experiences in Japan on his

larger visit to East Asia, which have never been examined in detail. I discuss what Neutra saw and what he communicated to his Japanese and later to his European audiences. I also propose a deep resonance between Japan and Neutra's subsequent thinking and design objectives, abundantly illustrated in his work in southern California.

Neutra's adopted American home in Los Angeles, halfway between the two worlds, afforded the perfect vantage between the European Modernists, his audience for various articles he wrote for the influential German magazine *Die Form*, and Japanese Modernists, who celebrated Neutra in the equally influential Japanese magazine *Kokusai-kenchiku*.

INFLUENCE TO INTEGRATION

In addition to his published observations, Neutra also brought home lessons from Japan that added conviction to his own Modernism, which was born and bred in Europe but had been increasingly inflected by the climate and geography of southern California and the American paradigm of the single-family house.

Japanese models also realized hypotheses that Neutra formulated and integrated into an architecture that embraced modernity's promise of long-span steel, the efficiencies of the assembly line, and large-plate glass. Additionally, Neutra saw a kindred spirit in the respect for a standardized architectural vocabulary—in Japan's case, based on a homogeneous culture and a long tradition of craft and artistry. However, he also was unique in adding new layers of understanding, which explained *why* Japanese architecture made so much sense to him.

These "new layers" were a broad range of sciences formulated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These include the emerging new discipline of physiological psychology, developed by Wilhelm Wundt in the 1870s, which distinguished psychology as separate from philosophy and quantified physiological responses to one's environment through measuring physical responses to stimuli;¹ the aesthetics of Gestalt psychology, developed in the 1890s and taught at the Bauhaus beginning in the 1920s, which provided tools to manipulate the perception of space, of particular interest to architects in pursuit of density with no sacrifice of a sense of spaciousness;² evolutionary biology, established in the late 1930s, which led Neutra to believe that understanding humans' primal genetic ancestry and where it occurred was not only relevant but crucial to successful contemporary



Neutra at rooftop shrine, warehouse, Osaka, 1930.
*Used with the kind permission of Dion Neutra. Richard and Dion Neutra Papers,
Collection 1179, Department of Special Collections,
Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.*

life;³ anthropology; and, finally, medicine, especially concerning those airborne, communicable diseases that were the bane of the dense, dirty Victorian urban environments that Modernists sought to abolish.

These new disciplines could become tools in the right architect's hands. They led Neutra to define "nature" and "organic" differently than most of his illustrious Modernist peers. Nature, for Neutra, was not Romantic. It was not "other" as in "man vs. nature"; rather, man was part of the spectrum of nature, and, furthermore, the presence of nature (or its properties) was necessary to well-being. To him, "organic" meant an attentive, alert response to these scientific truths, not a particular mode of construction, a building material, the introduction of curves, or an earth-tone color range. And while nature was certainly exquisitely calibrated for specific views and emotional responses in Japanese vernacular architecture, its very physical nearness and availability were also characteristic in these settings, just as requisite there as it was for Neutra's architecture. Even the Japanese quality of asymmetry resonated with what would later become known in psychology as "dynamic symmetry," or balanced asymmetry, in contrast with the West's love of bilateral symmetry, whose gratuitous use Neutra often called "empty geometricity."⁴

Together these added layers realized an architecture quite empathetic to the qualities of vernacular Japanese architecture he witnessed in 1930. His visit gave him heart.

And while drawn to America, home of the radical Frank Lloyd Wright and a place free of the chaos of the Great War, it was balmy southern California that he chose as the perfect venue for his experiments in integrating all these disparate elements. "California Calls You," as Neutra recalled his seminal 1920 encounter with a "lighted advertising sign" in Zurich, meant an opportunity to develop an architecture that would "regain the vanished biological balance" gone awry in dwellings elsewhere.⁵ Southern California presented itself as a candidate in two arenas: first, its landscape and climate, he believed, resembled that of the savannahs of East Africa, home of human genetic ancestry, which he believed still informed our cognitive and sensory equipment and to which architecture had to respond with acumen. Second, Neutra was a pragmatist. He never suggested that California was virginal, uninhabited territory. Rather, he recognized and sought to exploit an adolescent nation already blessed with a robust physical infrastructure, a capitalism integrated with a stable democracy, and sophisticated media for the distribution of publicity and, ultimately, of ideas.

GOING TO JAPAN

Neutra followed the footsteps of a series of notables in architecture, art, and urban design. Pivotal nineteenth-century figures include Edward Morse, who entered Japan in 1877 as a zoologist and departed as one of the world's first important Orientalists. Ernest Fenollosa arrived in 1878 at Morse's request; Fenollosa's early career as a philosopher and political scientist morphed into the role of a great collector of Japanese art and design. In the twentieth century, Neutra's visit followed Frank Lloyd Wright's first visit in 1905. Wright's apprentice and employee, the Czech-born Antonin Raymond (known as one of the fathers of Modern architecture in Japan) arrived in 1919 and eventually established his own practice that was most prolific during his stay there from 1948 to 1973. Neutra's trip preceded German Modernist architect and theorist Bruno Taut's three-year stay from 1933 to 1936; Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius came as a visitor in 1956.

Neutra's whirlwind but intense trip was particularly notable in its timing. Although Modernism had established itself in Japan, generating increasing excitement throughout the 1920s, by autumn 1930 the increasingly nationalist government began clamping down on groups espousing "radical" tendencies. But the preceding June was still bright with promise: Neutra was astonished to see 350 listeners attend his lecture after a cheering reception in Tokyo at his arrival.⁶ Thus, in both place and in time, his visit coincided with an especially golden moment for early Modernism in Japan.

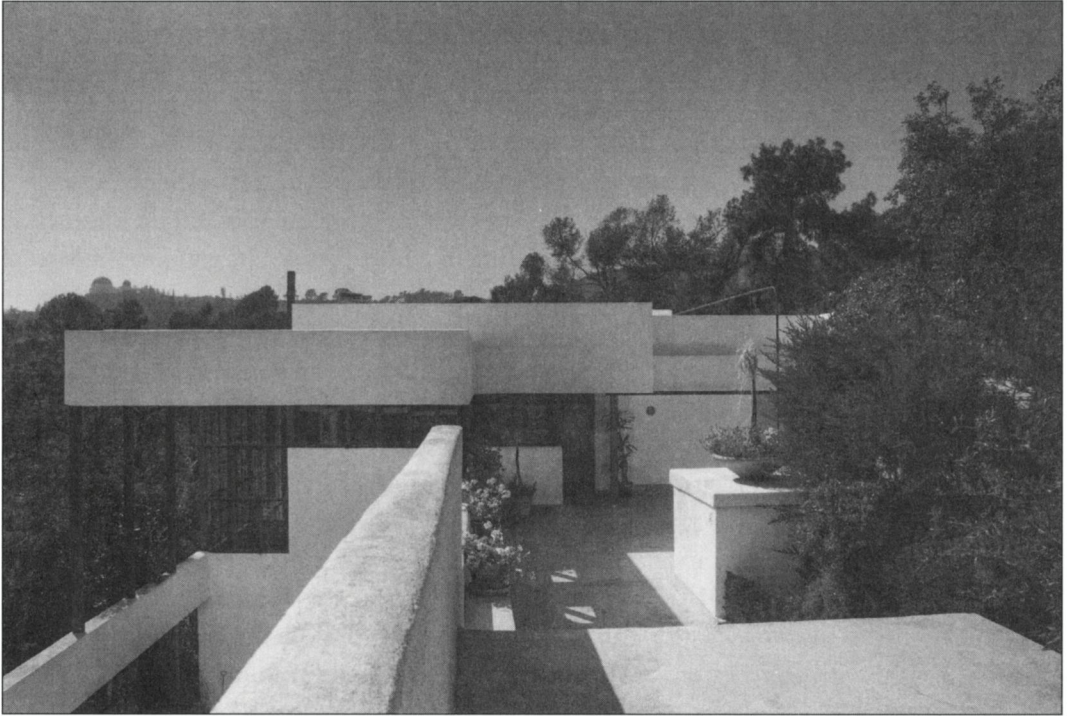
By 1930, Richard Neutra's name was well known in Modernist circles in Europe and to a lesser extent in Japan. Trained at Vienna's Technical University, he was a protégé of Adolf Loos, the Austrian architect and theorist who called for nothing less than a renunciation of frivolous new styles in favor of a return to classical principles, most notably in his seminal 1908 essay "Ornament and Crime." Neutra was also a former employee of Erich Mendelsohn, the Berlin-based Expressionist architect who enjoyed one of the most successful European architectural practices between the world wars. Soon after arriving in New York in November 1923, he left for Chicago, where he worked as "Draftsman #208" with the huge firm of Holabird and Roche. By July 1924, he was at Wright's Wisconsin atelier, Taliesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin, where he, with some dismay, was set to work detailing textile blocks and preparing drawings for an unbuilt development proposed for Sugarloaf Mountain in Maryland. In January 1925, Richard, Dione (who had arrived at Ellis Island in June), and their

baby son, Frank, departed for Los Angeles, where he would rejoin his countryman Rudolf M. Schindler, who had completed his ground-breaking twentieth-century King's Road home in 1922.

Although Neutra now worked and lived in America, he maintained close ties to Europe, writing two books for a European audience, *Wie Baut Amerika* (How America Builds)⁷, 1927, and *Amerika: die stilbildung des neuen bauen in der vereinigten staadten* (*Neues Bauen in der Welt*) (America: New Building Styles in the United States), 1930.⁸ In both he proved himself a voracious and catholic observer of new and ancient North American building technologies, especially the steel framing of Chicago skyscrapers. He documented not only the native pueblos and adobes of the Southwest but also the innovations in construction such as tilt-slab and slip-form techniques of his fellow southern California Modernists Irving Gill and R. M. Schindler⁹ as well as the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and his son Lloyd Wright. Neutra dramatically concluded *Wie Baut Amerika* with an image of "Die Wüste," or the desert (around Palm Springs), engraving the strange extremes of America in European minds.

Neutra had also assured himself a place in theoretical circles. He participated in the International Congress of Modern Architecture, or CIAM, a primarily European organization that advocated Modernist architecture and urban design schemes, from its inception in 1928. He sent a paper to the second congress, held in Frankfurt in 1929.¹⁰ Neutra would play a more prominent role at the third CIAM meeting in Brussels in November 1930. There, he presented in person his utopian urban plan, "Rush City, Reformed," in which he analyzed urban concerns such as transportation, new building types, and housing and presented them in a taut, brilliantly rendered, and apparently brutal¹¹ synthesis of his own, comparable to Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*, the Radiant City, 1935; Wright's decentralized vision of an urban/suburban development, *Broadacre City*, 1932; or Clarence Stein and Henry Wright's plan, "City of the Motor Age," 1927. In addition to presenting *Rush City*, in the same lecture—similar to the one he delivered in Tokyo—Neutra also sharply emphasized his analytical, pragmatic approach in acknowledging the profit motive in America, distinguishing himself from his more socialist European peers, particularly with regard to his recognition of the economics of American skyscraper construction.

Finally, the 1929 Lovell Health House in Los Angeles generated the global attention that assured his place in the watershed 1932 Museum of



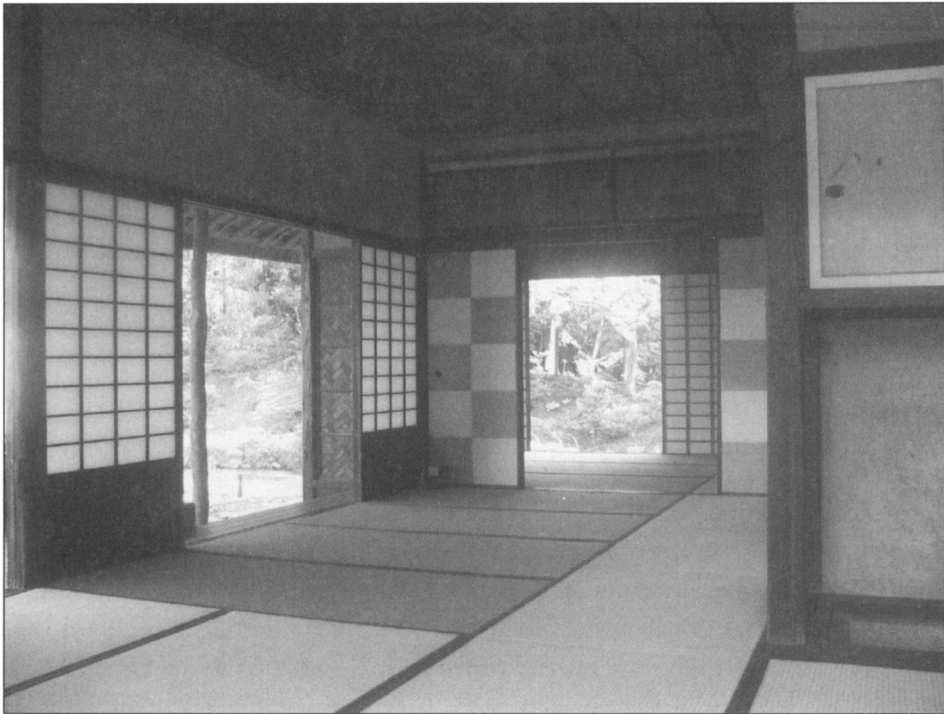
Approach across the “bridge” to the Lovell Health House, Los Feliz, Los Angeles, 1929. *Photograph by Laura Orozco.*

Modern Art show.¹² With only nine principal participants in the field of forty represented architects from fifteen countries, his inclusion as a principal confirmed him as a world player.¹³

Thus, Neutra was accustomed to all the roles needed for the international conduction and condition of architecture: as a practicing architect facile in disparate building technologies; as an innovative urbanist; as a participant in new architectural theory; and as a diligent reporter.

While Loos, with his exuberant love of the United States based on his stay between 1893 and 1896, certainly influenced the decision of both Schindler and Neutra to come to America, Wright and his monumental breakthrough, the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, published in Germany in 1910 as *Ausgeführte Bauten* (Executed Buildings), was a huge part of the allure of the U.S. for both émigrés. The portfolio revealed Wright's genius in "breaking the box" of segregated, static volumes to create athletic spatial relationships that embraced the diagonal and the outdoors as contributing members of cogent, connected spaces. Series of ganged windows replaced the conventional organization of windows individually "punched" into walls. Horizontality and a strong relationship to the ground plane replaced the vertical "opposition" to the earth that Wright abhorred. Wright's drawings also drew Neutra and Schindler together. In a way, it was also a mark of their talent that although they shared a mutual astonishment and appreciation for the implications and potential they saw in Wright's photographs and drawings, they produced such strikingly different oeuvres arising out of profoundly different conceptions of the role and purpose of "the architect," one as a custom artist calibrating space, the other expressing the specific through an understanding of the universal.

Wright's connections to Japan and its culture have been well documented, beginning when he was part of an informal network of prolific collectors of Japanese woodblock prints beginning in the late nineteenth century. Significant figures such as his friend Fenollosa, who became an important conduit for all things Japanese for Wright, and Morse, author of the seminal and still highly regarded *Japanese Houses and Their Surroundings* (1896), both lectured in the summer of 1893 at the Nippon Tea House, part of the reproduction of the Ho-o-den temple complex at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. While Wright's presence at the lectures can only be surmised as probable, historian Kevin Nute has noted the similarities between Wright's later writings on Japanese houses and Morse's (earlier) work, a fact that implies Morse's clear influence on



Katsura Imperial Villa, interior.
Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, 2004.

Wright's views, if not plagiarism, per se.¹⁴ Wright's knowledge of Japan was more deeply enhanced by the commission for the Imperial Hotel and his 1905 stay. He championed traditional Japanese architecture and abhorred the modernization of Japanese cities. However, as scholar Margo Stipe points out, Wright considered the search for modern architecture to have more affinity with Japanese architecture than any other because it was "in every bone and fiber of its structure honest."¹⁵

And as Stipe also notes, the observations of similarity between Wright's work and vernacular Japanese architecture began immediately. No less than the famous English Arts and Crafts architect Charles Ashbee noted it, to Wright's annoyance, in the very preface to the portfolio. Wright's Ward Willits House, 1902, and his Gale House, 1904, exhibit typical Japanese strategies including low hip or flat roofs, strong horizontal lines, ganged windows, and broad overhangs, demonstrated in the Ho-o-den but

beautifully illustrated in the sixteenth-century imperial villas Katsura and Shugakuin.¹⁶ Some of these strategies—whether directly from Japan, from Wright via Japan, or elsewhere—can be seen, more abstractly, in Neutra's work, discussed later.

By the early 1920s, Wright had built half a dozen buildings in Japan and had lived there off and on for six years, training several architects there such as Arata Endo and Raymond. His atelier at Taliesin East also included many young foreigners, including the young Japanese couple Tsuchiura Nobu and Tsuchiura Kameki. Nobu's drafting table was to Neutra's immediate left, while her husband, Kameki, sat directly behind Neutra in Wright's atelier of rough stone, Asian tapestries, and statues in a setting of soaring ceilings.¹⁷ The Tsuchiuras were with Wright from April 1923 to October 1925, moving there from West Hollywood in January 1924. Richard and Dione Neutra came to Taliesin in late October 1924 and left in January 1925. During their mutual time there, the Tsuchiuras mentioned shared picnics, musical evenings, and other activities in the weekends. Neutra and Tsuchiura both worked on textile block designs and on Wright's unexecuted National Life Insurance Company building, and the families spent Christmas together in 1925. The Tsuchiuras became lifelong friends of the Neutras, corresponding with them even during World War II with letters containing personal news and professional observations.

After Neutra's arrival in Los Angeles, he and Schindler designed the Jardinette (Garden) Apartments in 1928. The success of the Lovell House coincided with the beginning of the Great Depression.

Neutra, exhausted and depressed, had no work, and he was due in Brussels for the third CIAM conference anyway. Through the intervention of the Tsuchiuras, the avant-garde architectural magazine *Kokusai-kenchiku* sponsored him on a speaking tour in Japan replete with star-status publicity in its April and July 1930 issues.¹⁹ Learning that he would save \$150 by sailing west sealed the deal. "To see some glimpse of the Orient, before arriving in Europe, will help me to find the right proportions of values," Neutra wrote to a friend on 20 April 1930.²⁰ He sailed for Hong Kong on the 21st of May 1930 and departed for Marseilles from Yokohama, second-class, on June 15.²¹

Though brief, Neutra's time in Asia was nonetheless intense. He devoured ancient and modern Asia as hungrily as he had New York and Chicago, witnessed in the volume of material, images, and drawings he amassed from many Japanese and Chinese architects.²² In long and descriptive letters, he

frequently mentions an impatient, frenetic touring pace, never being alone “even for a minute,” and much rain. For example, he writes:

In Kyoto I thought the Kiyomizu temple to be the most beautiful. Broad staircases lead upwards in all directions to the anterooms and bell towers. I went there in the evening in the rain. Wonderful mood around the dark building with its wooden columns and a wide sweeping roof, from the verandas one had a view of the soft green cascades of the hilly vegetations and downwards onto the roofed city with its first lights [of the evening]. Japanese green tile roofs are very beautiful in the rain.²³

As ever, he drew incessantly with his pastel crayons, both landscape and people. In his encounters with geishas in inns with his companions, he even drew one woman from the front, rear, side, and even from above, as though to understand her through the architect’s media of plan, section, and elevation.²⁴

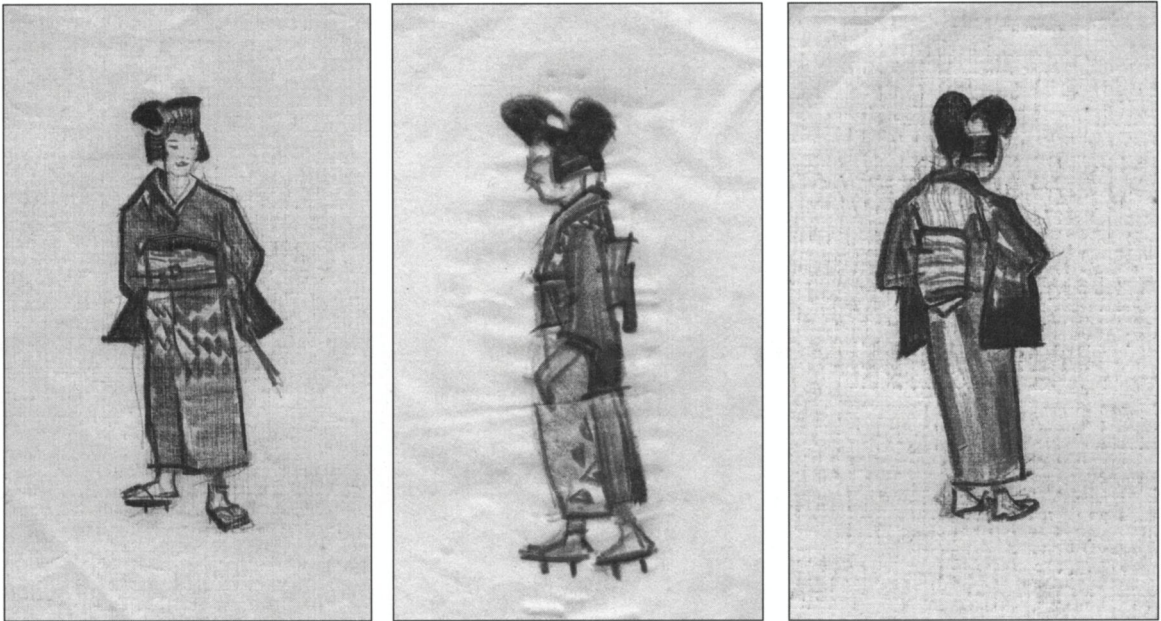
In the midst of touring, Neutra presented his talk, “Modern Architecture as an Idea and a Practice,” in Tokyo, 11 June 1930. Initially, he spoke to the phenomenon of the skyscraper, the product of capitalist business interests harnessed not only to mass production but to a sophisticated mass distribution system for materials and products. He then advocated a mix of low- and high-rise buildings, using Rush City as an example of how to elastically respond to mutable human configurations. Bemoaning the lack of “international lay intelligibility” of pre-industrial manual traditions in addition to the lack of standardization in modern times, he called for globally informed technical development. Neutra also spoke to the necessity for “designers and social engineers” to live and work among “different racial and ethnic groups to grasp them as an organic whole” and to see personally where human traditions overlap. “In Marco Polo’s time,” he observed, “the Chinese world was not as foreign to Europeans as it was in the Forties [1840s] when British gunboats bombarded the ancient Chinese city of Canton.” In contrast, he stressed, one must avoid stay-at-home “know-it-alls” who are “eloquently didactic.”²⁵ However, he foresaw some negative consequences for architecture arising from the American penchant for informality, mobility, and variety. He warned that these attributes led to buildings erected for only as long as utility allows, denying the “ideal creation of lasting values,”²⁶ an ideal Loos bequeathed to Neutra along with the need for artistic anonymity, an ideal that resonated with the long-standing vernacular Japanese architecture all around him. The speech, attended by 350, according to Neutra, inspired architect Maekawa Kunio,

a former apprentice of Le Corbusier and a highly accomplished architect who attended the lecture, to write an impassioned letter to Neutra on 12 June 1930, the next day. "I've the deepest conscience that the architecture should never be the work of some individual, and I believe so deeply that all the failures of the so-called modern architecture is [sic] *always* due to the lack of this conscience."²⁷

Turning to Europe, Neutra wrote three articles on his observations of Asia for the Berlin-based *Die Form* magazine,²⁸ the voice of the Deutsches Werkbund.²⁹ The first, published 15 March 1931, is "Japanese Dwelling, Development, Difficulties." The second, "New Architecture in Japan," was published 15 September 1931, and the third, "The Reconstruction of Chinese Cities," was the cover article for the 15 May 1932 issue.³⁰

Neutra's articles are not, for example, Taut's informed insights into Japanese traditional sensibilities and practices, seen in Taut's three monographs based on his experiences there as a political refugee between 1933 and 1936. Rather, Neutra's articles are somewhat idiosyncratic snapshots, veering from intimate minutiae to gross generality (building and labor costs and real estate tax rates in America vs. Japan; how most Japanese are nearsighted).

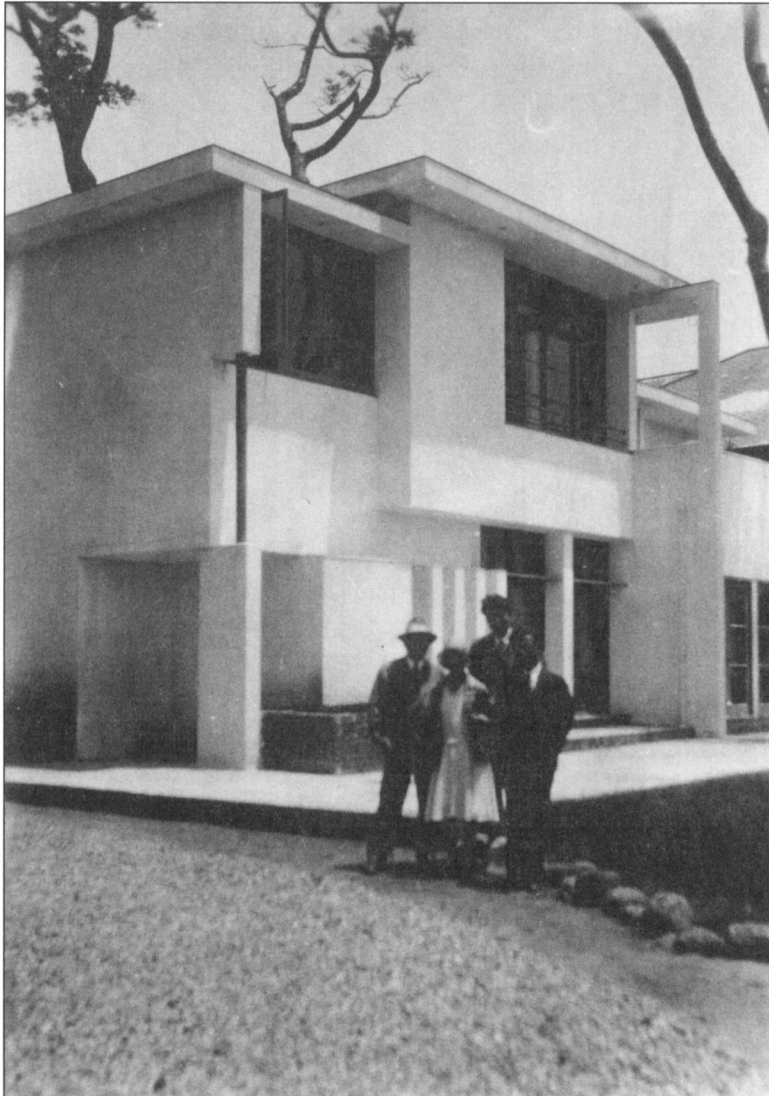
The images of buildings, sometimes unlabeled or mislabeled, are the work of those up-and-coming architects whom Neutra met, and while a profusion of blueprints and photographs of buildings by virtually every seminal early Japanese Modernist can be found in one or the other of his principal archives, sometimes with costs and sizes recorded on the backs of images or envelopes, it is really only through his personal letters that we can confirm, in America at least, that he spent almost all of his time in the company of these seminal Modernists, visiting their buildings with them.³¹ Just after arriving in Tokyo, Ishimoto Kikuji; "Koyema," *Kokusai-kenchiku's* publisher (Neutra gave no second name); Kameki (Tsuchiura); and Yamada Mamoru led him through "a confusion of contemporary buildings, many pseudo-modern and of adventurous ideas. . . . It seems everywhere the place teems with new experiments."³² Two days later, he saw buildings today considered iconic, including work by the firm Raymond and [Bedrich] Feuerstein, Ishimoto's Asahi Newspaper Office, Residence "Muniwa," the home of Count "Kuhara," the Shirokia Department Store, and the barely finished Clubhouse Asahi in Kamakura in the company of its architect, Ishimoto, and Nobu (Tsuchiura), Yoshida Tetsuro, and Saito (other name unknown), after visiting Seigo Motono's three "cement houses,"



Japanese woman, front, side, and back.
 Sketches by Richard Neutra, 1930. Used with the
 kind permission of Dion Neutra. *Richard and Dion Neutra Papers,*
 Collection 1179, Department of Special Collections,
 Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

(actually houses rendered in concrete block).³³ In a letter dated 22 June 1930, he wrote that at his second venue, Kyoto, he was met by “Isaburo Neno, Ho, Nokao, Motomo [sic, Motono], Morita, Neno’s Viennese wife, and Ishimoto from Tokyo.”³⁴ Later, in Osaka, he wrote in the same letter, “with the engineers,” he visited many new “large municipal buildings,” including “the municipal market hall,” remarking, “[I]t is a magnificent steel and reinforced concrete raw structure.”

In his first article, “Japanese Dwelling, Development, Difficulties,” Neutra affected the role of an anthropologist. He mused over the contrast between traditional Japanese mores and the new obsession with all things American—straw hats, dances, music, even the vulgarity of ‘Americanizing’ a revered Japanese poem into a casual ditty: “‘Shall we,’ a Japanese girl is asked, ‘make love or leave it at drinking tea?’” (Neutra shared many such closely observed portraits of the Japanese with his wife Dione in letters



The recently completed Clubhouse Asahi in Kamakura, 1930 (Kikuji Ishimoto, architect) which Neutra visited in the company of Ishimoto, Nobu Tsuchiura, Yoshida Tetsuro, and [?] Saito. *Used with the kind permission of Dion Neutra. Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.*

throughout his travels.)³⁵ In *Die Form*, he wrote that in contrast to “exuberant American exertions,” the Japanese dance is “statuesque.” In this article, Neutra showed just a few images: a group of skipping, uniformed Japanese school children, graphically linking standardized clothing to standardized architecture; a “Mädchenhaus” (brothel) in Tokyo, perhaps as a tongue-in-cheek vehicle for demonstrating “traditional light wood building”; and, in contrast, the modern four-story concrete Meiji Siedlung (“settlement,” or housing complex) labeled as being in Tokyo (though elsewhere Neutra locates it in Osaka³⁶) “in the midst of the slums, built for some 80 families with one Shinto shrine, with the laundry on the roof,” he wrote in *Die Form*, adding that it was “very populated, quickly deteriorating.”³⁷

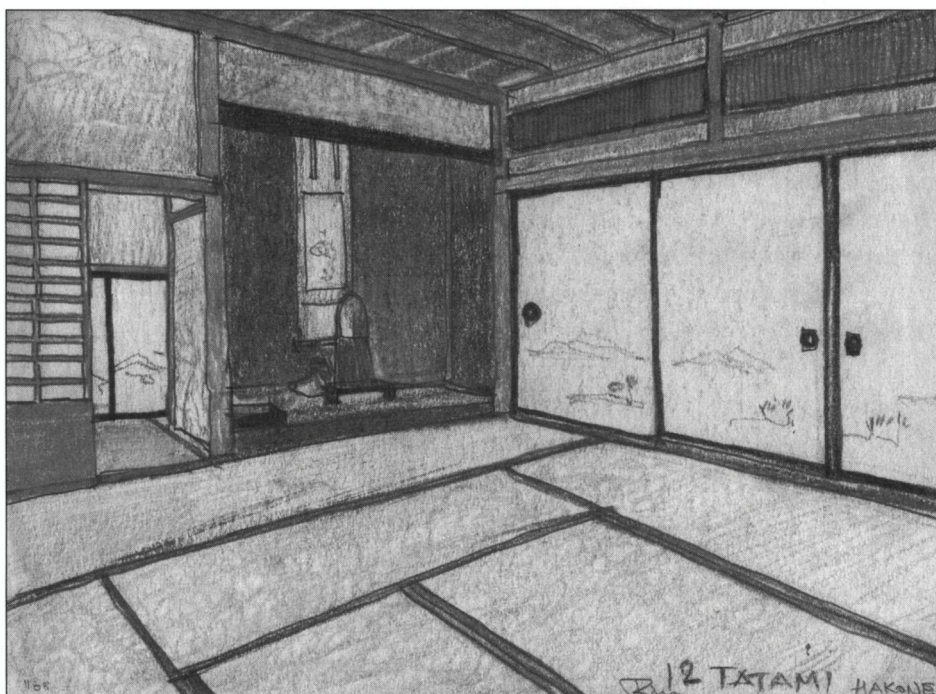
Because of his lifelong awareness of the role of the senses in design, he also examined the complicity between architecture and Japanese behavior, “honed to the smallest space.” One has to move slowly and deliberately through the small rooms, he noted, and in contrast to American children raised in “safe and foolproof houses,” Japanese children are raised “to avoid noise and be aware of breakable objects.”³⁸

“Acoustically seen, the house and its rooms are formed by opaque membranes set in light frames,” he observed, adding that the possible acoustical dampening of tatami mats is nearly absent:

Resonating panels for a loud primo tenoro or for a Wagnerian orchestra are neither needed or appropriate. . . . Secret conversations are better carried on in writing where one can draw quick characters on paper and then [throw it] in the hibachi. Such a scene as in a drama by Nakamuro is mysterious and teaches us about the acoustic characteristics of the Japanese house. The Japanese resident of a house makes no noise and does not share secrets in a verbose and gossipy manner. . . .³⁹

He also considered vision, if rather eccentrically, particularly given the audience of *Die Form*: “Normally one frequently observes scantily clad people behind the opaque moveable screens of the Japanese,” he wrote, “but one ignores them. . . . There is no prudery, and acknowledgments of nakedness, even in art, are avoided. If one “encounters a neighbor naked as he goes to the bath, both do not greet each other with ‘good morning.’ The Japanese are exceedingly good voyeurs during presentations by geishas in the smallest of spaces.”⁴⁰

Neutra also noted how architectural proportions are generated, based, he says, on the “carefully ironed-in sharp folds” of clothing. “Once ironed it is placed in ‘Tansu’ (dresser drawers) whose dimensions have been precisely



Twelve-tatami mat. Nakone.

Sketch by Richard Neutra, 1930. Used with the kind permission of Dion Neutra. Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Collection 1179, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

made for the width of standard materials used in a kimono robe. These also form dimensional elements for the floor mats and influence the size of rooms and the entire house. The dress becomes the measure for all things, so to speak." This could be true, since the 2:1 ratio of the tatami mat, three by six feet, is based on the size of a human being; in any case, this practical measure, seen everywhere, must have been a revelation to Neutra, witnessing here standardization in a traditional and very pragmatic form, stripped of the theoretical buzz surrounding the word in Europe.⁴¹

Pointing attention to the "months of dust" under tatami mats "upon which one treads in snow-white *tabis*" and "the dust of many nights under a woman's precise coiffeur," Neutra also wrote that the "visually formalistic" aspect of cleanliness in Japan needed to be acknowledged before being appropriately "modernized with odorless toilets and plumbing."⁴²

In "New Architecture in Japan," Neutra included images of the very latest architecture, most of which he saw.⁴³ Here, he turned to the larger forces propelling construction, including a "decisive" part of the population who had a "concerned and driven speed to adopt new forms." He asserted that "Japanese progress is the opposite to that in the USA or China" because the government actively supports planning and gleans knowledge from experts and students sent abroad."⁴⁴ In contrast to China, where the private entrepreneur bested the civic urban planner, in Japan "the authorities have strong ambitions to apply all available techniques to construct their cities to perfection," Neutra wrote, praising the "wonderful plans for useful and well-laid-out streets, traffic designs, proper zoning laws, and small house districts."⁴⁵

On one page in this last article, four images are shown, all sharing an architecture characterized by horizontal layers. Two show the Mori office building and the Shirokiya department store. The third is a painting of an earlier eighteenth-century Shirokia building. The last, the 1649 Asakusa Pagoda, is labeled "historical horizontalism." Thus, Neutra graphically links new Japanese architecture to CIAM's sidebar topic scheduled for the upcoming Brussels meeting (a practicum on "horizontaler schiebenfenster-construktionen," that is, how to actually detail sliding horizontal windows).⁴⁶ This is a kind of lateral connection. The four images, spanning almost three centuries, also connected the Japanese penchant for horizontality to its own history—a kind of "vertical" connection.

Later in the article, Neutra was more critical: "As in Europe, there is useless experimentation. Yet this pertains only to construction that uses new materials, in which the skills of Japanese workers are significantly lower compared to their extraordinary perfection in wood carpentry. . . ." And he could not fathom why the Japanese didn't protect their woods "with several coats of varnish or paint as they do in Holland, [the lack of] which undermines durability." However, he commended the successful, tight-fitting skins of new ceramic tile work seen in the Kikkawa and the (unpictured) "Institute building of Yamada."⁴⁷

Neutra accomplished a great deal in his brief visit of Japan and Asia, which was only the beginning of his triumphant world tour. He sailed back to the United States in December. On board ship, he wrote to his wife Dione, "Where can the famous modern architect, with no practice, no organization, no jobs . . . rest his weary head? Just as I did in 1923, so do I now. I swim towards USA."⁴⁸

THE IMPACT OF JAPAN ON NEUTRA'S ARCHITECTURE

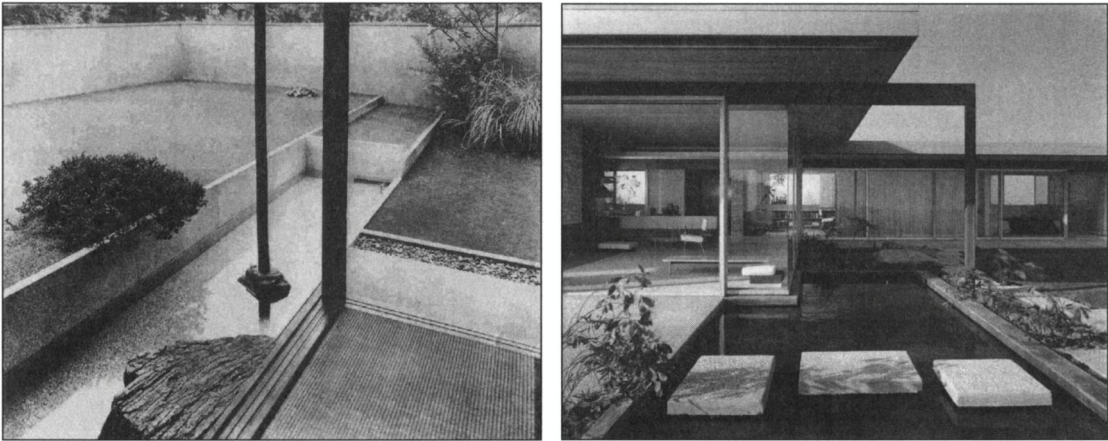
After his return, Neutra's work exhibited no sudden allegiance to the external aesthetics of Japanese wooden post-and-beam architecture. In fact, his work of the 1930s is the high point of his interpretation of the International Style in southern California, with long white spandrels of stucco alternating with bands of steel casement windows and silver-paint trim. Rather, Japan's influence was more subtle, as he integrated its lessons into his own ideas over time.

One can point to an overall clarity of composition; immediate and distant visual access to nature that afforded both views and experience of the landscape he believed necessary in order to acknowledge humans' savannah ancestry; physical access to nature through the use of extended terraces, full-height sliding glass doors (like shoji screens); precise and nuanced transitions between indoors and outdoors; and the use of a layered, rather than a monolithic, approach to materials and methods. All are similar to Japanese modalities.

His consistent use of asymmetry, while a stated tenet of the International Style, is also a quality he believed to be a biological imperative and one that he admired in Japanese architecture. In a preface to a 1959 book on Japanese gardens, Neutra marveled at the "relaxed asymmetry" of the traditional Japanese house fused with the garden and courtyards, "gardens so spontaneously free of the shackles of dry geometricity."⁴⁹

Neutra also saw the confirmation of the viability of standardization. It is startling and perhaps telling that throughout his archives related to Japan, one finds photographs of groups of zebras, trees and views of non-Japanese roofs taken from above and afar. I believe these photographs are not there by accident, were no clerical error, but remnants of one of the many ideas Neutra had, perhaps to illustrate a point for a potential magazine article or book: standardization appears *as a natural phenomenon*. He once posed the question that if the Bauhaus masters, with their diversity, could live, like the Japanese did, in uniform housing, why was standardization bad? He added that no one ever complained that a tree was boring.⁵⁰ Japanese dwellings and gardens "have made happy the humble, the modest, and the rich," he wrote, emphasizing their ability to suit many different people.⁵¹

One can also point to other Japanese tenets in Neutra's buildings throughout southern California, such as orthogonality; a standard architectural grammar and restricted palette of materials used in different ways



(left) Detail, Okada house, Tokyo, 1933. Sutemi Horiguchi, architect.

Photograph by Yoshio Watanabe. From Arthur Drexler,

The Architecture of Japan (N.Y.: MOMA, 1955), 244. Permission pending.

(right) Singleton House, Los Angeles, 1949. Richard Neutra, architect.

Photograph by Julius Shulman. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission.

Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the

Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10).

according to client, site and budget; landscaped internal courtyards (seen, for example, in the VDL Research House II, 1966, and the Flavin House, 1958, both in the Silver Lake neighborhood in Los Angeles); nuanced progressions to the main entry; and transitions from building to landscape, from one aspect of nature to another.

After the 1940s, wood post-and-beam construction and deep, sheltering overhangs—trademarks of vernacular Japanese architecture—do become essential Neutra trademarks. His many experiments in materials, which he enthusiastically and optimistically explored as a card-carrying soldier of Modernism, were increasingly tempered as he came to rely on more conventional materials but nonetheless informed by and disciplined with his own standardized design details.

With regard to interiors, just as Neutra layered spatial transitions from the interior to the outdoors, he also layered functions. He could easily relate to the Japanese concept of *ma*, or mutable interior space of total flexibility, in designing *ma* spaces that were multi-purpose, whether for commercial, civic, or domestic use, a quality of neutrality often remarked in Neutra



TRANSITIONS IN BOUNDARY

(above) Miller Mendensieck house, 1937 (Neutra). Photograph by Julius Shulman (gelatin silver print). © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). (right) Paving at Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto. Photo by Barbara Lamprecht, 2004.

buildings. As he once wrote, “In our house, rooms have no names such as living room, dining room, bedroom. . . . Rooms are portions of our great living space and pragmatically elastic.” This “great living space” sounds very much like the Japanese concept of the *zashiki*, or flexible principal room, used for living, sleeping, and entertaining. Neutra’s famous “camel table,” with its double-jointed legs so that the table could serve for dining or as a low coffee table, is quite similar in spirit to vernacular Japanese furniture, easily movable or foldable. While there is no evidence that Neutra visited Katsura on his 1930 visit, much later in his writings he noted that few rooms in the Katsura mansion were assigned any single irrevocable function.

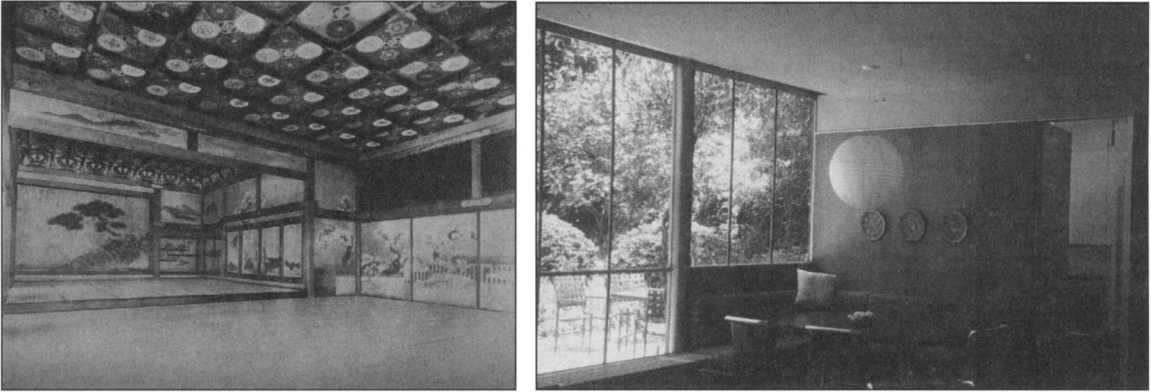
Other interior treatments in Neutra’s later practice also share sharper resemblances to Japanese architecture, particularly seen in the sense of connected space and spaces. The indisputable drama of the staircase leading to the lower floor of the Lovell Health House (1929), as well as its awkward jumble of an upper-floor layout, relaxed in his later work, achieving a serene, more humble quality of flowing space extending into the landscape



Miller Mensendieck house, interior, Palm Springs, 1937.
 Richard Neutra, architect. Photograph by Julius Shulman.
 © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive,
 Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10).

rather than cantilevering over it. The Lovell's undifferentiated intersections of interior ceiling and wall planes became nuanced. Contrasts between dark brown and white colors (a use of tones enriched, disciplined, and formalized later that year through the lens of Gestalt psychology taught at the Bauhaus (where Neutra taught in fall 1930 and later exploited to "stretch space") became typical, illustrated in the Taylor house (1964).

The Miller Mendensieck House, Palm Springs, 1937, is one of Neutra's most overtly "Japanese" houses. Client Grace Miller required a "live-work" space that could on occasion accommodate eating, teaching her "Mendensieck" method of physical movement, living, or guest overnight stays. (While this again recalls *ma*, it must also be noted that the Rietveld-Schröder House in Holland, designed by Gerrit Rietveld in 1924 and where



(left) Great Shoin of Nijō castle, Kyoto.

Example of shoin-zukuri residential Japanese architecture, seventeenth century.

Note the asymmetry of the panels and how the ceiling in the recessed bay “folds” down as a wall frieze in comparison to the window configuration and ceiling-wall treatment in Neutra’s Beard house. *From Robert Treat Paine and Alexander Soper, The Art and Architecture of Japan (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1960), pl. 168. Permission pending.*

(right) Beard house, Altadena, 1934 (Richard Neutra), interior.

Photograph by Barbara Lamprecht.

Neutra slept at least one night on his world tour, is the epitome of flexible space and to my knowledge has no connection to Japanese architecture.)

A resemblance to Japanese vernacular architecture can be seen in the Miller House in various ways, including its diminutive scale; panels of waxed, dark tempered Masonite below white stucco, recalling Japanese proportions and strong contrasts; functional built-in cabinetry; shoji-like translucencies; the band of white plaster that folds down the ceiling plane to reinforce the perimeter of the room (a Japanese device known as *arikabe*) that unifies a room rather than “let the space flow out through the windows by way of an uninterrupted ceiling plane.”⁵² Historian Arthur Drexler points out that in Japanese rooms, these white *arikabe* bands of varying depth are located *above* elements of varying heights, whereas “Neutra turned this upside down, using such jogs for changing windowsill heights so that attention is directed toward the floor plane rather than the ceiling.”⁵³ Sometimes, although not always, these window heights establish datum lines that are sustained around a room with a high horizontal line,

above which lies either clerestory window or solid white plaster. This thin upper plane unifies the room: the roof plane, which now “folds down” to form the high upper wall, delicately provides a sense of enclosure.

In terms of urban design, in witnessing Japan in 1930, Neutra now had living proof that a “tightly massed civilization need not spell the defilement of the natural scene but can mean its glorification,” he wrote later, with “lessons for American building.” Japan represented the carefully rendered, successful balance of the need for increased urban density and the need for nature, the rational, and the sensual. Japan was a miracle of land economy, he wrote, in that such complex unity could be “accomplished on the most diminished scale.”⁵⁵ The rest of his life would be spent seeking ways to design buildings that were intimate with nature yet more densely sited. The so-called “Silver Lake Colony,” a group of seven houses in Los Angeles primarily constructed in the late 1940s and 1950s exemplifies this approach. Neutra and his partner, architect son Dion, used a single architectural vocabulary to create unique homes grouped closely together, even combining pathways to conserve land. The gently sloping site, overlooking Silver Lake, permits each house a slightly different view and unique relationship to the lake and to each other.

In summing up, it is difficult to know what impact Neutra’s brief presence in East Asia had in Europe or its longer-term significance in Japan. The authors of two articles on Japan in the July 1933 issue of *Die Form*, coinciding with Taut’s arrival in Japan, showed many images of Katsura Imperial Villa, which, with Shugakuin, remain great inspirations to both Japanese and Western architects, whether traditionalists or Modernists. One writer in the 1933 issue noted that in spite of Neutra’s concern that “Americanization” (for Neutra had no love for American building and urban paradigms), that is, a penchant for novelty, had taken root, some new architecture showed a renewed interest in traditional Japanese building culture. It “is still so vital, that in spite of all reformings [*sic*], fundamentally it will survive. It is not the form, but the heart, that really matters, that is the essence.”⁵⁶

I propose that this “essence” remained with Neutra as a lifelong inspiration, realized in many versions over decades in southern California and readily adapted elsewhere. As Neutra wrote in his 1959 foreword to *Japanese Gardens for Today*, “A generation ago, when I accepted my first invitation from Japan to express my ideas on a biological, naturalistic approach to design, upon arriving there I suddenly felt as if I were coming home.”



I am indebted, for help with the difficult translations, to Dr. Bruce K. Byers, Ms. Christine Byers, Alphonz Lamprecht, and Brigitte Manholz, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Each translator noted that Neutra's German was often apparently overly complex; the letters in German were handwritten to family intimates, so that handwriting was as one writes to familiars; many letters were on thin sheets of hotel or ocean liner paper and difficult to decipher. I would also like to thank Dion Neutra for his kind permission to use the travel sketches; the Getty Research Institute; Laura Orozco, for the use of her Lovell Health House image; Genie Guerard, Manuscripts Librarian, Young Research Librarian, UCLA; as well as Simon Elliott, Octavio Olvera, and Jeff Rankin in Special Collections; and Dr. Lauren Bricker, Cal Poly Pomona.

NOTES

- 1 Max Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) wrote *Principles of Physiological Psychology*, 1874, which Neutra read. Wundt and Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887), with whom Neutra was also familiar, are considered the founders of experimental psychology. Wundt's work laid the groundwork for measuring physical sensation and stimulus by emphasizing experimentation and observation. His earlier work on emotion, a paper, "Lectures on Human and Animal Psychology," 1863, is considered by some to be the first modern scientific conception of emotion, relating it to the neural systems. Wundt also wrote works on ethics and metaphysics. My implication is that he was a broad thinker in trying to understand human behavior.
- 2 The word "Gestalt" literally means "whole form." Max Wertheimer and Christian Ehrenfels, authors of *Über Gestaltqualitäten* ("On the Qualities of Form"), 1890, are credited as the founders of Gestalt psychology, which argues that we understand shapes and patterns holistically. The theory organizes how we order our experiences into "laws" concerning the perception of shapes, patterns and relationships.
Bauhaus masters Lionel Feininger, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky were among those at the Bauhaus who were influenced by Gestalt theories, attending lectures and inviting Gestaltists to the Bauhaus. In his essay "Art, Design and Gestalt Theory," scholar Roy R. Behrens notes strong similarities between Gestalt and Japanese aesthetics. See <http://www.leonardo.info/isast/articles/behrens.html>.
- 3 Evolutionary biology developed in the late 1930s and early 1940s as part of the "modern evolutionary synthesis" combining several disciplines of biology, Darwinian theory, genetics, and natural selection.
- 4 See Jay Hambidge, *Practical Applications of Dynamic Symmetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1932), one of four works published on dynamic symmetry beginning in 1920. See also "Gestalt Principles and Dynamic Symmetry: Nature's Design Connections to Our Built World" by Prof. Emer. Thomas Detrie, prepared for a seminar at College of Mount Saint Joseph, Cincinnati, 2002. http://www.public.asu.edu/~detrie/msj.uc_daap/article.html.
- 5 As his bride, Dione, told Wright on their departure from Taleisin East, "To be happy and to be comfortable was not the single aim we had in coming to this country." Dione Neutra, *Promise and Fulfillment* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1986), 135. See also 7, 340.
- 6 Letter to Dione Neutra, 13 June 1930, from the Hakone Hotel. Richard Neutra Archives, College of Environmental Design, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona).
- 7 Neutra's title is not "Wie Amerika Entwirft," How America Designs but rather how it builds, following the example of Otto Wagner, who changed the title of his life's work, *Modern Architecture: A Guidebook for His Students to This Field of Art*, first published in 1896, to *Modern Building Of Our Time* by its fourth edition in 1913, linguistically abandoning the historicist associations embedded in the word "architecture."

- 8 This book was published by Anton Schroll of Vienna as one in a three-part series on new architecture, *Neues Bauen in der Welt* (New Buildings in the World) with design and typography by El Lissitzky.
- 9 In "tilt-slab," used for Gill's Dodge House, Los Angeles, 1916, concrete is poured on the ground and tilted up into place; the quite different "slip-form" technique refers to a concrete wall that is built up in a fast sequence of concrete pours. Form work, typically planks of wood, parallels the pours in that it is raised each time after a pour to accept the next one.
- 10 The Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture). At the first CIAM conference in 1928, Neutra was appointed in absentia to a sub-committee for the "implementation of contemporary architecture"; to the second, as a national delegate from the U.S. to the 1929 meeting (focused on "existenzminimum"), he submitted a paper. See Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2000), 23, 26.
- 11 "Rush City, Reformed" embodies the apparent contradiction of a design that appears to be almost incomparably authoritarian but also reflects an analysis of human needs and behaviors that, in turn, has elements of compassion designed into that architecture. While his housing in Rush City might have been ultimately unviable, it was certainly not frivolous and certainly not just about form-making. For example, Neutra sought to respond to the working person's need for housing by analyzing economic trends and demographics. One apartment unit, he argued, could be used by two parties, one working at night, the other during the day, and save both parties money. The charts and other analyses informing his design decisions, revealing a prodigious effort to accommodate a range of human needs and configurations, are housed at the University Library, Department of Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 12 "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition," Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, 1932.
- 13 In MOMA's exhibition, Neutra was included in the final line-up of principal exhibitors, which also included Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Raymond Hood, Howe & Lescaze, Mies van der Rohe, J. J. P. Oud, and Frank Lloyd Wright. See "Modern Architecture International Exhibition, New York, Feb. 10 to March 23, 1932." See also, Henry Russell Hitchcock's "Introduction to the 1966 Edition," *The International Style* by Hitchcock and Philip Johnson (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997) 19.
- 14 See Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2000).
- 15 Margo Stipe, "Wright and Japan," in *Frank Lloyd Wright, Europe and Beyond*, ed. Anthony Alofsin (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1999), 88.
- 16 Although scholars such as Kevin Nute and David Gebhard noticed at least as strong a similarity to the Turkish Pavilion, with its monumental overhangs, the Japanese parallel is the one almost invariably invoked. Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan: The Architect's Forgotten Passion* (New York: Japan Society and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001), 190, Illus. 160.
- 17 Neutra worked for Wright from November 1924 to January 1925. See Thomas Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 54. See also "Kameki and Nobu Tsuchiura: Apprenticeship with Wright in the Late 1920s," by Atsuko Tanaka (paper presented in joint session "East Asian Influence on Modern Architecture in Europe, 1918–39" with author, for the Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting, Toronto, 2007).
- 18 The Tsuchiuras were interviewed by scholar Atsuko Tanaka in 1989 and included this information in *Big Little Nobu—Apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright—First Female Architect in Japan*, written in Japanese in 2001. Dr. Tanaka kindly provided this information in English to the author.
- 19 Tanaka, "East Asian Influence . . ."
- 20 Letter from Frances Topf, Cal Poly Pomona, Box 40.
- 21 Souvenir Passenger List, Nippon Yusen Kaisha, The T.S.S. "Sinyo Maru" Voyage No. 21 Westward, 1930. Cal Poly Pomona, Box 2A.
- 22 Material in the archives at UCLA and Cal Poly Pomona.
- 23 Letter to "Dionemutterli," i.e., Dione Neutra's mother, Richard's mother-in-law, Lilly Niedermann, 22 June 1930, Cal Poly Pomona.
- 24 University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Young Research Library, Department of Special Collections, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, 1925–1970, 1179, Box 2, f. 3, 4, 5, 10, Box 4, f. 4.
- 25 Letter to Dione Neutra, 13 June 1930. Neutra practiced what he preached, traveling for work all his life, sketching and writing about people, scenes, and buildings wherever he found them, comparing cultures,

- finding where they were similar and where different, amplifying his wide range of reading in the sciences, philosophy, and anthropology.
- 26 In another similar lecture, "Wohnen in amerikanischen Einflussgebiet" (Living in the American Sphere of Influence), located/dated "Zurich 17 October 1930," Neutra expands on this theme: "The average American does not avoid the long road to work especially in his own (if not yet paid off) car that gives him movement and freedom from the rigid connection to his place of work. His lawn or patio, the protected realm of his yard, a Greco-Latin invention that is also to be found in Santung [?], symbolizes freedom from his four walls," he notes with startling prescience. This same American, Neutra continues, "loves to change his occupation—a professor of sociology becomes a dancer, a university professor becomes an avocado farmer." Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, Special Collections, UCLA, Box 192.
- 27 Richard Neutra Archives, Cal Poly Pomona, Box 2A.
- 28 *Die Form* was published from 1925–34 and was founded after a Werkbund exhibition by that name held in Stuttgart in June 1924.
- 29 Founded in 1907, the Deutscher Werkbund (German Work Federation) was a German association of artists, architects, designers, and industrialists whose initial goal was to establish a partnership of product manufacturers with design professionals involved with the Arts and Crafts and Modernist movements to improve the competitiveness of German companies in global markets, a cause carried through more famously in the Bauhaus. Several seminal figures associated with the Werkbund include founder Herman Muthesius, author of *Das Englische Haus*, Peter Behrens, Josef Hoffmann, Henry van der Velde, and Mies van der Rohe, director of the Bauhaus from 1930 to 1933.
- 30 Richard J. Neutra, "Japanische Wohnung, Ableitungen, Schwierigkeiten," *Die Form*, Heft 3, 15 March 1931; Richard Neutra, "Neue Architektur in Japan" *Die Form*, Heft 9, 15 September 1931, 333–340; Richard Neutra, "The Reconstruction of Chinese Towns," *Die Form*, Heft 5, 15 May 1932.
- Neutra's work was first featured in *Die Form* in an article on 1 July 1930, on the "Gesundheitshaus [the Lovell Health House] in Kalifornien." Later his Ring Plan School was used as the cover for the 15 April 1932 issue. After his visit, Neutra's work continued to be published in Japan; for example, the Josef von Sternberg house was published in 1936 in *Kokusai-kenchiku*.
- Perhaps coincidentally, just as Neutra's visit occurred during the pinnacle of early Japanese Modernism, the timing of his articles coincided with a high point in the publication's nine-year life before its far-flung explorations in Modernism and modernity succumbed to Nazism. While in the 1920s and '30s, *Die Form* celebrated Modernism, soliciting articles from seminal figures in Europe and the U.S. (One memorable May 1929 cover is an image of a photographer, feet astride. While the viewer's camera must be at his feet looking up, his heavy camera is mounted at groin level to aim back at the viewer in a suggestive pose.) Albert Speer introduced the May 1934 issue, devoted to *Arbeitsfreude* (the joy of work). Ads for a new book on Rome by Mussolini sit alongside Modern lighting. Exhortations for "Arbeitsfreude" (the joy of work) and "Schönheit der Arbeit" (the beauty of work) have replaced essays by Lewis Mumford. Most chillingly, and I think bearing a specifically graphical witness to a new intellectual emptiness born of the constrictions of fascism, is the lack of titles and authors in the title page, which now is blank. There is, quite clearly and intentionally, I believe, a message here: the magazine is speechless; the editors tell us through the graphics.
- 31 A picture of the Tokyo reception was included in the July 1930 issue of *Kokusai kenchiku* (6, no.7). A huge frontispiece includes a large picture of Neutra, age 38, with the title of his talk, identical to the talk he delivered in Brussels to CIAM. Virtually the whole issue is devoted to his work, including the Ring Plan School, the Lovell Health House, the Jardinette Apartments, and the Zehlendorf Housing (with Mendelsohn), although there is also work presented by El Lissitzky, Kawakita, Kurata, Yamada, and "Prof. W. Gropius." Box 192, Richard and Dion Neutra Papers. See Jonathan M. Reynolds, *Maekawa Kunio* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 75, 270–271, n. 3, 4. From his dashed, handwritten letters in German, which confirm his hectic touring schedule, it is often difficult to decipher what he is saying; additionally, many Japanese words are misspelled, so interpretation and translation are difficult.
- 32 Letter from Neutra to "My treasure Dione," Tokyo, 10 June 1930, Cal Poly Pomona.
- 33 These three houses by Seigo Montona included his own house, constructed in Kyoto in 1929. It was included in 1957, *Docomomo Japan: the 100 Selections*.

- 34 Ueno Isaburo (Neutra reversed the name and misspelled it) was an exact contemporary of Neutra's who studied in Berlin and Vienna, visited the Bauhaus, and worked with Taut. Isaburo's wife, Felice Lizzi Rix, was a Vienna Werkstätte designer. Both became well-known designers and academicians. Seigo Motono, with Isaburo, founded the International Japanese Arts Society modeled on CIAM. Nakao Tamotsu was a co-founder of the Nihon Intanashonaru Kenchikukai (International Architecture Association of Japan). Morita Keiichi and Kikuji Ishimoto were two of six co-founders of the Bunriha Kenchikukai (Secessionist Architectural Society), which favored German Expressionism, especially the works of Hans Scharoun, Taut, and Mendelsohn. It especially lauded Mendelsohn's *Berliner Tageblatt*, the headquarters for one of Berlin's major newspapers, on which Neutra had worked as a draftsman/designer and also acted as a construction supervisor, which may have burnished Neutra's cachet in Japan.
- 35 Letter to [Dione?], 22 June 1930. Cal Poly Pomona.
- 36 Handwritten letters in German on ship or hotel paper to Dione, 2, 5, 10, 13 June 1930, Cal Poly Pomona.
- 37 Letter from Richard Neutra to his mother-in-law, 22 June 1930, Cal Poly Pomona.
- 38 Richard J. Neutra, "Japanische Wohnung, Ableitungen, Schwierigkeiten," *Die Form*, Heft 3, 15 March 1931, 92.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Neutra, "Japanische Wohnung," 93.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 *Tabis* are socks with differentiated big toes. The hairstyles Neutra refers to were too complicated to be done every day; these hairstyles were erected on a *negake*, a paper and silk form, secured with *kanzashi* and *kushi*, needles and combs. Given the history of diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, influenza, and typhoid in his own family, including himself, this observation is understandable. Certainly he was able to translate his experience into the innovations he implemented. Neutra, "Japanische Wohnung," 93.
- 44 Richard Neutra, "Neue Architektur in Japan" *Die Form*, Heft 9, 15 September 1931, 333–340. Today considered virtual icons of early Japanese Modernism, these included the Soviet Embassy under construction by Feuerstein, this time partnering with Tsuchiura; the just completed "Residence of the Count Kittsukawa" (the Kikkawa, by Horiguchi Sutemi); Kikuji Ishimoto's Klubhouse Asahi; the Mori Office Building and Shirokiya Department Store by Ishimoto, (whom Neutra calls the "most successful of them"). (Indeed, Kikuji Ishimoto, 1894–1963, studied at the Bauhaus and went on to become a nationally renowned architect in Japan.) Neutra also apparently visited a small house competition project by Nobu (Tsuchiura); an unidentified but masterful house by Kameki (Tsuchiura); the Osaka Rugby Stadium by T. Nakao (other name unavailable); the Star Bar in Kyoto by "Isaboro Ueno"; and a photo gallery by "N. Tsuchihashi." In any case, photographs of many views of all these important buildings, often snapshots in the same format and usually signed on the back, sometimes accompanying personal notes and observations, are included in UCLA Special Collections.
- 45 This is a condition perhaps reflected in the preponderance of communications towers that seem to accompany many municipal buildings in the 1920s and early 1930s. Here Neutra subtly applauds the shrewd business sense of Chinese developers and architects who were not so favorably impressed with European architectural trends. Instead, he writes, they appropriated American mass production gleaned from experience in San Francisco. The Chinese entrepreneur "subscribes to no foreign art magazines as does the Japanese architect," he wrote in "The Reconstruction of Chinese Towns," *Die Form*, Heft 5, 15 May 1932, 146.
- 46 Neutra, "Neue Architektur," 340. Neutra's formidable collection of images include work by Raymond and Feuerstein (The Rising Sun Petroleum Co.); Ishimoto Kikuji (the Asahi Club House in Kamakura); the expressionist Takizawa Mayumi (a tailor's shop in Tokyo); Mamoru Yamada, the Electrical Testing Office of the Traffic Ministry, Tokyo; Yamaguchi Bunzo, Feuerstein and Tsuchiura, the Soviet Embassy; Kameki Tsuchiura (Yoshida Residence); Masabumi Ito, Satō Takeo, Horiguchi Sutemi, House of Kikkiu, 1930.
- 47 Neutra, "Neue Architektur," 339. Schindler used sliding doors with transparent panels at his house, the Schindler Chase House (the King's Road House), 1922, and, of course, traditional shoji and fusuma screens are framed in wood. Neutra was soon to incorporate such "schiebenfenster" in steel for the 1934 Beard House, quite likely the first commercial steel-and-glass sliders in America.

- 48 Ibid., 337. Though Neutra says the Yamada building is pictured, it is not. He could be referring to the Central Telegraph Office, Tokyo, 1925, or to the 1929/30 Electrical Laboratory.
- 49 Dione Neutra, *Richard Neutra: Promise and Fulfillment, 1919–1932* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 193.
- 50 Richard Neutra, "Foreword," in David H. Engel, *Japanese Gardens for Today* (Tokyo and Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1959), xii, xiii.
- 51 See Barbara Lamprecht, *Richard Neutra—Complete Works* (Cologne and Los Angeles: Taschen, 2000), 50, 52, quoting a Neutra interview conducted by Chris Byal and Jim Young for *Opus Magazine*, published by the then California State Polytechnic College, Kellog-Voorhis, Pomona, Spring 1970, 15.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Arthur Drexler and Thomas S. Hines, *The Architecture of Richard Neutra* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 51.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Neutra, "Foreword," in Engel, xii.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Helmut Hentrich, "Japanese Living Culture," *Die Form*, Heft 7, July 1933, 200, and Marta Heisinger, "Japanese Gardens," 202.
- 58 Neutra, "Foreword," in Engel, xiii.