THE EXCITING ARCHITECTURAL ADVENTURES OF THE FUTURE BOY, ‘TERUBO’

TERUNOBU FUJIMORI ARCHITECTURE, AS VIEWED FROM DOROBUNE

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차실(茶室). 햇살을 냈다
2010년 여름 어느 날, 일본 나가노현 카니시마관(茅野市美術館) 앞에 당겨진 '물건'이 하나 설치되었다. 알록 이를 UFO 같기도 하고 가오라기 같은 것도 한 걸이, 다시 보면 두 개가 휘어지는 거북이 물품을 담았다. 이처럼 다양한 목성을 유발하는 이 물건은 이름하야 '소라도부도루내(霧雨の屋内)'라 불리던 경우도 있었다. 즉 '/upload.png'를 나온 절을

도로부내 내부
The interior of Dorobune

'dorobune'로 불리는 것이다. 가장한 이름처럼 도로부내는 공중에 매달려 있는 바람, 어

로 물건은 진동으로 움직여 있다. 바람, 거북이 등목차처럼 보이는 상인부

두개의 물건은 절을 잡아 굴곡과 바람의 장면으로 바꾸었다. 물건 상부 양쪽에는 네

모든 물에 둥근 절이 각각 두 개나 세 개나 있고 모두 아리따운 모양으로 떠어져 있다. 그리고 이런지 간단으로 바람이 작은 공중에 깔고 세 개 쪽 면의

상에 살고 있다. 게다가 나무기물이 지주로 하여 절에 매달려 도로부내 에는 어떻게 탐색할 수 있을까. 공간과 형태로서 동상작업이 일어나 공중

부등의 것과, 이 같은 선상에서 호스달리다가 자신들로 드리워져 꽃가

꽃가를 밝히는 또 다른 세계이다. 한 명만 남짓의 작은 민중이 직접

하지만 차를 통해 충분한 빛이 들어와 끼금 포유한 공간으로 느껴진다.

첫 번째 도로를 밝혀 바닥을 깔아 있고 점프와 점프로 모든 가까운 밝은

마주하고 있다. 내부 공간 대부분을 차지하는 타이僕와 밝은 면은 두

범적 역시 나무로 대체되었다. 특히 두개의 나무로 만들어진 절이 이르

는 모체 물건이 인상의 최고였다. 북부의 토목학에 대한

경험한 사람들은 그가 하였다. 아무리 아름다운 화명 바람의 바람으로 끝

대가 경상도나라 할까? 빛의 화명점령이라면 바람 물건이 일시시한

건축자나 후지모리, 그리고 건축가 후지모리

수년 전 도로대학교를 운영하고 현재 공학연구학회 교수로 재직 중인

후지모리 테로부루는 건축법으로 대신이 된 건축가로서 길을 이루며 인물이다. 그는 1977년 센다이의 도호쿠대대학 건축학과 졸업 후 일본 근


dorobune.jpg

재단사 연구로 진로를 결정했다. 그 후 대학 연구원인 도호쿠대대학 생

산과학研究所 무지마초 테이지로(abetorii)와 함께 1979년 연구실에 진

학해 1980년 도지사의 도시계획사로 임직을 하였다. 이

후 출판한 '도로'의 도로 계맥다(東京新潮社, 1982) '소와주택 이야기

가을색의 (住宅物語/1991)' '일본의 근대건축(日本の近代建築/1982) 등 다

수의 역할을 그는 일본 근대건축사 분야의 최고 권위자로 우뚝 서게 했다.
도로부내의 비평과 공상과학적 논양식

이 같은 후지모리의 대학 설계로 인해 도로부내의 무대가 확장되었다. 도로부내의 주요 건축물은 대부분의 건축가들이 이와 관련된 자료에서 투쟁이 있음을 암시하고 있다. 최신의 건축가들이 이러한 건축물들의 건축기를 이해하기 위해서는, 도로부내의 건축물들이 어떻게 설계되었는지에 대한 연구가 필요하다. 도로부내의 건축물들이 어떻게 설계되었는지에 대한 연구가 필요하다. 최근의 건축가들이 이러한 건축물들의 건축기를 이해하기 위해서는, 도로부내의 건축물들이 어떻게 설계되었는지에 대한 연구가 필요하다.
A Teahouse, Flying in the Sky

One day in the summer of 2010, something curious was installed in the courtyard of Chino City Museum of Art, Nagano Prefecture, Japan. At first glance, it appears to be a peculiar UFO or an oversized seashell, but then, glance again, it looks like a turtle with its head and limbs tucked tight into the body. The object that has stimulated these multitudinous associations has the name of ‘Son-dobu-doro-bune’ (just Dorobune henceforth), meaning ‘a mud boat flying in the sky’. As in the lyricism of the name, it may indeed be a boat, but one that is hanging high in the air, with its belly coated in mud. The upper shell, however, resembling the carapace of a turtle, is clad in copper sheets, reminiscent of scales of armour. Both sides of the upper body have round windows; two on the one hand and three on the other – With rectangular frames, which can be opened upwards. A small chimney, clad in the same copper sheet, soars at a corner of the three-window side. As a whole, Dorobune is suspended on metal wires, which are tied to big wooden poles. Then, how on earth can we board this boat suspended mid-air? It might be best if passengers can themselves levitate, or if an elevator flows down automatically from the boat. But let us face up to reality, and bear in mind that Dorobune cannot actually float in the air by itself. In order to step onto Dorobune, we have to bring a long ladder, and adjust its end to an entrance point at the stem. If we climb up the ladder, over 3 metres above the ground, and crawl into the narrow entrance, our boarding is finally successful! The inside is another world, different from the outside. It is a very intimate space, of just 5.5m² area, but seems more spacious due to the amount of light coming through the windows. Excepting the plastered white curves of the floor, the wall-cum-ceiling is all finished in wood; and the table and bench, which occupy most of the interior, are also made of wood. Most significantly, a series of wooden ribs, forming pointed arches that support the upper structure, dominate the impression of this cabin. Does it allude to an atmosphere once experienced in that of a vernacular church in Nordic countries? Or, is it reminiscent of the skeleton that wove a Viking’s boat a long time ago? The finishing touch to this inner world is the existence of ‘fire’, noted in the chimney of the exterior. A fireplace is positioned to the right of the opposite side of the entrance. It is composed of a pot-like body and a funnel, and painted the same crisp white as the floor. The blazing red firewood and the fireplace mouth blackened by fire, however, harks back to the memory of man’s first shelter around the hearth. Fire, the oldest companion of human civilization – which should never be omitted even from a minimal living space – is also within Dorobune. Likewise, Dorobune summons up a superimposed image of the future and of the past. The identity of this ‘Unidentified Flying Object’, which seems likely to appear only in children’s cartoons, is a teahouse designed by the architect Terunobu Fujimori (1946–). Chino City Museum of Art organized the Terunobu Fujimori Exhibition: Memory of Suwa and FUJIMORI Architecture to celebrate the achievements of Fujimori, who was born and grew up in Chino. (Suwa is a part of the Nagano Prefecture, and Chino belongs to the Suwa area.) At this event, Fujimori was asked to install a new teahouse, and to allow citizens to participate in the manufacturing process. The copper-sheet scales of the Dorobune roof were prepared by hand, by local people, and the mud-coated belly was well thumbed by their children.
Plan for Tokyo; 1982), *Showa Jutaku Mangatari* (Story of Houses in the Showa Period; 1990), *Nihon no Kindai Kenchiku* (Modern Japanese Architecture; 1993), proved his worth as an authority on the history of modern Japanese architecture. Moreover, his fieldwork conducted on every corner of the street, with the foundation of 'Kenchiku Tantei-kan' (Architectural Detective Agency; 1974) and 'Rooj Kansatsu Gakukai' (Roadway Observation Society; 1986), also resonated with the public, as well as within academia. In the meantime, while his reputation as a historian was ever-growing, he suddenly decided to cut a dash into the world of architectural design. His inaugural project was the Jinchokan Moriya Historical Museum in his home village, the design of which he began in 1990 at the age of 43, and the building was completed the following year. Since then, he has realized over twenty buildings — including his own Tokyo residence Tanpopo House ([Dandelion House; 1995]), Nira House ([Leek House; 1999]), Tsukuba Castle ([Camellia Castle; 2000]), Takasugi-an ([Io-high Tea house; 2004]), Yakisugi House ([Charred Cedar House; 2003]), and Taiwan's Irises-tei ([River Entering Tea house; 2010]) — and also attracted attention as a practicing architect. What is more, the fact that he was chosen to exhibit at the 2006 Venice Biennale, while a commissioner of the Japanese Pavilion, appears to be the real moment of watershed in his career, as his name has been getting ever-more recognition from that time onwards, as a presence on the international stage beyond Japan.**

Though he has been developing his own design concept through his practice over the last two decades, the basic theme of his architecture is by-and-large related to the finish of a building. As further clarified at the Venice Biennale,** his theme emphasizes the usage of natural materials and roof planting, and his methodology of finish is generally based on simple techniques of workmanship. The reason that his first work, Jinchokan, could be designed by him was that it had a thematic connection to its natural and vernacular appearance. (When in consultation for the project, one possible architect that he came to recommend was the famous Toyo Ito, who had also grown up in the Suwa area. Ito's architecture, however, with its urban machine aesthetics, is too distant to imbibe a regional character. Concluding that nobody else could design the building properly, as possessing of an adequate understanding of the vernacular tradition and the unique faith of the Moriya family associated with Shintoism, Fujimori decided to take on the project himself.) The traditional slate roof, split wood panels, mudlike mortar on the wall, and tree-like standing poles at the entrance, are rich in local color. Those rough finishes with natural or natural-looking materials have evolved further throughout his following projects. In particular his recent roofing method, which employs irregularly bent copper sheets, is extremely eye-catching. That is because the copper sheets are suggestive of the wood shingles in a vernacular roof, as the initial bronze color will fade with the passage of time. Fujimori adopted this method for the first time for his teahouse, Takasugi-an, and it is very likely that the idea came from the cedar shingle roof of Ichiyas-tei ([One-Night Tea house; 2003]), built for the former Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa. On the other hand, the method of roof planting can trace its origin to the Japanese 'Shibamune' (planted roof-ridge) tradition, and Fujimori discovered some similar precedents in France. This method, which finds its beginnings in the Tanpopo House, with planted dandelions positioned between slates on the roof and wall, has been repeatedly introduced in the later projects, while also exploited in diverse ways. For example, at Nira House, leeks were planted in pots, one-by-one, and the pots were inserted into the roof in a line; at Tsukuba Castle, the whole roof was covered with grass, and a camellia planted at the peak; and at Nemunoki Children's Museum ([2006]), the ridge of the roof was turfed. Adhering to natural materials and planted roofs, the Fujimori brand appears to maintain a distance from, most specifically, the Corbusian 'radiant city,' and the latest technological ideas. Beyond this easily recognizable primitivism, however, his architecture has something new, which other buildings have not hitherto attained. Fujimori, who as a historian has gone through architecture across all times and places, intends to create something that is familiar, but which has never yet existed. One observer coined the term 'avant-garde' to define his architecture.* This word is an interesting combination of 'avant-garde' and the Japanese 'yaban,' which means barbarian. In other words, we can say that Fujimori architecture indicates a form of 'advanced barbarism,' or a 'new barbarism.'

** Playfulness and the nuance of Science-Fiction in Dorobune

Even though we are aware of Fujimori's former designs, Dorobune is still very interesting. While, on one hand, it succeeds in the same architectural approach he has exploited so far, on the other hand, this construction suggests a new facet to his idea. Above all, his sustained design concept is soon observed in his use of building materials, such as wood, mud, and copper sheets, and also in their rough finish. In addition, the fact that ordinary people volunteer to assist in the simple manual work of copper-sheet bending reveals an investment of considerable significance. Modernized man has become alienated, even from his own house, but he can only try to once again recover his relationship to architecture, by participating in-person in these kinds of physical activities, putting his hands and body to use. Furthermore, those works are pleasurable. The works where people alternately bend copper sheets, and make irregular bumps on their surface by beating them with a piece of wood, are like the play of the little boy Terubu — Fujimori's childhood name. It is well known that Fujimori's Rojo friends voluntarily participate at points in his building work, significantly following the formation of the 'Jomon Kenchiku-dan' ([Jomon Architecture Group]) at the Nira House project ([Jomon is the name of a] Japanese Neolithic culture, and it means that the laymen of the group enjoy making buildings using only stone-age techniques). Nevertheless, what we should not miss in Dorobune is the unique aspect behind the methodology at which Fujimori hints. It was designed as a teahouse, just like the many teahouses he has designed until now, and installed high in the air, just as with both Takasugi-an and Irises-tei. This point tells us that Dorobune can be classified as one of the most representative building types of Fujimori's architecture. Yet, the theme of a 'flying boat' manifests the wide scope of Fujimori's playful nature, and this fairytale retains a certain science-
Architecture after Technological Utopianism

In sum, the primitive image associated with Fujimori architecture can be properly understood only when viewed from the perspective previously framed by his diploma design, and the recent Dorobune. His design denotes architecture of the present, and the future, should be premised on lessons learnt from past experience; that is, at first from an optimistic and naive reliance on technology, and then from the destruction of optimism, owing to the excessive desire of human beings. Especially in Japan, the irresponsible fear of natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis, as well as the nightmare of atomic bombs and the defeat of World War II may well be traumatic, and, deep-down, haunt the unconsciousness of her people. Isn't this schema symbolically implied by Fujimori architecture? If technological utopianism reached its climax in the Archigram period, and thereafter, if the existence of human civilization itself is continually threatened by its dystopian by-products, our architectural direction must be re-adjusted. The science-fiction fairytale in caricature form in Dorobune seems like one symptom of this underlying situation. From that point of view, Fujimori's architectural world could be related to a narrative that Hayao Miyazaki's [1941–] animation has depicted. Do you remember Conan, The Boy in Future? The exciting adventure of Conan and his friends unfolds as they fight against a dictator, who is going to snatch up the secret of solar energy, with the ambition of conquering the world. As backdrop to the story, it was not only the destruction of the earth by man's abuse of technology, but also Mother Nature's resilience that patiently endures the tragedy. What can we build on Conan's island, covered again by lush green vegetation among the ruins? What house could be built by the future boy, 'Teruro'?

Material provided by Terunobu Fujimori (except otherwise indicated)


2. Various books have been published on the Fujimori architecture. For the most recent ones, see Yukio Futakawa [ed.], Fujimori Terunobu: Fukuoka [Tenenobu Fujimori Reader], SA I.D.A EDITION, Tokyo, 2012 & Nikkei Architecture [ed.], Fujimori Terunobu [Tenenobu Fujimori], NA Kenchiku Series 04, Nikkei BP Co., Tokyo, 2011.


5. The title is 'Bridge: the Method of Ledoux for Giving Reality to Images through Illusion'.


7. This animation with 26 episodes has been broadcasted several times in Korea, too, since it first appeared on NHK in 1979.