

A Comparative Study on Conceptual Similarity and Differences between Traditional Houses of Japan and Turkey

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to make a conceptual analysis of the rooms of traditional residential architectures of Japan and Turkey in order to find out and compare cultural reflections of Turkish and Japanese ways of life on their own houses. To focus the discussion, this research has been arranged around certain themes and concepts. In Chapter 2, this study provides an outline of the basic characteristics of traditional architectures of Japan and Turkey. Chapter 3 contains comparison of some basic concepts that have been used to define characteristics of traditional rooms. The first section of this chapter is devoted to the meaning and comparison of the concept of 'simplicity' in traditional lifestyles. In the following sections, introversion and extroversion characters of the rooms and the reflection of climatic factors in Japanese and Turkish house types are studied comparatively. In conclusion, a preliminary outline of the outcomes of the comparative study is given. Special attention is given to the relation between the traditional lifestyles of the occupants and the reflection of lifestyles in their rooms.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to make a conceptual analysis of the rooms of traditional residential architectures of Japan and Turkey in order to find out and compare cultural reflections of Turkish and Japanese ways of life on their own houses. A comparative analysis was made to establish similarity and differences of conceptual approaches in the two countries by examining their peculiar ways of dwelling.

Japanese house is among the most well-known examples of world's vernacular architectural heritage which shares certain similarities with the modern movement of 20th century in some points of its design approaches such as mobility, minimalism, functionality, lightness, transparency, flexibility, standardization etc. Influence of traditional Japanese architecture on the process of modern art and architecture of the 20th century has already been emphasized by many architects and researchers from across the world. ¹ Frank Lloyd Wright is the most famous architect who designed houses strongly influenced by the traditional architecture of Japan (though he himself claimed to have been influenced only by Japanese paintings). (Collins, 1998)

Above mentioned concepts have also been referenced as the featuring characteristics of traditional Turkish architecture by some scholars. Sedat Hakkı Eldem is the first architect who pointed out these features of the Turkish house that present a tradition for contemporary architecture. (Eldem and Ertuğ, 1981) The same notion has been emphasized in the book titled "Türk Evi-The Turkish House" (Yürekli and Yürekli, 2005) by the authors when reviewing the Turkish house in terms of universal concepts. That is to say although their forms are

characteristically different in essence, it is still possible to say that Turkish architecture bears some conceptual resemblances to Japanese architecture or vice versa. Comparison of the forms and plan types of traditional houses has intentionally been excluded from the scope of this study. There are very few researches on the comparison of architectural features of Japanese and Turkish houses. Eldem and Ertuğ's article "A Comparative Spatial Analysis of Turkish and Japanese Dwellings" (1981) was the first attempt in this respect. Another important contribution was made by Satsuki Matsushita with his MSc thesis on the "Comparative Study of the Structure of Traditional Timber Housing in Turkey and Japan." (2004) In the book titled "Turkish house-A concise re-evaluation" (Yürekli & Yürekli, 2005), authors devoted a sub-chapter to the discussion and comparison of conceptual characteristics of Japanese and Turkish house. Aligül Ayverdi's surveys on the Japanese Architecture (1963, 1967, 1972) enabled researchers to make comparisons between Japanese and Turkish architectures. But, what has not been thoroughly examined is the reflection of similar or different life styles that lay behind the parallel attitude in their conceptions of dwelling. Günay (2005) has rightly placed an emphasis on the significance of evaluating house plans with the prevailing lifestyle of the time as in the following quote: "The plans of the houses were designed in accordance with the lifestyle of the period, and the plans can only be understood in relation to that life style." In the light of this understanding, this research will differ from the previous researches since materialistic properties of both house types will not be compared. Rather, reflections of users' ways of life in the inner space of a house—room—will be studied comparatively.

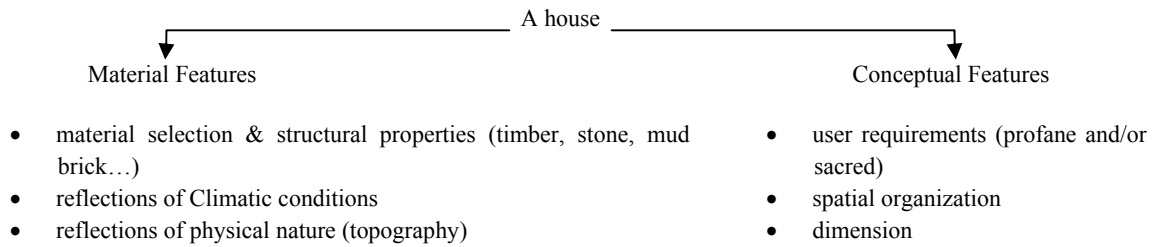


Fig 1. A schematic analysis of a room

To focus the discussion, the author of this research has arranged the text material around certain themes and concepts on the analysis of traditional rooms. Rooms of the traditional houses of Japan and Turkey are the best places where one can clearly see and compare reflections of the above mentioned concepts. The primary characteristic of the room in the Turkish house, according to Küçükerman (2007), is that of a unit serving specific purposes within the house. This can also be valid in case of traditional Japanese architecture as noted by Werner Bleser (1958) in his “Japan Dwelling Houses.” What the most appreciated argument about Japanese house was, according to Bleser, “the perfect harmony of the room with the Japanese way of life.”

The focus has mainly been on the comparison of space formation between Japan and Turkey. This research will be done in the following way: after an introduction, in chapter II this study provides an outline of the basic characteristics of traditional architectures of Japan and Turkey. This chapter starts with analyzing origins and contents of both house types. Then in the third section of this chapter, role of women in traditional houses of Japan and Turkey are discussed respectively. The following chapter (Chapter III) contains comparison of some basic concepts that have been used to define characteristics of traditional rooms in Turkey and Japan. The first section of this chapter is devoted to the meaning and comparison of the concept of simplicity in traditional lifestyles. In the following sections, introversion and extroversion characters of the rooms and the reflection of climatic factors in Japanese and Turkish house types are studied comparatively.

2. Comparison of Basic Characteristics of Turkish and Japanese Houses

Basic characteristics of a house can be analyzed in two distinctive ways as analyzing material culture and Conceptual (spiritual) properties. The first way requires analysis of a house in terms of material selection, reflections of climatic conditions and physical nature of the region. The second way, which is much more effective in creating domestic atmosphere of a house's inner space, means to analyze users' living styles by focusing on spatial organization, dimensions and user requirements that can be profane and/or sacred. Especially, necessity of being in accordance with the prevailing social values of a time has always been one of the most motivating powers that lay behind of space formation process. (See fig.1) This study mainly focuses on clarifying and comparing conceptual features of Japanese and Turkish traditional houses.

2.1. ORIGINS OF TURKISH AND JAPANESE HOUSES

This brief outline of the basic characteristics of traditional houses of Japan and Turkey starts with a definition of origin of the house types.

Firstly, Sedat Hakkı Eldem in his book “Türk Evi Plan Tipleri” (1968) (Typology of the Turkish House), and then

Küçükerman (1978) investigated the typological evolution of the Turkish House by regarding the sofa (the sofa, to Küçükerman, is an area providing access between the various rooms and has a varied technical terminology in Turkish ‘Sergah, sergi, sayvan, çardak, divanhane, hayat’ etc.) and the rooms as the fundamental elements creating the Turkish house.

It has generally been accepted that origins of traditional Turkish house (Türk Evi) took their roots from the tent structure of nomadic way of life. (Küçükerman 1978, Goodwin 1971) Küçükerman (1978) says in his seminal book that “Like the tent each room is a medium for various activities such as sitting, working, eating, sleeping etc.”

Origins of the most well-known architectural features of traditional Japanese house, which were highly praised by the leading figures of the 20th century modern movement, such as recessed alcove (tokonoma), built-in desk and shelves, wall-to-wall tatami mats, sliding screens to divide interior space (fusuma), wooden-lattice exterior sliding doors covered with translucent rice paper (Shoji) are the basic characteristics of Shoin Style of the Muromachi Period. (1333-1573) Shoin means “drawing room.” Shoin rooms, used as studies in the living quarters of monasteries and later, more formal Shoin style rooms were developed for entertaining important guests in the villas of Shoguns. In the Edo period (1603-1867) the Shoin Style gave rise to the Sukiya Style, in which numerous variations were added to suit the taste of the owner. (Young, 2004)

Japanese architecture based on evolutionary development process, which might be rephrased as a refinement process. Bruno Taut, who stayed in Japan for three and half years (1933-1936) and wrote many articles and books about Japanese art, architecture and social life, described this refinement process in one of his sketches (Taut, 1935), in which the main route begins with the Shrines of Ise, then via Tea-culture reaches to “modern quality” in the Katsura Detached Palace. (Dündar, 2006) (fig. 2)

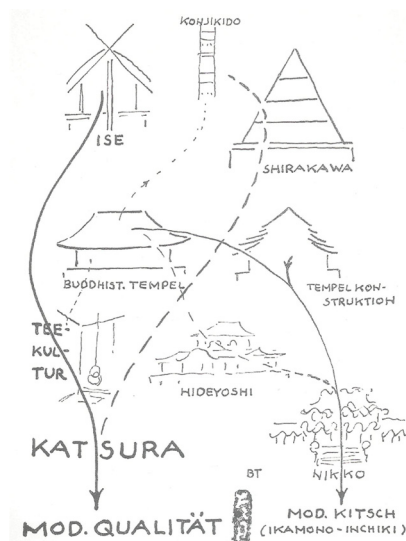


Fig 2: Taut's sketch (1935) showing the refinement process of Japanese architecture.

Regarding the origins of traditional houses of Japan, Ise Shrine (Shinto belief) and Tea culture (Zen belief) were considered as the main impetus to reach so called universal modernity concepts in the later centuries. Influence of these examples was not limited to the features of the formal characteristics of the building types, rather their influences were much more deeply rooted in the philosophy of life of the people. The basic reflection of this philosophical attitude can easily be seen in modest—unpretentious—daily life of Japanese people.

2.2. CONTENTS OF TURKISH HOUSE AND JAPANESE HOUSE

The name of the Türk Evi (Turkish House) does not represent all types of vernacular architecture in Turkey. As it is well known, each region of Turkey has its own vernacular architecture that reflects the characteristics of the region including life styles, beliefs, physical and climatic conditions etc. Regarding the specific name of Turkish house type (Türk Evi), Doğan Kuban (1976) points out to a specific geographical region as the mountainous areas that circle the mid-Anatolian Plateau and the Balkans. (Yürekli and Yürekli, 2005)

It shouldn't be forgotten that especially being on a trade route crossroads where different cultures interacted with one another led people who live in different climatic and natural conditions to construct their houses in the same typology of Turkish houses in general. In other words, vernacular houses of Turkey can be divided into three distinctive groups as the houses that located on trade routes and houses that represent rural life and the others. Küçükerman (2007) too classified Turkish houses in three main groups as follows: village houses, urban houses, other types of Anatolian houses. Traditional Turkish vernacular houses of rural communities are not included in the scope of this paper.

“Dwelling house of old Japan proceeds from an entirely different set of premises—technical, economic, social and mental—from those obtaining in the West.” (Schmidt, 1958) Although the name of ‘traditional Japanese house’ represents a wide range of buildings in different form from different period and region, in contradistinction to the case of Turkish house, it still covers common features such as the wooden construction method with a post and beam structure, multifunctional usage of the rooms and spatial organization. The regional differences of the Japanese house can clearly be seen in fig.3, which was previously used by Matsushita (2004) to describe the variation in the plan types, style, the form of the village and the structure.

Sizes of the Turkish houses quite differ from a region to a region. Not to mention, characteristics of a region is not the only determiner of size differences of traditional houses. Different spatial variation patterns can be seen at Turkish Houses of different sizes. The most visible variation is the differentiation between the spaces for male and female.

Economic state of a family in a private and a community in general is one of the factors that effects size of houses in a region. House of a wealthy family is larger and has more complicated spatial organization by comprising Haremlik section (Women's quarter) reserved for the family members and Selamlık section (Men's quarter) reserved for the men, some of which have an independent entrance door and separate primary facilities.

Nevertheless, Küçükerman (1978) claimed that “*economic factors did not have very much influence on the shape and size of the Turkish house in Anatolia.*” To him, the basic principles of the room concept and form do not show significant variations arising out of economic factors.

The same attitude can also be seen in Japanese traditional houses. Even though there is a direct relation between wealth and

degree of elaboration in the construction of the building and its rooms, the basic principles of room—daily life styles of users—do not change much at all. Japanese houses are generally small in size and one story, except in cities, where two stories are the rule; the first floor serving for the shop or store, and for general business, the second floor being devoted to the private apartments of the family. (Houghton, 1877)

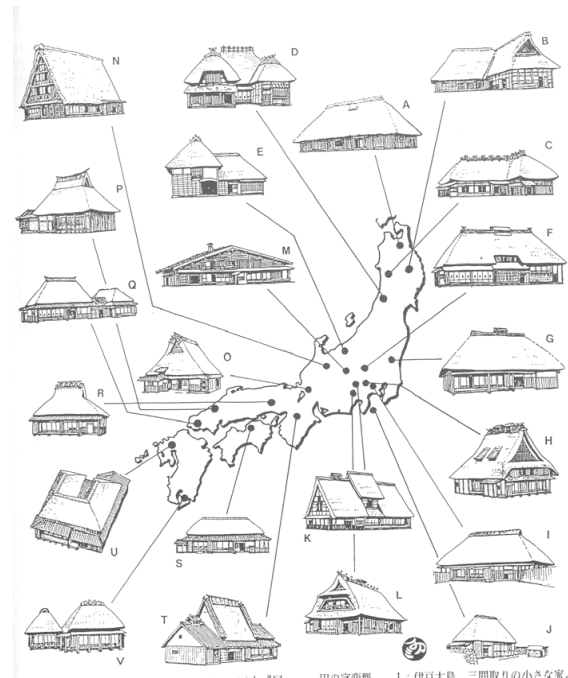


Fig 3. Regional differences of the Japanese house
(Source: Nishiyama, 1989: 118)

2.3. WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE HOUSE

In Turkish House, contrary the situation in Japan, “*room is the space isolated at the most from the exterior world.*” (Yürekli, 2005) This is also one of the most easily recognizable aspects of religious belief of users.

Patriarchal family structure, in which men (especially father) is considered as the only authority in the family, is another common feature between traditional Turkish and Japanese life styles. Reflections of this common feature are quite different on traditional houses of Japan and Turkey. In both cases, the best places in the house are reserved for the man, for instance in Turkish house, the selamlık section (başoda), which is easily accessible without disturbing the family, (Günay, 2005) has the most windows making it brightest room in the house and richly decorated ceiling.

Woman's role in the spatial organization of the houses of Japan and Turkey are quite different from each other. The most noticeable aspect in the spatial organization of traditional Turkish house, where social spaces for men and women are separated from each other, is the reflection of religious beliefs, customs and Islamic rituals that implemented by dwellers. Contrary the situation in Turkey, the domestic position of an average Japanese woman was superior to that conceded to her sisters in other Eastern countries and there was perfect freedom in domestic and social life among the Japanese-males and females enjoying each other's society. (Houghton, 1877)

In daily life of traditional Turkish family, most of woman's life was spent indoors while man spends most of his time in outdoors. After emphasizing this situation in daily life of Turkish

family, Küçükerman (2007) when explaining reason of having an individual garden with full of plants and tree, claimed that “...in a sense the Turkish house has been designed for the woman, providing her with separate areas for her work, leisure and social relations.”

3. A Conceptual Comparison between the Rooms of Traditional Houses in Turkey and Japan

This chapter contains comparison of some basic concepts that have been used to define characteristics of traditional rooms in Turkey and Japan. Comparison of the general characteristics between traditional houses of Japan and Turkey, the significance lies in the similarity of multipurpose usage of a room for various daily activities as sitting, eating and sleeping. Activity of sitting also includes several occasions such as gathering for work, leisure or social relations.

The floor plays an important role in the multipurpose usage of the rooms in Japan and Turkey. In both countries, outdoor shoes are not allowed in the house as the part of their custom. At the entrance gate of houses, shoes are taken off to keep the floors clean. This custom of taking shoes off is still highly prevailing in most of the houses in Turkey and Japan. The origin of this custom bases on the same simple desire to keep floor covering materials clean. (Tatami in Japan and carpet or rugs in Turkey are very sensitive to any kind of dirt.)

As have been mentioned in the previous chapter, traditional Japanese house is an evolution of religious building of Shinto, which is Japan's indigenous belief. That means the house itself is a sacred place in a way where various kind of religious and custom rituals take place in time. A traditional house itself in Turkey does not imply sacredness. However, rooms should be kept clean all the time since occupants perform obligatory religious rituals of Islam as the part of their private daily life in their house.

3.1. CONCEPT OF SIMPLICITY IN WAY OF LIFE

“The true beauty of a room lay in the vacant space enclosed by roof and walls, rather than the roofs and walls themselves.” Lao tse (the ancient Taoist scholar) (Quoted by Alexandra Black in the Japanese House, architecture and interiors, 2000)

Room in Turkish house by itself is an independent space that provides all requirements of daily life. This is also valid for traditional Japanese architecture that fulfills its function in the most appropriate level. Although the floor covering materials in the traditional house of Turkey and Japan are quite different from each other—carpet (or rug) in Turkey; Tatami in Japan—users' living styles share close similarity. Floor is the most functional part of the house since it hosts basic activities of daily life—seating for different occasions, eating on a low-rise tray and sleeping on mattress that is placed on the floor.

The so called modularity of Japanese houses starts with the standard size of a Tatami, which is ‘the name of the mats which entirely cover the floor of the rooms and upon which it is forbidden to tread in shoes.’ (Schmidt, 1958) That is, tatami is the smallest unit of the Japanese house. “The mat (tatami) takes the place of several articles of furniture deemed necessary to houses in other lands. It is a carpet, chair, and table by day, and a bed at night.” (Houghton, 1877)

Room is the smallest and repeated dwelling unit that consists of standard facilities for daily life in traditional Turkish house. The relationship between users and the room in traditional Turkish architecture is almost the same as that between the users and their rooms in traditional Japanese architecture. Both show great proximity in the multipurpose usage of a room in

accordance with the ‘simple life styles’ of their users. Living style of dwellers is one of the most important arguments that characterize not only the functional but the spiritual peculiarities of traditional room. Regarding simplicity in living styles of the dwellers of traditional houses in Turkey, Güney (2005) wrote that “There was simplicity in everything. They sat on the floor, worked on the floor, spread their mattresses on the floor and ate sitting on the floor.” In Turkish house, each room is an independent unit with its own service area, which gives the Turkish house its specific character. (Küçükerman, 2007)

Residential architecture of Japan and Turkey shares another common approach in having a built-in utility areas such as cupboards, closet for bedding and shelving. Taking the advantage of using wall inserted utility areas, the house contained very little furniture. Güney (2005) clearly indicated the philosophy of life based on contentment with very little as the source that led people to create this simple and highly appreciated design solution.

The motivations lay behind this simplistic attitude are not the same. Although there is a similarity in using concept of simplicity between the traditional Turkish house and Japanese house, perceptions of this concept are quite different from each other. This notion has been explained by Yürekli (2005) in the following words: “the simplicity in the Turk Evi is related with reminiscence of the nomadic life style, and consists of compressed functional layering. On the other hand the simplicity of the Japanese house is related with the worldview and beliefs of the Japanese people.”

Multifunctional usage of a room in Turkish house style is the clear reflection of the nomadic culture. This was interpreted as a minimalist attitude by Yürekli (2005). They had to maintain all facilities of the time as simple as possible. Nomadic way of thought has always been an indispensable part of traditional living style in Turkey. Furthermore, nomadism continued to be the dominant pattern even after settled agriculture was established. In Turkey, there has always been a long tradition of having seasonal inner-spaces to meet the severe climatic conditions of summer and winter.

Whereas the reason of simplistic attitude in Turkish House is highly functional (profane) that has originated from the conditions of nomadic life style, simplicity in Japanese house is mostly the reflection of the users' philosophy of life that is the sum of religious belief (Zen and Shinto) and customs. Functionality in Japanese architecture in general consists of spirituality in itself. Religious belief in Japan, one of the basic teaching of which is contentment with very little, is the main source creating simplicity in every aspect of people's daily life. The concept of simplicity in Japanese thought, to Bruno Taut (1935), goes far beyond the boundaries of architecture and art, and should be discussed in the context of Tea-Culture. (Dündar, 2006)

3.2. THE CONCEPT OF PRIVACY IN WAY OF LIFE: INTROVERSION OR EXTROVERSION

Contrary the case in traditional Japanese architecture, contradiction between the interior and exterior is one of the chief characteristics of the Turkish House. (Küçükerman, 2007) According to Güney (2005), religious thought and customs were the main factors for the isolation of house from the outside world. The similar thinking can also be seen in Küçükerman's (2007) following words: “The Islamic outlook also had its influence on the basic principles of the Turkish house and its rooms in Anatolia and reflected its introverted way of life and limited solutions to outside relationships.”

In other words, interior-exterior relationship was reduced to

minimum to keep the privacy of the family life. The family concept was the most important social unit in Turkish socio-cultural life. *“The interior-exterior relationship of the rooms is limited since most of the occupants time is spent out of doors. From inside and outside it gives the impression of portability.”* (Küçükerman, 2007)

Interior-exterior relationship in traditional Japanese room is quite original among other vernacular houses of the world. Schmidt (1958) clearly expressed this feature of Japanese architecture in the following words: *“Since the Japanese room is completely empty and enclosed by sliding screens, so that it is not actually shut off from the outside, there is perfect unity between the interior and the garden.”* The continuity between inner space and outer space is one of the significant characteristics of traditional Japanese house. That is, walls are not as important in defining space of a Japanese room as in case of a room in traditional Turkish house. Construction process is also quite different between the two. In Japanese architecture, after erecting posts the roof comes first prior to the walls which do not, in fact, show the properties of ordinary walls. These are the sliding screens (Shoji) which can also easily be removed from their frames. During the hot and humid summer season, these sliding doors are opened wide to let the cool breeze flow through the house. Roofs are much more important in Japanese architecture to characterize a room than the walls. In Turkish architecture *“the room is characterized by its walls.”* (Yürekli, 2005)

Japanese feeling for nature was the fundamental source in the formation of unique relationship between interior and exterior spaces. Perception of nature in Japanese thought is completely different from that of the Western counterpart. Being united with nature was the necessity of their belief for Japanese people in their dwellings.

Another important determiner for this kind of exceptional relationship with nature was the unique perception of privacy (personal space) in Japanese traditional life style. Privacy concept in both societies shows great differences. It is sometimes suggested that there was no conception of privacy in Japanese culture. Houghton (1877) put an emphasis on the lack of privacy concept when he wrote *“All Japanese houses, except the castles and mansions of the nobility, are directly on the street, and are so universally kept open during the day, ...”*

Another significant difference between the residential architectures of Japan and Turkey can be seen in their space configuration in which Turkish house shows the characteristics of intra-spatial relationship whereas Japanese house represents inter-spatial relationship. The most easily recognizable example of this sort of space configuration in traditional Turkish house is the place named as sofa which differentiates in its border and contains several sub-spaces of different functions. (Eyüce, 2005) The sofa, a hall, is the most important section of the house, which links the various rooms of the house. Other than linking the rooms, sofa² is used for various activities as dining, sitting, working, or even a sleeping. (Günay, 2005)

In summary, traditional Turkish house represents introverted way of life whereas traditional Japanese house represents extraverted way of life. There is a common point in these contrasting approaches that they both have mainly been influenced by the prevailing religious thought and customs of their times—while Islamic thought and customs were the basic source for introverted character considering family privacy as a major concern, indigenous religion of Japan (Shinto) and Zen belief were the basic sources for extraverted character of Japanese house creating exceptional idea of interior-exterior relationship.

3.3. REFLECTIONS OF CLIMATIC FACTORS

The climate of Japan is predominantly temperate, but due to the large north-south extension of the country, it varies greatly in different regions. Generally, northern Japan experiences a cool-temperate climate, central Japan is temperate, while southern Japan has a sub-tropical climate. (Fong et al., 2007)

Japan is hot in summer, and cold in winter. However, Japanese houses were basically built to deal with the severe climatic conditions of the summer season, which is a rather long, hot and humid. There are only minor differences between a typical traditional house in Hokkaido, the extreme north, and Kyushu, the extreme south. (Rapoport, 1969) There are seldom any chimneys in Japanese houses. In cold weather, or for cooking, the fire, which is invariably of charcoal, is sometimes kindled in a shallow pit walled up from the ground; but oftener the fire is in an earthen or metal brazier sitting on the floor. (Houghton, 1877) That is to say, heating is inadequate in traditional Japanese houses. Residents have adapted to low temperatures in winter by changing their behavior rather than by controlling the room temperature by heating. (Sawashima and Matsubara, 2004) Central heating does not exist in traditional Japanese house. During the winter season, residents heat themselves by wearing thick clothes and using small moveable heating elements like iroi, which was installed in the hall played a role of a fireplace in Japanese house. (Fig.4) Since the hall had function of a common space, family always gathered around the fire for eating, working and chatting. Thus the iroi was used for multiple purposes such as cooking, lighting, warming the house, and drying the wet clothes.” (Matsushita, 2004)



Fig 4. Iroi in Traditional Japanese House
(Source: Murata&Black, 2000)

Turkey is situated in the temperate Mediterranean climatic and geographical zone. (Eşiyok, 2006) Significant temperature differences between summer and winter in Turkey characteristically influenced the spatial organization and use of the Turkish house. Reactions of users to the temperature differences in Turkish house can be classified into the three main groups. *“The first reaction the weather turning cold is for the person to heat himself and gain protection. It was the person rather than the room which was heated.”* (Küçükerman, 2007) The best example of this attitude can be observed in the room called Toyhane of the traditional houses of Divriği. Toyhane was the hall where everything was done, meals were eaten, guests were entertained, and various ceremonies were held especially in winters. (Matpum, 2010; Şenol, 2007) The most interesting part of this room—Toyhane—was the sitting area called Kürsübaşı

which had an oven (tandır) in the middle. There was a wooden table placed 60-70 cm high above the fire place and covered with two quilts (Kürsü Yorganı) where the family sat around and lay their legs underneath for heating themselves.

Interestingly, an approach very similar to this traditional facility (Kürsübaşı) was used for heating in all of the traditional Japanese houses. As Nakagami (1994) stated the idea of space heating was completely foreign to most Japanese until the 1960's. Prior to that time, 'kotatsu,' which is a table with a padded quilts around the sides under which a coal fired, kerosene heater was placed, was used in the living or dining area of the house. Families would spend much of the evening eating and socializing around the kotatsu. (Wilhite and Nakagami and Murakoshi, 1996) Kürsübaşı in traditional Divriği Houses in Turkey and kotatsu in traditional Japanese house were used not only for heating but for socializing as well.



Fig 5. Toyhane in Traditional Turkish House in Divriği
(Source: Şenol, 2007)



Fig 6. Kotatsu in Traditional Japanese House
(Source: Murata&Black, 2000)



Fig 7. Toyhane in Traditional Turkish House in Divriği
(Source: Şenol, 2007)

The second reaction of the dwellers of Turkish house was to heat the room's interior. *"When it became impossible to heat a room sufficiently the occupants had to move to a better protected and more easily heated room in another part of the house. The concept of winter room is based on these foundations..."*

(Küçükerman, 2007) Material selection also reflects the effect of whether conditions. Winter rooms are mostly placed on the ground floor, which is built of stone, while summers are spent on the upper floors, which are of wood. (Petherbridge, 1978)

The third reaction of dwellers to deal with the severe weather conditions of the winter season in Turkey was to move to another house capable of providing them with a more suitable environment. The custom of living different houses at different times of the year can still be observed in many parts of Anatolia. (Küçükerman, 2007)

Although climatic conditions of summer seasons are different from each other—since the humidity in Japan is much higher than in most Western countries including Turkey—one of the common properties of the both houses is that they are designed for summer season. (Yürekli & Yürekli, 2005)

4. Conclusion

Room in Turkish house by itself is an independent space that provides all requirements of daily life. This is also valid for traditional Japanese architecture that fulfills its function in the most appropriate level. Floor is the most functional part of the house in Japan and Turkey since it hosts basic activities of daily life—seating for different occasions, eating on a low-rise tray and sleeping on mattress that is placed on the floor.

Residential architecture of Japan and Turkey shares another common approach in having built-in utility areas such as cupboards, closet for bedding and shelving. Taking the advantage of using wall inserted utility areas, the house contained very little furniture.

The basic conceptual similarity between the rooms of traditional houses in Japan and Turkey is the simplicity in occupants' ways of life. Occupants of both Japanese and Turkish rooms were living a life of total contentment with very little. A major conclusion of this comparative study is that the motivations lay behind of this simplistic attitude in their lifestyles differ from each other since functional necessities of nomadic period were the fundamental impetus for development of Turkish house, whereas religious belief in Japan, basic teaching of which is contentment with very little, was the main source for creating simplicity in every aspect of people's daily life. In other words, the reason of simplistic attitude in Turkish House is highly functional (profane) that has originated from the conditions of nomadic life style. Simplicity in Japanese house is mostly the reflection of the users' philosophy of life that is the sum of religious belief (Zen and Shinto) and customs.

Economic factors did not have very much influence on users' daily life styles of both traditional architecture of Turkey and Japan. The basic principles of room in both houses do not change much at all arising out of economic factors.

Traditional Turkish house represents introverted way of life whereas traditional Japanese house represents extroverted way of life. There is a common point in these contrasting approaches that they both have mainly been influenced by the prevailing religious thought and customs of their times. Japanese feeling for nature was the fundamental source. Perception of nature in Japanese thought is completely different from that of the Western counterpart. Being united with nature was the necessity of their belief for Japanese people in their dwellings. Another important determiner for this kind of exceptional relationship with nature was the unique perception of privacy (personal space) in Japanese traditional life style. Privacy concept in both societies shows great differences.

Roofs are much more important in Japanese architecture to characterize a room than the walls. That is, walls are not as important in defining space of a Japanese room as in case of a

room in traditional Turkish house.

There is a very interesting common feature between dwellers of traditional Divriği Houses in Turkey and dwellers of traditional Japanese houses in their unique reaction to cold weather. Both dwellers heated themselves rather than the room by using a specially designed table, which was named as *Kürsübaşı* in Divriği houses and *Kotatsu* in Japanese houses. *Kürsübaşı* in traditional Divriği Houses in Turkey and *Kotatsu* in traditional Japanese houses were used not only for heating but for socializing as well.

Finally, in light of the above mentioned points, it is possible to say that traditional residential architectures of Japan and Turkey bear close similarities in terms of some basic concepts. Although the motivations lay behind these concepts are characteristically different from each other, there still exist a common point in these different approaches that they both have mainly been influenced by the prevailing religious thought and customs of their times.

Endnotes

1. For instance, see Bruno Taut's 'Houses and People of Japan,' 1935; Peter Collins's 'Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture,' 1998; William J.R. Curtis's 'Modern Architecture since 1900,' 1982.
2. Plan types of traditional Turkish house are defined according to the position of sofa in the house as the outer sofa, inner sofa and the central sofa. For more details please see Küçükerman (1978), Günay (2005).

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