



## Introducing the collaborative design method from Europe to Japan in the modern time

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### SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to understand the importing the collaborative design method from the Western countries to Japan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of collaborative design method was born in the 1920s in Europe when CIAM was organized by the modern architects. Today, the collaborative design method has a role in carrying out several types of urban design projects in the European cities and Japan. In order to understand the history of collaborative method as a modern movement of Japanese architects, we focus on how the collaborative design method was accepted by the Japanese modern architects. We discuss following subjects ; 1) summarizing the concept of collaboration, and collaborative urban design projects in Europe, 2) describing the history of introducing the concept of collaborative design method in Japan, 3) analyzing the aims and characteristics of the collaborative urban design examples in Japan.

As the result of this study, we came to understand that the modern Japanese architects who worked with Le Corbusier introduced the idea of collaboration, and the aesthetics of collaboration was found in the Korean folk-craft. On the other hand, the collaborative idea was understood together with the concept of democracy after the Second World War in Japan.

### 1.Introduction : Purpose and backgrounds of this study

The aim of this paper is to discuss interpretation of the collaborative urban design method in Japan. This country is an Asian country that has been making mega-cities for more than half century. Many kinds of urban environmental issues were caused by the rapid urbanization, under the making of high-industrialized society. Rapid urbanization of the mega-cities in the world is a serious issue in the globalization, relating to environmental issues on the urban periphery and inner city areas, because the increasing urban population in these mega-cities brings many kinds of unsustainable conditions to these cities. Asian countries and the south courtiers, which are not European countries, are facing difficult urban situations (Westendroff, 2005). From the early modern time, meanwhile, European architects and city planners have been using collaborative urban design process in order to control urban environment and expanding of the cities. In particular, the urban development bodies in the European cities have been using collaborative design process for making social housing districts and for inner city re-development projects from the early modern time. Collaboration was an aspect of modern movement in urbanism.

Since Japan has been making high industrial society, there are still many urban development projects. In order to deal with urban development issues, Japanese architects and city-planners are using collaborative urban design method in order to resolve urban issues from the end of the high economy development periods. The experiences from these two non-European countries will be able to show you possibilities of using the collaborative urban design process for a solution for the expanding mega-cities. In this paper, we will discuss how the collaborative design system are introduced and used by the architects and city-planners in this country.

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## 2. The Master Architect in Japan

Japanese urban development bodies have been using the 'Master Architect Design Method (MA-Method in this paper)', which is a kind of collaborative urban design process, since at the end of 1980s. The master-architect, in the Western countries, is the architect who is in charge of city planning. The architect, who is the designer of monumental building is also called master-architect. Famous architects, such as Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and these kinds of great architects are called master-architect. The word, on the other hand, the 'Master Architect' in Japan and Korea, indicates different meaning. The definition of the 'Master Architect' is not clear, but generally, following roles in the design process is called for in Japan: The architect (s), who is/are in charge of making collaborative design process is called 'the Master Architect'. We call in this paper 'master architect' the urban designer or architect who has a profound knowledge about urban design and landscape design. He/she plays a role in coordinating collective form design in terms of urban design together with collaborating architects, engineers and clients in order to create a coherent collective form. Collaborative urban design method does not always deal with all kinds of urban issues, but this method helps to create 'the city within the city' as collective forms of architecture (Kitao, 2005).

## 3. Collaborative projects in the modern movement

The 1920s is the period when the collective building projects by modern architects were developed in Weimer Republic, Sweden and the Netherlands. Architectural concept of collaboration was seen in the movement in the Netherlands. The architectural group 'De Stijl' had collaborative solution at their movement (Van Rossem, 1996). Urban extension projects in Amsterdam were also collaborative projects in which Berlage played a role in giving directions of architectural design while collaborating with Amsterdam school architects. In the process of the Amsterdam projects, collaborative attitude by the architects was very important. In Sweden, factionalist architects worked by cooperative way from the 1920s, for example, the HSB (the National Association of Tenant's Savings and Building Society) was playing important role in creating modern housing projects in this country, contributing to make welfare society (Hall, 1991 and Egelius, 1990). And architects office of Kooperativa Förbundet (KF) played very important role in promoting collaborative movement through the architecture in the 1930s projects in Sweden of the 1930s (see fig.1&2). The word 'collaboration' was hired by the CIAM congress first of all. The starting member of CIAM tried to achieve the development of architects' collaboration. Le Corbusier and several architects discussed activities of the CIAM, and they described this 'congress' as being 'collaboration' or 'working together'. The concept of architects' collaboration appeared at the beginning of the 1920s (Giedion, 1969).

In Weimer Republic several collaborative projects were seen. The most important project was Weissenhof Siedlung in Stuttgart. Mies Von Der Rohe played a role in planning the master plan and directed collaborator architects to decide the architectural expression of modernism. After, the project of Siemensstadt in Berlin was done by W. Gropius and others (1931). The housing exposition of Breslau in Poland by Adolf Rading and Heinrich Lauterbach and others (1929). Several collaborative projects were operated by the Deutscher Werkbund. We are able to see relations between art and crafts movement and their modern activity, in relation with collaboration.

It was the 1945 that Walter Gropius proposed an architectural concept of democracy in the manifest of TAC, standing for The Architects Collaborative. This architectural concept succeeds modern architectural movement before the war in Europe. Walter Gropius is a key architect who started the architects' collaboration, aiming a reconstruction of society after the Second World War. He shared the same architectural purpose with CIAM, which started to make re-construction projects during the cold war period (Mumford, 2000). His manifest of TAC was the first clear concept that leads the collaborative architectural projects. According to his remarks, he did not like "boss style architect office", but he preferred more even and flat organization (Gropius, 1945). He appealed

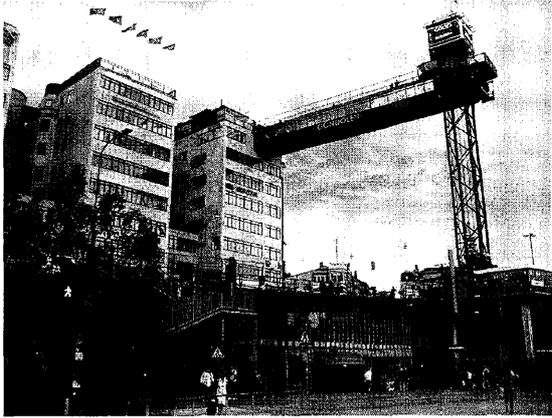


Fig.1 The head Quarter Office of 'Kooperativa Förbundet (KF)', Stockholm, Sweden

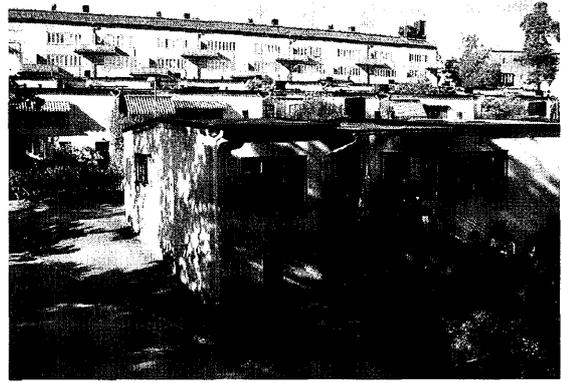


Fig.2 Housing of the Workers, designed by KF, Kvarnholmen, Sweden

Photos by the Author

for collaborating in the reconstruction of society and cities in the postwar period. He intended to organize an architects' group by teamwork. He and his collaborators tried to create 'Total Architecture' which is concerned with the whole environmental development and demands' collaboration on the broadest basis.

#### 4.The idea of collaboration in the modern period of Japan

Japanese society has been learning about and accepting western countries cultures and civilizations since the beginning of the Meiji period (1864–1909). This also happened in the field of urban design and architecture. An urban block looks like an urban street in the Victorian London was developed in Tokyo. The Japanese government employed a German architect firm in 1886. This architect firm was called Ende & Bockmann. They designed a part of the governmental area in Tokyo. These projects are the early examples, showing the first phase of understanding modern European city planning. Actually, at this phase, many Japanese architects designed in the style of European architecture. In this way, Japanese culture caught up with the western culture in the Taisho period (1909–1924) when democratic movements were seen in the society. In this period, Japanese Europeanized culture was born in Japan. This is called 'Taisho romanticism'. Since then, several westernized collective forms appeared in the form of university buildings, residential districts, governmental areas and other projects, meaning that these projects were designed following western architectural languages. This is the second phase of imitation European city planning.

Through the Westernization of Japanese society, meanwhile, the Japanese society got modern technology and science. By using this, the Japanese government extended its military, economy and political power to the Asian countries. The Japanese government occupied a part of China and whole country of the Great Korean Empire. In the domain of city planning, the Japanese colonial government used the land readjustment projects, which were from Germany, in order to rule Japanese colonial cities. The land readjustment project was the city planning system in the Japanese cities. Japanese colonial politics brought modern European city planning system to these Asian countries. We are able to say this is the third phase of using European city planning. The Japanese government occupied Chosen peninsula in 1910. By this history, Korean cities and Japanese cities had been sharing the same city planning method during the modern period.

European urbanism was not introduced until 1924. A Japanese architect, Jyunpei Nakamura, who went to study architecture at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, introduced urbanism. When he was in Paris, he went to see an exhibition of the works done by Le Corbusier at the Salon d'Automne in 1923. After he came back to Japan, he published a book on the city rebuilding plan of Tokyo, because he was requested to make a city-planning project after the Kanto earthquake, took place in 1923. His idea was not realized but he introduced his city planning

method and theory. He quoted a perspective drawing of 'Città per tre milioni di abitanti (1922)' in his book in order to explain urbanism. He explained that the urbanism would be studied wider point of view, in which the area of this study was larger than town planning and architecture (Nakamura, 1924). The European urbanism came to Japan with Le Corbusier's works.

## 5. The idea of working together in the internationalization

International architecture movement was born in the modern period of Japan, as well. Seigo Motono, who was a professor at Kyoto Institute of Technology, started an international architectural organization in 1927, and he asked for cooperation between architects, because he and his colleagues were interested in internationalization of the society (Fujita, 1999). He and his colleagues addressed their idea in the manifesto of the International Architectural Association of Japan. They defined their activity to resolve the issues relating to architecture by collaborative mind. This association enhanced modern movement in Japan. Walter Gropius and Bruno Taut were the members of this association. Since association invited Bruno Taut, he decided to come to Japan from Nazi Germany. His discovering modernity in the traditional Japanese architecture contributed to enhance the modern movement in the country.

While, the idea of collaboration was found in the Arts and craft movement in Japan, making contact with Korean culture. A Japanese Professor of literature found collaborative approach in the traditional culture in Korea. The theoretical approach on the collaboration was done by Muneyoshi Yanagi (1889–1961). He promoted Japanese art and crafts movement in the modern period. He found a sense of esthetic from Korean folk-art. He felt that that an individual does not have enough knowledge and skill in order to create something. He explained limit of the individual knowledge. Thus, his idea was to make the world in which the people do not need to compete each other, but the people are working together. In order to work together he promoted to make collaborative groups. Fore example, he and his friend made the craftsmen group in Kyoto. He said that 'the collaborative group sends us a way to get the freedom together with order'. He used the word 'the social esthetic' in his studies (Yanagi, 1928).

In 1940, the Japanese government decided to invite an architect from Paris in order to modernize Japanese art and crafts. The architect was Charlotte Perriand, who was a staff of Le Corbusier. When she was in Japan, Kunio Maekawa, Jyunzo Sakakura and Muneyoshi Yanagi guided her to travel in Japan (Matukuma, 2007). Maekawa, and Sakakura were working at Le Corbusier's office around 1930. We are able to say that this trip made the important chance for the Japanese modern architects to meet the Arts and Crafts Movement. The role of Muneyoshi Yanagi was very important in the modern architecture movement in terms of collaboration.

## 6. Reconstruction projects after the Second World War

Some ideas, concepts and movements appeared before the Second World War, however, we had to wait for the concrete collaborative projects after the war. During the war, 119 Japanese cities were demolished, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese government decided to make the basic direction for rebuilding these demolished cities in 1945. The department of city rebuilding [戦災復興院] was established by the cabinet at the time. This urban rebuilding department selected typical 12 model city rebuilding projects in 1946, because it was very huge work to make adequate plan by analysis by the limited specialists (Morimura, 1976). This department requested professors and city planners to make the rebuilding plans of 12 model cities (Aomori, Kagoshima, Yahata etc...). Many specialists participated to make the plans for these bombed cities. These projects gave a good chance to create the modern cities in Japan, but the government, which was controlled by the General Headquarters/Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, decided to diminish the rebuilding projects from 1949. At the beginning of the city-rebuilding project, many architects and planners contributed to these projects, but finally

bureaucrat took over these city development projects from the architects and city-planners (Kawakami, 1976). Seeing a re-building project of Tokyo, many modern city planners and architects names are listed. We suppose city rebuilding projects were done by collaborative splits, under the democratic aspects after the War. A rare example of collaborative urban project was seen in Yahata City. Togo Murano and Gunpei Matsuda designed some perimeter block buildings in the centre of the city (Kitao, 2005).

## 7. Developing collaborative process through the modern architecture movement

In the modern architecture history of Japan, we are not able to ignore the contribution from Kunio Maekawa. After he came back from Paris to Tokyo, he started to work at the architecture office of Antonin Raymond, who was an American architect, came to Japan with Frank Lloyd Wright. After Maekawa quieted Raymond's office he launched his firm in which Kenzo Tange participated. Maekawa started his collaborative approach in order to create architectural works in the 1950s. Maekawa established a collaborative group, which was called 'MID (Maekawa Institute of Design Group)'. He intended to enhance modern architecture movement by using this group. He felt that the European modern architecture movement was playing important role in the society on the steady basement of accumulated technology, but he did not find any strong and stable basement of the Japanese modern building methods. He established the MID group in order to develop basic modern building technology, and he hoped to share the modern building method with other modern architects. This group was to support Maekawa to create modern architecture (Matsukuma, 2007). After the war, he was looking for the significances and roles of the architects in the society for rebuilding the Japanese society. His intention of his role in the society is similar to the idea of Walter Gropius after the war.

A participant of Maekawa's firm concluded Maekawa's architectural approach as follows : Maekawa did not think that the architectural works would not be completed by using the knowledge/skills of only one architect. He was thinking of his roles and his contributions in order to achieve his works together with his staffs (Kito, 1990 & Hashimoto). Jyunzo Sakakura thought the same issue (Matsukuma, 2006). Two Japanese modern architects were thinking of the limited ability of one architect in order to carry out architectural work, in particular, for the city-planning projects. When these two architects were working at the atelier of Le Corbusier, he made many modern city-planning projects, in which Jyunzo Sakakura and Kunio Maekawa could have felt something about the ability and knowledge of individual architect. After the War, the idea of democracy/social-democracy became common by the Japanese, Maekawa was also thinking of this point. He denied having his absolute power to his staffs as their boss (Kito, 1990). As we cited before, this way of thinking was proposed by W. Gropius when he established TAC. Gropius's idea was introduced in an architecture magazine (Kokusaikenchiku, 1951), modern Japanese architects could have paid attention to this issue of architects' collaborative, because his concept had to do with democracy.

During establishing democratic new Japanese society, in the 1950s, Masato Odaka participated to the MID and he contributed to design the education centre of Fukushima by citizen participation. In 1954, Maekawa build his office by himself, and named MID building. In 1955, in order to promote international exchange program, The International House of Japan was designed by Maekawa, Sakakura and Yoshimura by collaborative process (see Fig3.). In the same year, Le Corbusier came to Japan for his project, The National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo. Maekawa, Sakakura and Yoshizaka (who was a staff of Le Corbusier), supported his work by their collaboration.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

As the result of this study, we came to understand that the modern Japanese architects who worked with Le Corbusier introduced the idea of collaboration, and the aesthetics of collaboration was found in the Korean folk-

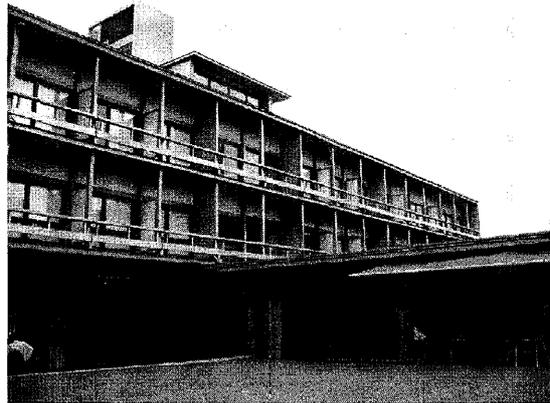


Fig3. The International House, Tokyo, designed by J. Sakakura, J. Yoshimura and K. Maekawa  
Photo by the Author

craft before the Second World War.

On the other hand, the collaborative idea got together with the concept of democracy after the war, and the metabolism architects and their collaborators used collaborative process for the urban development projects.

Recently the idea of the Master Architect Design Method is called for by the Korean Society. A Japanese architect went to Korea in order to carry out collaborative urban design projects as the Master Architect (note 1 & 2). Also a book on the Japanese MA-Method was published in 2005 (Kitao, 2006). Exchanging ideas and methods between these two countries are activated. In Seoul and Tokyo the urban population is still increasing as same as the mega-cities of the world. These two countries have been sharing similar urban issues, from the high economy development period. The issues on housing environment and urban landscape have been a problem. In order to improve these issues, the collaborative urban design method, MA-Method, is used in these countries, but the purpose of using this process is not always the same. In Japan, collaborative urban design was applied to make somehow commercial orientated purpose. The first MA-Method project provided expensive housings. Architects design knowledge was used for making the urban design project unique. Prof Ohno pointed out the Japanese MA-Method was adapted to the consuming type of society (Ohno, 2000). Architecture expressions were expected to show some regional aspects by the collaborative (sometimes comparative) situation. Even the architects came from Tokyo to a local area.

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## Note

note 1 : The author conducted the interview for Prof. Fujimoto on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007 at his office in Tokyo.

note 2 : In Japan, we started research project on the Korean City Planning System from 2007. Some symposiums and conferences are held, for example, 'Korea-Japan International Workshop on Land-Use Planning for Urbanized Society' took place at the University of Tokyo in 2006.

## 和文概要

### 近代日本における協働設計手法のヨーロッパからの導入過程

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本論は、協働設計手法が日本の建築と都市デザインにどのようにヨーロッパから導入されたのかに関して歴史的な経緯を明らかにする目的を持つ。特に20世紀に入り、CIAMなどの近代建築運動がヨーロッパに展開し、協働の概念はドイツ、オランダ、スウェーデンなど各国に広まっていった。そこで、協働が日本の社会でどのように展開したのかを、建築家のヨーロッパの近代的価値を理解していった過程から明らかにする。戦前には、ヨーロッパのアーバニズムが中村順平により紹介されたが、設計方法にまでは至らなかった。しかし、戦後、民主主義の展開過程において、西洋の民主主義の方法や思想が社会に定着してゆくなか、近代建築建築家達は、民主主義的な価値観を設計プロセスに反映させるための方法を実践した。特に、ル・コルビジェのアトリエに働いた経験のある建築家が、協働設計手法の日本での戦後の展開に大きな役割を担った事が明らかになった。しかしこうした理解の背景には、韓国の伝統的な民芸から発見された、協働の美学の発見という過程が背景にある。現在、韓国と日本の間では、この協働設計手法を巡って国際的な交流が展開している。

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