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House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930, by Jordan Sand. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, 512 pp., \$65.00, £41.95 (hardcover ISBN 0-674-01218-6)

For over a century, the traditional Japanese house has loomed large in the architectural imagination. Frank Lloyd Wright, for instance, praised Japanese houses where he had little but scorn for works of the contemporary West. He admired their spaces and materials, writing, ‘The simple Japanese house with its fences and utensils is the *revelation* of wood. Nowhere else may wood be so profitably studied for its natural possibilities as a major architectural material’ (Wright 1962: 88). Wright’s contemporaries Ralph Adams Cram, an advocate of Gothic architecture, and Charles and Henry Greene, the remarkable arts and crafts figures, shared his enthusiasm for things Japanese; European modernist architects such as Walter Gropius and Bruno Taut later produced their own interpretations of Japanese houses. Evidence of the persistent appeal of Japanese houses to a broader audience can be found in the publishing history of Edward Morse’s sober and carefully observed *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*; first published in 1886, it remains in print today, an estimable run for a book on a then-obscure subject.

This overseas interest in traditional Japanese houses developed at the same time that the houses themselves were changing, a situation perhaps now too familiar to deem ironic. Yet relatively few scholars have examined the relationship between houses and modernity during the crucial Meiji and Taisho periods. With admirable thoroughness, Jordan Sand’s *House and Home in Modern Japan* addresses this lack. By addressing houses and households as constructs at the intersection of cultural, social, intellectual, and architectural discourses, Sand gives meaning to the spaces, forms, and technology of houses. Conversely, he shows how the matrix of discourses in the Meiji and Taisho periods created new environments on both large (urban) and small (interior) scales. *House and Home* is thus equally sociocultural history and architectural history. This review emphasizes the position of *House and Home* within the literature of the latter,

although Sand's book will be of equal use to scholars of almost any subfield of modern history in Japan.

Historians of Meiji and Taisho architecture have frequently concentrated on large-scale institutional works of the type that drew the explicit sponsorship of the Meiji government. This has been particularly true of the rather thin body of English-language scholarship, for instance David Stewart's *The Making of a Modern Japanese Architecture* and Dallas Finn's *Meiji Revisited*. Standard Japanese-language histories of modern Japanese architecture, such as Fujimori Terunobu's *Nihon no Kindai Kenchiku* (The Modern Architecture of Japan, 1993), cover architect-designed houses but pay less attention to the broader currents that produced changes in more typical houses.

Among works focusing on domestic architecture, *Jūtaku Kindaishi* (The Modern History of Houses, 1969), edited by Ōta Hirotarō, focuses on the issues of technology, style, and construction that occupied early historians of modern Japanese architecture. Uchida Seizō's *Nihon no Kindai Jūtaku* (Modern Japanese Houses, 1992) covers some of the topics treated in *House and Home*, but Uchida's approach is more typical of architectural historians: he places architects and other individuals in the foreground and, while not inattentive to social developments, generally sees residential architecture in terms of buildings and individuals rather than as a locus of competing social and intellectual phenomena. In contrast, Sand's book is characterized by the assumption that a full appreciation of houses and households requires an analysis of the surrounding matrix of competing discourses.

The ten discrete topics of *House and Home* defy a simple synopsis; no brief review can do justice to the remarkable range of material. Let me instead outline the general argument and then examine a representative section in relation to several major architectural themes. Treating numerous episodes from the 1890s through the 1930s, Sand traces both the 'genealogy of a private sphere of everyday life, or *seikatsu*' (p. 353) and the related but not congruent development of its container, the house. By granting equal time to both strands, Sand presents a narrative that conceives the built environment not simply in terms of space and form—the usual terms of architecture—but as a complex and fleeting social artifact.

Sand begins with early formulations of Japanese domesticity in the 1890s as reformers sought to produce households that better fit their visions of modern Japan. This was the time when the

concept of ‘home’ emerged: ‘Although the basic forms of domestic life were not themselves new, the notion of “home” as an intimate space sequestered from society and centered on parents and children was alien’ (p. 21). He then examines how the modern role of the *shufu*, or housewife, developed within the Meiji set of professions that included medicine, hygiene, industrial management, and architecture. This new profession of housewifery reconfigured the spaces, tasks, and actors of the bourgeois home. These changes in the conception and content of homes were related to changes in spaces and forms, although these relationships were never simple equations of cause and effect. As Sand emphasizes, what tied the domestic interiors to the discourses on home and housewifery was the bourgeois context and not a shared set of goals or actors.

From household interiors, Sand moves to the larger landscape of suburban residential development, in particular Kobayashi Ichizō’s Hankyū developments around Osaka. These private developments offered a new paradigm of occupying land and also of imagining the household. The physical distance from the city entailed a separation from the ties and habits of urban life. The Hankyū railroads and suburban developments were in turn related to the development of a mass society and the reform of middle-class homes. Sand emphasizes the variety of means and motives involved in any housing-related development. Prominent players here included architects, publishers, retailers, domestic scientists, and governmental organizations such as the Everyday Life Reform League.

Two examples from the section on ‘Culture Villages’ illustrate *House and Home*’s treatment of several issues fundamental to architecture in modern Japan: the roles of the West, the expansion of the sphere of architecture, and the relationship between high and common architecture.

In 1922, architects designed fourteen ‘reformed houses’ (*kairyō Jūtaku*) to be erected as a Culture Village (*bunka mura*) at the Peace Memorial Exposition in Tokyo. The Culture Village, along with slightly earlier developments, reveals that ‘housing and urban policy became topics of discussion among architects, few of whom had previously shown professional interest in the problems of any social group beyond that of their elite clients’ (p. 174). Although Sand does not explicitly make the point, the history of architecture in modern Japan perhaps is best seen not as the development of styles or technology, but as the struggle to define the nature and position of the field. Styles and technology could be imported relatively easily, but the social role of

architecture—its purview, users, and designers—could not. By placing architects in relation to other fields, Sand begins to outline the changing contours of the field of architecture. In his discussions of other topics as well, Sand emphasizes architects' roles as intermediaries between disparate figures. This perspective distinguishes *House and Home* from the many writings on architecture that treat architects as independent creators.

For architecture no less than for other fields, interpretations of the West have been crucial to modern development in Japan. Similarities in style and technology allow Western influences to be inferred, but clarifying their meanings requires analyzing their motives. In the late Meiji period, designers, consumers, and developers became more sophisticated traders of Western imagery. They used Western precedents to address particular Japanese situations and desires rather than to create imitations of Western environments. For instance, the architects involved in the Culture Village and other house-related projects believed that the housing problem in Japan involved not only a shortage of housing, as in Europe, but also the difficulties of the 'double life' (*nijū seikatsu*). The housing problem in Japan was, on the one hand, inflected by international developments such as the post-World War I housing shortage and, on the other, grounded in specifically Japanese conditions.

This was equally true for Den'en Chōfu, the Tokyo suburb developed by Shibusawa Ei'ichi's Garden City Company. The radiating streets and central open space of Den'en Chōfu at first glance appear to be derived from the diagrams of Ebenezer Howard's 1902 *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. These figures had been republished in a book on garden cities by the Home Ministry. Yet the similarities between Den'en Chōfu and Howard's diagrams belied the fundamental differences in concept. Howard imagined the garden city as a self-sufficient entity founded on socialist ideas. In contrast, Shibusawa Ei'ichi and his son Hideo developed Den'en Chōfu as a bedroom suburb for white-collar Tokyo workers. If their goals were more mundane than Howard's, though, their garden city imagery still drew on utopian visions. As Sand writes, 'Western models were less important as prescriptions for urban planning and management than as visual and sensual spurs to the imagination of the developers and buyers. Here too, the exotic occident sustained a dreamscape' (p. 237).

Another major issue of architecture in modern Japan is the tension between the avant-garde and the vernacular. The schism between the two types of residences is reflected in the academic

world, where the field of modern architectural history is generally distinct from the field of *minka* (folk house) studies. Sand notes that when white-collar urban residents relocated to the suburbs in the 1920s, they were likely to live neither in typical historical urban dwellings nor in the relatively large and exotic houses designed by modern architects. He turns to the surveys carried out by Kon Wajirō to examine the houses of one Tokyo suburban neighborhood, noting that 20% of the houses were in the ‘culture style’ (*bunkashiki*) and 5% in a ‘Japanese and Western’ (*wa + yō*) style. Because the survey was restricted to exterior appearance, what Kon cannot do is provide evidence of the houses’ interiors—the layout, use of spaces, family structure, gender roles—or of the residents’ attitudes toward their lifestyles and residences.

This observation brings up two general points. First, Sand takes as his subject the difficult-to-define middle class of Japan, examining a remarkable range of figures: architects, government officials, developers, educators, carpenters, and even a feng shui expert. His final chapter examines the competition among the various groups and individuals that offered visions of everyday living and residential architecture. Yet although consumers partake of these discourses, they generally appear as relatively passive participants (or as exceptional figures, such as Naomi from Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s *A Fool’s Love*). Sand concentrates on the supply curve of the market for house and home. Perhaps this weighting is inevitable given the nature of the topic and the available sources. Rare is the typical consumer who makes public his or her attitudes toward everyday life, whereas architects, intellectuals, and corporations sought careers and fortunes in doing so. All the same, given Sand’s desire to explicate middle-class discourses and his clear mastery of the relevant literature, a broader attempt to examine common consumer reactions might make his narrative even more complete.

A second concluding point pertains to the remarkable breadth and detail of *House and Home*. Sand moves surely through a vast store of literature from disparate fields, from Kon Wajirō’s surveys to articles in women’s magazines, to promotional pamphlets for real estate. The density of information makes each chapter read almost like a condensed book of its own. Because of the clarity of the book’s central theme, the relevance of each discrete topic remains clear. At the same time, the sheer mass of information sometimes makes it difficult for the reader to connect topics to each other or to create a clear hierarchy of points. Ultimately, though, such cavils can hardly detract from the quality of the scholarship. *House and Home* is an ambitious, exhaustively researched treatise that will reward any scholar of life in modern Japan. For historians looking

for models on how to write about architecture as a social phenomenon, it will prove eye opening and essential.

References

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