

The Founding of Bunriha Kenchiku Kai: “Art” and “Expression” in Early Japanese Architectural Circle, 1888-1920

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Six members of the Department of Architecture, Imperial University of Tokyo, all from the class of 1920, organised *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai* [Secessionist Architectural Group] [1] before their graduation. We should call them the first architectural movement started in Japan, considering the inaugural declaration included in their *Collected Works* published upon their first exhibition. The group claimed that “architecture is an art” in many of their writings; however, such claim is not apparent in the group’s name or in their declaration. This paper analyses the theoretical backgrounds of their claim, referring to the writings published in Japanese architectural magazines of those days.

Bunriha has been regarded as a Japanese wing of contemporary expressionism which originated in the German-speaking world. Our analyses focus on their view of “expression” and the two historical backgrounds: first, the perception of “Art” and “Beauty”, the cause of the then barren controversy, that formed from the influences within and out of the architectural circle, and second, the scopes of the conceptions of “expression” which determined the validity of each argument. To conclude in advance, we will find the perceptions varied, old and new, within the *Bunriha*. Therefore, we can regard the founding of *Bunriha* as a hinge to pursue the perception of “art” in Japanese architectural circle, in the respect that both views were united to a spectacular appearance through the media, and that their movement itself was a defiance of another standpoint.

This paper suggests to review and revise the common understandings of today that: the argument between after-mentioned “*Kozoha*” [Structure Advocates] and *Bunriha* was a dispute between *Meiji* and *Showa* mainstreams and *Taisyō* rebellious minds [2], and the *Bunriha* has been treated as theoretically negligible in the point of art for art’s sake [3]. Since the introduction of architecture to Japan, did we see dichotomous schemes between utility and beauty, or structural mechanics and expression, behind these understandings? The founding of *Bunriha* was the dawning of the viewpoint that surpasses such dichotomy. Thus we pay more attention to Morita Keiichi (1895-1983) than to Horiguchi Sutemi (1895-1984), a member of *Bunriha*, and to his predecessor Goto Keiji (1883-1919), who have been referred many times before as typical *Taishō* architects. We use the term “early” to indicate the time period from the starting of the Japanese architecture until the actualisation of the skepticism toward the above dichotomy.

The first section introduces the theoretical framework that defined the arguments since the introduction of architecture into Japan. The second section discusses Sano Toshikata (1890-1956), the precursor of “*Kozoha*”, and Noda Toshihiko (1891-1929), the so-called adversary of *Bunriha*. The third section focuses on Goto, the one who refuted Noda immediately after Noda

voiced his opinion and became a theoretical predecessor of Horiguchi. In the fourth section we will analyse the arguments of Horiguchi and Morita who discussed “art” and “beauty” in the founding of *Bunriha* 5 years later to Noda and Goto to discover more theoretical potential in Morita than Horiguchi, though the latter was the one regarded as the leader of *Bunriha*. Finally, section five summarises the standpoints above with a focus on their view of “expression”.

1. The Concept of “Architecture” and “Art”

The two understandings that dichotomised architecture were evident since the introduction of architecture to Japan. One was the “structure” or “utility” which meant structural mechanics or the rooms’ equipments and arrangements, and the other was the “beauty” or “ornament” which meant styles and exterior proportions. Such dichotomy was already recognised by Kawai Kozo in 1888, the year following the publishing of the first Japanese architectural magazine *Kenchiku Zasshi* (The Architectural Magazine; published as *JABS* now) by *Zoka Gakkai* (present Architectural Institute of Japan; AIJ) in 1887 [4]. The source that influenced Kawai could be Josiah Conder (1852-1920), a professor of *Kobu Daigakko* [Imperial College of Engineering], for similar understandings were found in Kawai’s two-year predecessor Tatsuno Kingo (1854-1919), who studied in London from Conder’s teacher William Burgess and later became a professor of Imperial University of Tokyo.

As this dichotomy established itself, people began to take sides. An example would be President Tatsuno Kingo’s lecture in AIJ annual meeting of 1914, in which he suggested that structure and art do not go together; he reinforced the division between the art and science. Moreover, he said there was a growing concern over the future of the structural aspect of architecture [5]. Shin’ichiro Okada (1883-1932), an alumnus of Imperial University of Tokyo and professor of Waseda University at the time, argued against Tatsuno in the same meeting. While he introduced the formation of “new architecture” in Europe in response to the shift of material and structure, he apprehended that let the architecture be divided into two, in today’s scene the world of art was rather neglectful [6]. We will explore the influence of this dichotomy on the perceptions of architecture in later Japan.

Apart from this, there were those who supported the trichotomy of architecture. Kuroda Hoshin (1885-1967), an art critic and alumnus of the Department of Philosophy, Imperial University of Tokyo, made critical remarks on architecture and established a position of architecture critic outside of architectural institution. He proposed the “science, utility, and beauty” to be the trichotomy of architecture which correspond to the valuation bases “truth, goodness, and beauty” [7]. This was different from the well-known three axes “firmness, utility, and beauty” by Vitruvius [8]. While the name of Otsuka Yasuji, an aesthetician, is mentioned to have influenced Kuroda, their perspectives of architecture were not congruent [9]. To Kuroda the “truth” was to not feign material and structure, and to exclude ornament, while the “goodness” was to meet the needs of buildings or rooms. In regards to the “beauty”, he barely managed to provide nested classification of “beauty” by truth, goodness, and beauty. “Beauty”’s central definition is only “formal beauty” principled by “unity in multiplicity”. Furthermore, he altered his definition 5 years later [10], which indicates his struggle to determine “beauty” in

architecture. From his argument until Noda Toshihiko, there were no arguments that supported trichotomy [11].

2. The Emergence of “Structure-Advocates”

Following the above emerged those who were found as “*Kozoha* (Structure-advocates)”. They were Sano Toshikata who was promoted to professor of Imperial University of Tokyo in 1915, associate professor Uchida Yoshikazu (1885-1972) and Noda Toshihiko who graduated the university in 1915. They valued the study of structure as of principle importance. Many of their writings focused on antiseismic and fireproof architecture built with steel frames or reinforced concrete.

A. Sano Toshikata: The Nation and Architects

Sano Toshikata graduated from the Department of Architecture, Imperial University of Tokyo in 1900; he recalled in his later years that while a student, he was “disappointed” by the lectures because they were oriented to “art” and lacked “scientific theory”. Sano reminisced that, “discriminating the form and judging the colour are women’s doings, not men’s” [12], which shows his volition from his early days to separate architecture from “art” by superposing on the dichotomy of “men/women”.

Moreover, when Sano watched the “Englishmen dominating every enterprise in every port of call such as Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, [he] was so agitated with the possibility that Japan might be in similar situation if unguarded” [13]. After he arrived in Germany he contributed an essay “Resolution of Architects” to *Kenchiku Zasshi*. In this essay, he regarded the significance of “Japanese *Kenchikuka* [Architect]”, unlike that of “Western *Akitekuto* [Architect]” as corresponding to the fact that government “[was] constructing at maximum cost some genuinely scientific structures such as warehouses and factories”. Moreover, considering the wealth of Japanese government to be “no match for the Great Powers yet”, Sano hesitated seeing the continuous expansion of armaments in other countries. Consequently, he stressed *Kenchikuka*’s duty was to “build strongest buildings with most advantages and least cost”, and as a member of the nation “in its period of endurance of hardships”, he “cannot be absorbed in senseless extravagances”.

Sano’s unique nationalism in this essay defined “art” as follows:

[I] understand the value of art, but my interpretation of art is that [...]: “for the time being, art is only a manner to raise our nation’s power, for example by consoling people, cultivating their minds, and promoting benefits. [...A]esthetic designs must be kept simple, noble, steady and never indulge in gorgeousness. In short, utility is the principal.” [14]

While “art” was not completely disregarded in Sano’s duty, the “architectural beauty” which “[was] merely dynamic and precise expression of weight and support” was a value that supported univocal understanding of “expression” which delivered definite values to people, and that enlightened them without spoiling the “utility” “to raise national power” with “gorgeousness”.

B. Noda Toshihiko: Confusion of a Designer

Noda Toshihiko submitted his graduation thesis titled “*Tekkin Konkurito to Kenchiku Yoshiki* [Reinforced Concrete and Styles of Architecture]” to the Department of Architecture, Imperial University of Tokyo in 1915. His teacher Uchida Yoshikazu promoted the first half of this thesis to the magazine published by AIJ, “*Kenchiku Zasshi*”, renaming the title of the paper as “*Kenchiku Hi Geijutsu Ron* [Theory of Inartistic Architecture]”. The gist of this paper was regarded that “architecture is not art” as mentioned in its title. This perception had got significant influence on the Japanese architectural circle; it was expressed clearly in the introduction by Uchida and in the beginning of Noda’s argument [15]. However, the actual gist, or his real motive was different from this title.

1) The Relationship between Architecture and Art

Noda summarised that the architecture had been deemed as a “genre of art” that possesses beauty, utility, and science, where the latter two were of greater and increasing importance then [16]. He conveyed a trichotomy similar to Kuroda’s one; his trichotomy had got unprecedented correspondence to the three types of drawings: elevation view, ground/floor plan, and construction drawing [17]. The reason for which Noda concluded the former architecture to be a “result of compromise” of the three could have been a sense of confusion toward the difficulty of alignment of various conditions of designing and the puzzlement over the variable criteria.

[T]hey say that these three should ideally accord and such contradiction may not be compromised. Well then, do they have got these three in accordance and use it as standards of architectural evaluation? No, because they would pass the building as ‘good’, [...] if one of the three excels while the rest may be a little inferior. [18]

Noda revealed his irritation toward the lack of clarity of the standard of design and evaluation; he wrote that the ideal planning which consists of the three fields was merely a coincidence. The rejection of the theory that a designer cannot utilise in designing was Noda’s strong motive behind the scene.

Meanwhile, Noda cited the discrepancy between the definition of “art” and “architecture” as the basis of the assertion of the title. Primarily Noda’s definition of “art” was in accordance with Tolstoy’s “*What is Art?*” [19]. According to Noda’s summary, “art” is a means of mutual comprehension between the author and the viewer, and between the viewers to share a feeling experienced by one with another. He regarded art as a type of “language”: “Thought is delivered by speech; Art delivers feeling, what speech cannot deliver” [20]. Moreover while he placed “beauty” on the same level with appetite and sexual desire, the duty of art was to cultivate man’s social nature, rather than to “express beauty” as “one of pleasant sensations”. We can point out the theoretical influences of Sano in Noda in the following three points: the attitude to exclude some kinds of pleasure from the foundation of human society; the “expression of beauty” was as directly effective as appetite or sexual desire was; and the conveyance of “feeling”, or a duty theoretically assigned to “art” instead of such “feeling”, was also unilinear [21].

Noda explained, “whatever feeling the building has got, it is a feeling of the building itself and it does not relate to the feeling of a work of art expressed by the buildings” [22]. He judged that architecture was inapplicable to the definition of “art” that was based on the view of the expression as human mutual comprehension. According to Noda, the act of expression cannot be realised in architecture since an architect cannot express his or her message in the buildings designed, which is the very condition of “art” that differs from “beauty”. But in spite of these statements, his attitude toward the existence of “artistic architecture” remained ambivalent.

In the same way as [music divides time], there may be a genre of art that divides space and exhibits the feeling of its designer. [...] But it is not architecture. Though we could designate it “architecture”, it is not what people live and gather within. Was it an art, it should forbid people living within and free the designer of the inconvenience. [23]

On one hand, Noda regarded architecture as non-art in the respect that one cannot observe the architect’s expression. On the other hand, while he accepted “artistic architecture” which exists outside of any restraints of expression, he distinguished such work from “practical architecture” “to fulfil human life by protecting people against the pressure of nature’s climate” [24]. This ambiguous attitude indicates that his assertion of architecture as non-art had no veritable motive behind the argument. Besides, while Noda added his own interpretation to Kuroda’s trichotomy of architecture, he denied it as a designer and reinforced the dichotomy that was conventional in the architectural circle through advocacy of “inartistic architecture”. Two understandings supported such attitude: the understanding of art which lacked an eye to the material and regarded the action of expression unilinear, and the understanding of expression that it is realised outside of the conditions such as structure or utility. The former separated beauty from art, and art from architecture while the latter stated that the architect’s limitless expression is the qualification to be art. Therefore, Noda was obliged to accept the existence of “artistic architecture”.

2) The Relationship between Architecture and Beauty, and Recognition of Noda’s Essay

Noda considered other definitions of art and came to support the opinion that what is “true and good can be beauty as well”. To the taste like his, which found “the railway bridge over Rokugo River” to be “one of the most beautiful structures”, the beauty could be the objective of architecture. This indicates that the positive relationship between beauty and architecture was in his scope. But here the “beauty”, which he put in the same category with an appetite or sexual desire like Tolstoy, should become an issue.

The fact is that Noda denied only the architect’s need of consciousness for beauty, but did not deny the beauty itself observed in buildings.

When a building satisfies its practical purposes, it is always beautiful. So it is nonsense to question the need of beauty in architecture, that is perfect as a practical item. [...] Whether architecture requires the expressions of the *Zeitgeist* or individuality is still more absurd. Such conditions are satisfied naturally when the purposes of the building as a practical item are completely fulfilled. [25]

Therefore, Noda subordinated “the standard of beauty”, that stated the method of its realisation, to the theory of structural mechanics. While the works of those who “are untrained as architects but are acquainted with the calculation of strength of structure” may have got “disagreeable and unbearable shape”, Noda suggested lack of research of structural mechanics resulted in such “a failure to attempt to make it beautiful” [26]. We can find the influence of that definition of “architectural beauty” by Sano, “a dynamic and precise expression of weight and support”. We can say that Noda’s architectural beauty was defined within the extensive control of structural mechanics that was realised only when the designer is free from the consciousness of art and beauty. We continue to explore whether his graduation project was really “a genuinely utilitarian theatre”, as Uchida Yoshikazu introduced in the beginning of Noda’s paper [27].

Regardless of the various inconsistency or suggestions as mentioned above in Noda’s paper, his argument has been hitherto extensively recognised as “architecture is not art”. The reason to this may be the fact that a graduation thesis originally titled “*Reinforced Concrete and Style of Architecture*” was converted into a paper titled “*Theory of Inartistic Architecture*” by his teacher and published in an academic journal; there could be an intention to recognise Noda’s argument differently from his original motive, and the effect of this lasted until today.

3. Goto Keiji: the Forerunner of *Bunriha* Movement

A. Selection of “Laws” and “Self”

Goto Keiji, who entered the university five years earlier than Noda, responded to Noda’s paper soon after it was published. His argument was familiar to the arguments of *Bunriha* five years later, especially that of Horiguchi Sutemi; we can regard him as a predecessor in theory of *Bunriha*. Goto commented to the dispute between Tatsuno and Okada (seen in Section 1) later that actually the architecture of the time lacked both science and art. While he deplored the lagging of architecture behind the other genres of art in Japan, many of his articles discussed the themes that Structure-advocates would choose, such as reinforced concrete. Thus Hasegawa Takashi evaluated him to be a well-balanced embodiment of “*Taisho* architecture” that is based on the principle of “self”, suggesting that Goto was also a capable structural engineer [28]. We will discuss the theoretical limit of Hasegawa’s discussion in Section 4.

In his article written in dialogue-style, Goto raised the possibility of frequent conflicts “between the reifying the ideal of nature and the requirement of nature”, or “between structure or utility [...] and beautiful appearance”. Then he answered as follows:

When we construct a building, we face numerous laws [...] that often conflict with each other. One solution is to compromise; we stick to all laws loosely so they won’t conflict by mutual concessions. Another solution is to discard all laws but one. While this solution seems thorough and uncompromising, it is merely an elusion of the problem. [...] It could solve everything easily, but the result is reckless and narrow-minded. [29]

The first was the standpoint which Noda had refused while the second indicated Noda’s own standpoint; Goto’s opinion was “the third solution”.

Originally, all laws are external. While one adopts these laws and accepts external judgement, he cannot escape from the contradiction. He could discard all laws but one, but still, the same is true. The only solution is to find an internal law; one must digest all external objects and establish a totally new autonomic law within oneself. [30]

Goto sought for assurance of autonomy and the principle of expression in coincidental procedure; first absorb any “external objects” to later find an internal law within oneself. Thus the amelioration of architecture was to depend on “enhancement / extension of the self” rather than the choice of “external laws”.

[W]ithout us discarding the unity of self, we cannot make a leap forward against our internal law. And because such laws generate from our mentality as a whole, we cannot establish the law unless we fulfil ourselves. [31]

The influence of *Shirakabaha* [White Birch School; a literature and art movement influential in Taisho Japan] over Goto was evident, as Yanagi Muneyoshi emphasised “enhancement of the self” in the magazine “*Shirakaba*” [32]. However, it is notable that the dynamism to “leap forward” after dissolution of “the unified self” is unique to Goto.

B. The Countermeasure to the Polemic: Its’ Scope

Noda’s response to Goto’s argument was not apparent. Noda’s counterargument was directed to Ito Chuta, his former teacher at the university; however we cannot discover a point of issue. Moreover, he disregarded Goto completely. The fact is, Goto had presented two questions to Noda by name three months earlier to the dialogue above in the same magazine. First he questioned how serious Noda was when he wrote the paper, and then he continued to ask:

Can Mister [Noda] execute that purport with devotion? [...] Will he not be tempted from time to time to entrust his passion for art that seethes inside him into architecture? [33]

Goto stated that the slightest passion may “quite shake his argument”. In fact, Noda had already expressed repentance in a private letter before these questions were published.

I regret how inconsistent my diploma was, for my advocacy to the needlessness of beauty in architecture. Have I never attempted to beautify the building in that design? I am very disconcerted. [34]

Goto also indicated that the “truth”, the value Noda claimed to which all beauty agrees, was biased in favour of structural mechanics [35]. If Noda had read these Goto’s articles, he would have realised that Goto defeated him, having his designer’s “self” at stake. However, his theory “architecture is not art” itself led the argument among Japanese architects more extensively than Noda’s name. The “Structure-advocates” became the political mainstream in Japanese architectural circle; one example would be Sano’s promotion to professor in the Imperial University of Tokyo. The thesis was referred to in various articles and structural mechanics became the theme that monopolised “*Kenchiku Zasshi*” in those days [36]. Noda himself

continued to assume the name of “inartistic architecture”[37]. Meanwhile the commercial architectural magazines, rising yet insecure media then, substituted for publishing the articles that were dropped from “science”, that is, structural mechanics and sanitary engineering [38].

It is unlikely that Goto had made contact with *Bunriha* members, since they were ten years junior to him at the Imperial University, and moreover, he passed away in 1919. However, Horiguchi Sutemi and Goto share a few points: both were well versed in genres of art such as *tanka* [traditional Japanese poem] and painting, and both were influenced by the magazine “*Shirakaba*”. In the next section we will ascertain the theoretical limits in common, in their understandings of “expression” rather than the terms “beauty” and “art” which were focal points in the controversy with Noda. At last, we will examine Morita Keiichi’s argument which developed a new theoretical perspective.

4. The Founding of Bunriha Kenchiku Kai

As mentioned above, Morita developed new opinions on “art” and “expression” apart from the other five members of *Bunriha* including Horiguchi, the theoretical leader of the party. We will discuss two issues in this section: the commonality of Horiguchi and Goto, the forerunner of *Bunriha* in general, and the limits of such commonality, and Morita’s uniqueness and potential. As we aim to clarify the founding of *Bunriha* from the theoretical history, we will deal with the articles of Horiguchi and Morita in the “*Collected Works*” published in 1920 when they held their first exhibition.

A. Horiguchi Sutemi: Goto Keiji’s Continuator

“Architecture, of all genres of art, is the largest, the most multi-dimensional and the most closely related genre to human life,” discussed Horiguchi. “Large” signified the physical scale of the work; “multi-dimensional” consisted of “structure”, “paintings and sculpture”, “deep understanding and broad knowledge of life” including “inner life of spirit” and “economy” as a consequence of “cooperation by large number of people” in construction: this meant the quality of “*Gesamtkunstwerk*”. Then he examined the term “art”.

I think art is an expression. Expression must be based on the desire of artistic instinct. [...] It is by the intuitive desire that the personality and total character appear, regardless of the artists’ intentions. [...] Instinct is the power that transcends the reason, and the affirmation of this instinct is piety. [39]

The understanding of art based on “instinct” and the refusal of “reason” were not found in Goto’s argument but in those of *Shirakaba* School such as Nagayo Yoshiro [40]. This “piety” was “not in a form of any existing religions”: he explained that “the power of artistic expression” “suggests the world” beyond time and space, and “people feels the world by the suggestion”. He related the “instinct” to “inspirations” and “life / vitality”.

[However old or new,] if what I want to express is expressed, I do not care what it is. [...] I do not know whether my direction is right or wrong. All I do is to perceive a lot, observe

a lot and consider a lot by myself. Then a momentary inspiration will occur to me with which I could judge my direction right or wrong. [...] We cannot make inspirations by ourselves. [...] We cannot help but hope for them to come. Our lives always want to be refreshed and saved by such inspirations. [...] Constant purification of our lives purifies and refreshes our desires and makes them true. [41]

There was no “self” in Horiguchi’s argument which Goto applauded, but “instinct” “character” and “life” substituted it. The influences of “*Taisho* Life-centrism” advocated by Suzuki Sadami and “personalism” by Nagai Takanori are apparent [42]. However, one issue remains; as they borrowed the theoretical framework from outside of the architectural context, both Goto and Horiguchi tended to ignore the substance of buildings when they considered the action of expression. Goto and Horiguchi postulated that art or architecture was a precise reflection of designers’ inner desires, and entrusted the conscious improvement of expressions to “the self” and “life”, respectively. This common point shows that the direct or indirect influence of the forerunner Goto engendered Horiguchi’s argument that has been regarded as the best disputant of *Bunriha*.

B. Morita Keiichi: New Understandings of “Expression”

1) Understanding of “Structure-Advocates”, Art and Expression

The title of Morita’s article “On Structure-Advocates” indicated Peter Behrens who was regarded as a pioneer in European new architecture, rather than Sano Toshikata or Noda Toshihiko [43]. Since “the Structure-advocates”, such as Behrens, “never espouses the inartistic architecture”, the issue was “how to understand their architecture as an art”. Morita rewrote this issue, “where can we notice the expression of life, the glitter of personality, in the structure constructed as dynamics instruct”: he also considered the “art” in relation to “life / vitality” and “personality”. Moreover his praise for unconsciousness and “character” was common to Goto and Horiguchi.

Fundamentally speaking, a work of art is an appearance of the character of the artist. Its contents [...] must be the whole expressed in its form, regardless of the artist’s awareness. We shall endeavor to express precisely the life that we want to express. Let us work investing the whole depth of our personalities. [...] Let us be fearful of our characters appearing unconsciously to our work more evidently than the contents we want to express consciously. [44]

However, similar to the Impressionist painters who found an object of “wonder” and “adoration” in nature, Morita located “the expression of life, the glitter of personality” in “the organic function” and “the necessary shape” of “the shell of the small lower animals”, or “the strain of a giant”, “necessity without ostentation” and “the beauty of a great power”. In other words, “Structure-advocates” in architecture for Morita was a trend based on the “desire to express” the “inner serious demand”, stimulated literally by “living” matters and machines that were concrete creations of “natural” science. Indeed the structural mechanics was a “suitable method” to realise “the beauty of nature’s power” within the architecture, but he refused “the

result of a mere conceptual knowledge”. Aside from the viewpoint of an architect, he argued from the viewer’s standpoint that “the analytical beauty of dynamics, the beauty displayed by the truth” that is essential to our material civilisation and lacks “poetic beauty” assured “the artistic value of Structure-advocates”.

Morita did not entirely appreciate “Structure-advocates” and searched for “a work of art richer in free emotions”, though he was not convinced of “the form of that expression”. The significance of Morita’s argument was that he admitted studying structural mechanics and entrusting one’s character to it, contrary to Goto and Horiguchi who had intended the improvement of buildings only by the improvement of “the self” without considering the substance of buildings. Goto’s rejection of “the unity of self” and Horiguchi’s advocacy of “inspirations” were the means through self-consciousness. However, Morita included structural mechanics among the efforts “to express precisely the life”, by emphasising the “expression” found in the buildings’ forms and consequently succeeded in pointing out “character” there.

2) The Countermeasure to “Theory of Inartistic Architecture”

Morita regarded Noda’s article as a harmful spin-off of “Structure-advocates”.

[W]hen architecture with a certain basis [=structural mechanics] appeared in the world of architecture of beauty as they speak, architects were obliged to lapse into skepticism by vacillation, unless they regard only existing styles as architecture or they close their eyes meanly. This skepticism will engender the theory of inartistic architecture in time. [45]

Because this skepticism did not limit its target to the style, it coincides with Noda’s refusal that we saw earlier. Furthermore Morita wrote, “Structure-advocates never espouse inartistic architecture; this is obvious when we observe their works” [46]. Thus he depended rather on the work of a designer than on a designer’s intention as the assurance of architecture’s artistry. The separation of designers’ intention and his work seized upon Noda’s theoretical ambiguity and the disagreement of his motive with the title of his article.

The next of our analysis is Morita’s confrontation with Noda’s theory that had limited the designing method to structural mechanics. Morita wrote, “Our desires to express generates Structure-advocates and structural mechanics supplies a suitable method” [47]. If he admitted that structural mechanics was the method to fulfil the “desires to express”, why did he abstain from being one of Structure-advocates?

While they exert themselves to study structural mechanics, their fountains of lives were abandoned and went dry by the hour. When they find themselves comprehending structural mechanics, their fountains will have dried up. [48]

Considering Morita’s intention “to continue scientific research of structure hereafter”, he seems to have demanded that Japanese “Structure-advocates” should confront “life”, “personality” or “character” because “the rich and subjective feeling or emotion” that sprung from the “fountains of lives” was an aspect of “our characters appearing unconsciously to our work” and thus it could not be discarded. This was in common with the other members of *Bunriha*, including Horiguchi. But Morita accepted the intervention of structural mechanics

and suggested the improvement of “forms” of architecture through it. We can see the momentum of Morita’s argument that the self was realised upon the structure and both the aspect of architecture as physical substance and the endeavour of the self became included into the scope of a concept of “expression”. This was the first time to demonstrate a constructive relationship between structural mechanics and “expression” which had been regarded as two opposing things.

5. Summary Based on the Concepts of Expression

In the first section we have seen the introduction of the concept of “architecture” accompanied by the dichotomy of beauty and structure; the trichotomy was introduced from aesthetics or philosophy. In the second section, “dynamic expression” that Sano Toshikata barely approved as “architectural beauty” was proved to be a unilinear medium of expression to help enlightenment of the nation. Moreover, Noda Toshihiko’s ambiguous attitude was a mixture of two understandings: one derived from Sano, that art should be the unilinear expression and the other influenced by the dichotomy or the trichotomy, that beauty or art was distinct from structure or utility. However, the title “Theory of Inartistic Architecture”, hid Noda’s motive and drove the theoretical surroundings in those days.

In the third section and the first half of the fourth section, we observed Goto Keiji and Horiguchi Sutemi countering Noda with such term as “self” and “life” which were introduced from the preceding art movement, *Shirakaba* Group. But because of their understandings of expression in a direct coupling with “self”, they could entrust the improvement of architecture only to that of human inner mind and disregard the substance of architecture. Accordingly, while their arguments showed a typical opposition to “Structure-advocates”, they cannot provide an effective methodology to the designer intending his improvement. This might incur a fruitless dispute over whether architecture is art or not, and in fact the discussion around *Bunriha* after its foundation tended to be so. However, such discussion will exceed the range of objective of this paper. Here we discovered two popular models of “expression” that occasionally appear today: that the author addresses a message through his work of art to the receiver, behind “Structure-advocate’s” understanding of expression; and that the work of art should be a true and genuine medium of the artist’s character, behind those of Goto and Horiguchi.

While *Bunriha* was assembled by an appeal of Horiguchi and two members, another member Morita Keiichi possessed the viewpoint to discover a “character” in the “form” of structure. The separation of the work from designer’s intention included an immediate effect on Noda as well as it connoted a viewpoint that integrated dichotomy and the trichotomy. Goto also approached to “expression” of “the content of the buildings themselves” by studying structural mechanics; but he arranged it separated from designer’s “expression” and did not accomplish the integration [49]. The integration was found in Morita’s argument for the first time in Japan.

Bunriha’s theory is not necessarily significant today, but their opinions and their adversary’s opinions led the Japanese popular views of architecture and the contour of the

concept of art, in respect of the development of their dispute after *Bunriha*'s founding on general journalism beyond the architectural journals. The examination of the later dispute is another theme. This paper points out the conceptual framework that fettered the discussion in Japanese architectural circle through to *Bunriha*'s founding and the historical significance of *Bunriha* that also presented a viewpoint to overcome the framework.

Notes

[] of the quotations indicates the addition or the omission by the quoter.

- [1] *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai* (indicated below as *Bunriha*) published three catalogues by themselves, titled *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai no Sengen to Sakuhin* [The Declaration and Works of Secessionist Architectural Group] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1920) or *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai no Sakuhin* [Collected Works of Secessionist Architectural Group] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1921/1924). The catalogues contained the members' drawings, photographs of their scale model and their articles. Later they annually published similar presentations on commercial magazines until 1928 and then suspended their activity. In this paper we discuss only the writings in 1920 and indicate their catalogues as *Collected Works*. Their declaration collected in the beginning of the "Collected Works" was as follows: "We rise. / In order to break away from the realm of the past architecture and to create a realm of the new architecture where all of them are given genuine significance. / We rise. / In order to awaken all that are asleep in the realm of the past architecture and to rescue all that are drowning. / We rise. / In order to attain this ideal, we dedicate the whole of ourselves in a state of a joy till we collapse; we are even ready to face death. / In unison, we declare this to the world." cf. Jonathan M. Reynolds, *Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001, pp.21-23.
- [2] Hasegawa Takashi, 'Nihon no Hyogenha [Japanese Expressionists]', in: *Shinden ka Gokusya ka* [Shrine or Prison], Tokyo: Sagami Shobo, 1972, pp.1-115; Miyauchi Yasushi, 'Fasizumu to Kukan [Fascism and Space]', in: Dojidai Kenchiku Kenkyu Kai [Society for the Study of Contemporary Architecture] ed. *Hikigeki: 1930 Nendai no Kenchiku to Bunka* [A Tragicomedy: Architecture and Culture in 1930s], Tokyo: Gendai Kikaku Shitsu, 1981, pp.28-32. The latter text depicts the contrast between 1920s and 1930s and its import coincides with Hasegawa's schema of *Meiji* and *Taisho*.
- [3] Honda Shoichi, *Kindai Nihon Kenchiku Undo Shi* [History of Architectural Movements in Modern Japan], Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2004, p.22. More classic reference is Nishiyama Uzo, 'Kenchiku Undo ni Tsuite [On Architectural Movements]', in: *Nishiyama Uzo Chosakushu 4: Kenchikuron* [Writings of Nishiyama Uzo 4: Essays on Architecture], Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1969, pp.456-7. Both took a standpoint considering social movements and class strife as important.
- [4] Kawai Kozo, 'Bijutsu no Setsu [On Art]', in: *Kenchiku Zassi* [The Architectural Magazine; Now publishing as *Journal of Architecture and Building Science*], v.9, no.9, 1888.9, pp.152-3. His dichotomy was "Butsuri / Bijutsu [Physics / Art]".
- [5] Tatsuno Kingo, 'Kaikai no Ji, Fu Shokan [The Opening Address with My Opinions]', in: *Kenchiku Zassi*, No.331, 1914.7, p.3.
- [6] Okada Shin'ichiro, 'Shin Kenchiku no Igi [The Significance of New Architecture]', *op.cit.*, p.10.
- [7] Kuroda Hoshin, 'Kenchiku Hihyo no Hyojun [Valuation Bases of Architectural Criticism]', in: *Kenchiku Zassi*, No.293, 1911.5, pp.3-8.
- [8] On the valuation bases by Vitruvius, See *De architectura libri decem*, I,3.2. Morita Keiichi was a translator of this book [*Witoruwiusu Kenchiku Sho*, Tokyo: Seikatsusya, 1943].

- [9] Taki Ichiro, 'Hikaku to Ruikei: Otsuka Yasuji no Bigaku [Comparison and Type: Aesthetics of Otsuka Yasuji]', in: Sasaki Ken'ichi ed. *Nihon no Kindai Bigaku (Meiji/Taisho Ki)* [Modern Aesthetics in Japan (Meiji and Taisho Period)], Tokyo: Report of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, 2004.3, p.158, n.15; Fujioka Hiroyasu, 'Senzen no Kenchiku Hyoronka no Kenchiku Kan', in: *10+1*, Tokyo: INAX Shuppan, No.20, 2000.6, p.80. We can find Otsuka's trichotomy of architecture as "purpose/material/taste", for example 'Nihon Kenchiku no Shorai [The future of Japanese Architecture]', in: *Teikoku Bungaku* [Imperial Literature], Tokyo: Teikoku Bungaku Kai, No.176, 1909, pp.1-18.
- [10] Kuroda Hoshin, 'Kyogi Kenchiku to Shin Zen Bi [False Architecture and Truth, Goodness and Beauty]', in: *Kenchiku Gaho* [Illustrated Architecture], Tokyo: Kenchiku Gaho Sha, v.7, n.10, 1916.10, pp9-10.
- [11] Later an architect and critic Nakamura Mamoru argued architecture from four viewpoints: "use/structure/economy/beauty", but this argument did not also expand afterwards. Nakamura Mamoru "Kenchiku no Genri" no Soan [A Draft for "Principles of Architecture"], in: Nakamura Otowa ed. *Nakamura Mamoru Iko* [Posthumous Works of Nakamura Mamoru], private edition, 1936, esp. pp.20-21.
- [12] Sano Toshikata, 'Tsuiso [Memoir]', in: *Sano Hakushi Tsuisou Roku* [Documents of Doctor Sano], private edition, 1957, p.6.
- [13] *op.cit.*, p.14.
- [14] Sano, 'Kenchikuka no Kakugo [Resolution of Architects]', in: *Kenchiku Zasshi*, No.295, 1911.7, p.5.
- [15] Introduction by Uchida Yoshikazu, *Kenchiku Zasshi*, No.346, 1915.10, p.28; Noda Toshihiko, 'Kenchiku Hi Geijutsu Ron', *op.cit.*, p.31.
- [16] *Idem.*
- [17] The corresponding relations can be observed between: the "Truth" that constituted the architecture and the construction drawing without ornaments nor finishing, the "Goodness" and the ground/floor plan that indicated the functions and arrangements of each room with the consideration to the activities planned to happen inside, and the "Beauty" and the elevation view that shows the exterior, especially the façades, with the consideration to ornaments and proportions.
- [18] Noda, p.31.
- [19] Noda attached katakana indicating the English pronunciations alongside the Japanese title, but we cannot identify what English or Japanese edition he referred.
- [20] Noda, p.30.
- [21] Noda did not reveal any nationalism similar to Sano at least until 1917: "Although we are afraid of our culture being destroyed by the Western cultures, have our beautiful remains never been influenced by other peoples until today? [...] If they were destroyed by the Western cultures, there would be worthless to bequeath in any case". Noda Toshihiko, 'Iwayuru Nihon Shumi wo Nanzu [Criticism for So-called Japanese Taste]', in: *Kenchiku Gaho*, v.21, n.4, 1930.4, p.20 [special issue: Posthumous Works of Noda Toshihiko, originally published in *Kenchiku Zasshi*, 1917.11].
- [22] Noda, 'Kenchiku Hi Geijutsu Ron', p.33.
- [23] Noda, p.34.
- [24] *Idem.*
- [25] Noda, pp.34-6.
- [26] Noda, p.40.
- [27] Introduction by Uchida, *op.cit.*, p.28.
- [28] Hasegawa, p.30.
- [29] Goto Keiji, 'Kako tomo Shorai tomo Tsukanu Taiwa [Dialogue neither in the Past nor in the Future]', Nakamura Mamoru ed., *Goto Keiji Shi Iko* [Posthumous Works of Mr. Goto Keiji], private edition, 1925, 116-7. Originally published in *Kenchiku* [The Architecture], Osaka: Rowakai,

- No.200, 1916.7.
- [30] Goto, pp.116-7.
- [31] Goto, p.118.
- [32] Yanagi Muneyoshi, 'Kakumei no Gaka [Painters in a revolution]', *Shirakaba* [White Birch], Tokyo: Rakuyodo, v.3, n.1, 1912.1, p.4.
- [33] Goto, 'Misukiato Kenchiku Hi Geijutsu Ron [Miscellany: Theory of Inartistic Architecture]', in: *Iko*, p.104. Originally published in *Kenchiku* No.196, 1916.4.
- [34] Noda, a letter to Ogura Tsuyoshi, 1915.7.2., *Kenchiku Gaho*, v.21, n.4, pp.113-4.
- [35] Goto, 'Misukiato (Kanso) [Miscellany: Impressions]', in: *Kenchiku Gaho*, v.6, n.7, 1916.4, p.4.
- [36] It is noteworthy that this tendency occurred before the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Sano began to seek seismic standards since the Nobi Earthquake of 1891 and the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. He published his doctoral dissertation "Kaoku Taishin Kozo Ron [Earthquake-Resistant Structure of Houses]" in the same year where Noda published 'Theory of Inartistic Architecture'. cf. Fujimori Terunobu, *Nihon no Kindai Kenchiku Ge* [Modern Architecture in Japan, The Second Volume], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993, p.127.
- [37] Noda Toshihiko 'Kenchiku Hi Geijutsu Ron [Theory of Inartistic Architecture]'. *Kenchiku Gaho*, v.21, n.4, pp.44-50. The title was the same as his debut article in 1915 but originally published as a report of a mixer in his alumni association *Todai Mokuyo Kai* in October 1922. Although he was aware of the divergence between the title of his lecture and his own assertion (p.45), he concluded again that architecture was not art (p.50).
- [38] In 1920, six commercial magazines of architecture were being issued; however, of the five that were launched in the prior four years, the two were already discontinued in three years.
- [39] Horiguchi Sutemi, 'Kenchiku ni Taisuru Watashi no Taido to Kanso [My Attitude and Impressions toward Architecture]', in: *Collected Works*, p.4.
- [40] Nagayo Yoshiro, 'Geijutsuka no Shoshin [Timorousness of Artist]', *Shirakaba*, v.4 n.7, 1913.7, p.174.
- [41] Horiguchi, p.12.
- [42] On "Taisho Life-centrism", Suzuki Sadami, "'Seimei' de Yomu Nihon Kindai [Reading Modern Japan by 'Life']", Tokyo: NHK Books, 1996. Suzuki use this term instead of "Vitalism", the term he once used. *Japan Review*, No. 5, 1994, p.131ff. A bracketed term "personalism" was used in Nagai Takanori, '1930nendai Nihon no Sezannu Juyo: "Jinkaku" kara "Zokei" e [Acceptance of Cézanne in 1930s Japan: From "Person" to "the Plastic"]', in: The Japanese Society for Aesthetics ed. *Bigaku Geijutsugaku no Konnichiteki Kadai* [The Present Problem of Aesthetics and Sciences of Art], 1999.3, esp. pp.17-9. About before 1920, *idem.*, '1910-20nendai Kyoto no Bijutsu Hihyo to Geijutsu Ron [Art Criticism and Art Theory in 1910-20s Kyoto]', Iwaki Ken'ichi ed. *Geijutsu / Katto no Genba: Kindai Nihon Geijutsu Shiso no Kontekusuto* [Art: The Scene of Conflicts, The Context of Thought of Art in Modern Japan], Kyoto: Koyo Shobo, 2002, pp.103-18.
- [43] AEG Turbine Factory was completed in 1909 by Behrens and consequently it was featured in the Japanese magazines. Morita's understanding of "Kozoha" inherited the lectures by Ito Chuta. Yoshida Hirohiko, 'Bunriha no Hataage no Koro [When Bunriha Started]', in: *Kenchiku Bunka* [Architectural Culture], n.73, 1952.9, p.30.
- [44] Morita Keiichi, 'Kozoha ni Tsuite [On Structure-Advocates]', in: *Collected Works*, p.35.
- [45] Morita, p.34.
- [46] *Idem.*
- [47] Morita, p.35.
- [48] *Idem., sic.*
- [49] Goto, 'Misukiato (Kanso)', p.5.