

Of Nature: Design Proposal for the Nitobe Inazo Memorial Hall

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Japan's architecture is deeply rooted in its history and religion. Traditional Japanese architecture received its influence from the Chinese who, during the Asuka period (538-710), brought with it the worship of *kami*, spirits that can manifest in nature as elements of the landscape. In Shintoism, *kami* is said to be *of nature* rather than separate from nature, which alludes to Japan's reverence for all that is natural.¹ This reverence can be displayed in two ways: first, through traditional Japanese architectural elements that create flow between exterior and interior spaces, allowing for a relationship between man and the environment; this relationship is possible due to Japan's temperate climate, as spaces can be kept closed or opened up depending on the temperature.² Second and more prominently, this reverence can be presented through the use of a natural building material like wood, which is especially common in traditional Japanese architecture.

This project identifies several key traditional architectural elements such as the *engawa*, a covered exterior corridor that runs around the outside of a building's main space and acts as an extension of the interior space, that help to foster this inside-outside relationship. It also explores Japanese wooden construction and the traditional practice of carpentry, with a focus on traditional wooden joints through literature review and analysis of case studies of traditional shrines and modern wooden buildings. Utilizing my research and analysis, I incorporated these architectural elements and use of wooden joinery to develop a structural and design proposal for the Nitobe Inazo Memorial Hall in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan.

¹ Boyd, W James. "Japanese Shintō: An Interpretation of a Priestly Perspective." *Philosophy East and West*, 2005.

² "Elements | The Engawa". <https://archiscapes.wordpress.com/2015/01/15/japanese-traditional-engawa-space/>, 2015.