

Japanese Sensitivity of Space

日本

Nippon



"In Japan, there are aspects and elements observable that constitute the "Japanese-ness" in its cities, architecture, gardens, painting, and literature; these can all be tied to Japan's history in its development of a unique sense of space socially, culturally and aesthetically."

--Taeg Nishimoto

On Tuesday, April 13 UTSA's East Asia Institute hosted Associate Dean Taeg Nishimoto from the College of Architecture to give a lecture at UTSA's Main Campus. Prof. Nishimoto was born in Osaka, Japan. He received his undergraduate degree from Waseda University in Tokyo and earned his master's in architecture from Cornell University. Prior to joining UTSA he taught at Columbia University, Pratt Institute, Temple University, Texas A&M University, and UT Arlington.

Prof. Nishimoto has won many awards and honors and his built and un-built works have been widely published. The

title of Prof. Nishimoto's presentation was "Japanese Sensitivity of Space".

"In Japan there are aspects and elements observable that constitute the "Japanese-ness" in its cities, architecture, gardens, painting, and literature; these can all be tied to Japan's history in its development of a unique sense of space socially, culturally and aesthetically," said Prof. Nishimoto.

Prof. Nishimoto's talked about how the Idea of space is used in Japan. He covered many aspects of this including: space, time, distance, articulation, juxtaposition, boundary, threshold.



- Space
- Time
- Distance
- Articulation
- Juxtaposition
- Boundary
- Threshold
- Light & Shadow
- Content & Surface

Light and shadow, and content and surface.

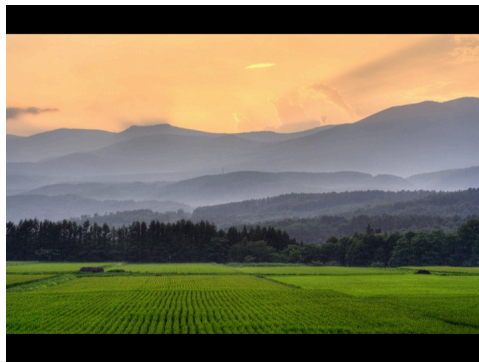
Prof. Nishimoto began with the history of Japan and how the effect on living on an island was deeply enrooted into Japanese design and thought. He showed how many designs had the island feel incorporated in it with water added to the design of gardens. He explained how the Japanese put in their gardens and designs images of how they viewed the world. When Zen Buddhism was brought from China to Japan, the Japanese began making Zen gardens where again the idea of water and islands

were incorporated into their design of the gravel as the water and rocks as the islands.

Prof. Nishimoto then went into the use of distance in the Japanese thought. He explained the concept of how they use the background into their design of gardens. This is called “*shakei*” (borrowed scenery) where the surrounding mountains and trees outside of the garden is used and plays a big part of the whole concept of the garden. This has been shown in many art pieces from Japan with the use of Mt. Fuji in the background of these works of art. The use of sound is also used in this borrowing

technique, where sound is heard but not seen so it gives the idea of something is there but is hidden. This is important for the resonance of that sound gives creation to thought which is used in meditations.

This brings Prof. Nishimoto to his point on the use of space in the Japanese way of thought. He says it like this, “What is not there is the concept of Japanese space”. This means that in Japanese art and design the impression of something being there is implied without it actually being there.





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The lack of something, brings an essence of thought that something is there is the Japanese way of thought. He went on to how Japanese use the space they do have to create their own boundaries, which is important to the life of everyone in Japan, he used examples of this with how families stake their claim of space in parks with blankets during *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing), also with bed bunks where many sleep together in bunks divided only by a few inches between them. Not only is this used with people but with other things like food, the bento box lunches are divided up with boundaries to keep food away from each other.

Prof. Nishimoto gave a wonderful presentation with beautiful images to help explain his ideas and thoughts. He helped explain the Japanese way of thought and how through history the use of space has been used to the best potential in the way the Japanese design many things. His lecture was very educational and also very philosophical as well, it is very interesting how he explained the way Japanese use and manipulate the space they have to maximize the most out of it.



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