

Design for the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies at Bahcesehir University

1. Outline of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies at Bahcesehir University

On June 14, 2010, “Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies” was inaugurated in Bahcesehir University (BU), Turkey. This institute aims at the introduction of Japanese culture not only to the students of BU but also to general public, and supports and promotes scholarly research and educational activity related to Japanese culture. The institute functions as a base of Inter Cultural Studies of Architecture (ICSA) in Istanbul where Mukogawa Women’s University (MWU) students engage in the research or experience recovery protection works of Turkish historical architecture.

In autumn 2009, Dr. Shigeyuki Okazaki and architects in MWU started the design of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies at the request of BU. Meanwhile, the Institute of Turkish Culture Studies (ITCS) in the Koshien Hall, which was established prior to the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies on July 29, 2009, aims to deepen understanding of the two countries in cooperation with the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies through studies of Turkey and Japan located on opposite ends of Silk Road. Both institutes are expected to be active in research and exchanges cutting across the field of architecture.

The Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies is not meant to be a mere exhibition room for various objects to introduce Japanese culture, but a space of hospitality as a whole. In this sense, we designed this institute also function as a tea-ceremony room.



Opening ceremony of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies at Bahcesehir University

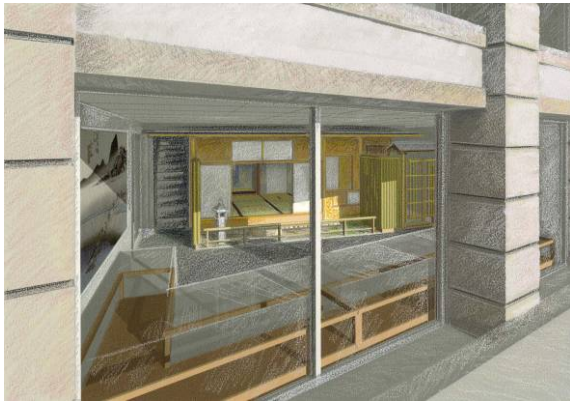
2. Primary design (2009.11.3)

We planned to construct an exhibition room centered on a tea-ceremony room, a space filled with essence of Japanese beauty.

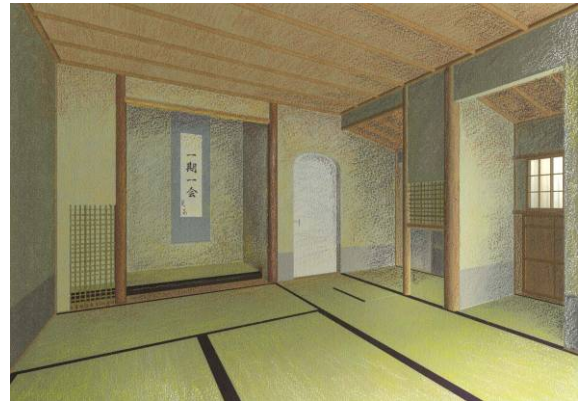
This tea-ceremony room is not of a tea hut style completed by Rikyu Sen. We designed a tea-ceremony room after Enshu Kobori’s style called “Kirei Sabi”. “Kirei Sabi” is thought to be a compound of “Wabi Sabi” and additional amorousness. In this room, we express quietness, brightness, and amorous and rich elements in overall taste of “Sabi”.

In the basic design of the tea-ceremony room, following characteristics of Enshu style were considered to be taken in. Clear distinctions were made between the seats for the main guest and that of the sub. The distinction of seat order was made apparent by installing crawl-in entrance in the central position of the tea room. As a result, upon entering the room one can see the seat for main guest in front of him, and that of the sub on the left. It is a design to help the guests easily distinguish

the order of precedence of the seat. In addition, the seat for main guest is located in front of *tokonoma* (alcove), a position which faces the seat of the host who draws tea. Many windows were planned for the tea-ceremony room not only on the south side of the guest's space but also close to the seat of the host. And installation of a flat ceiling (above the seats for guests) and a modified roof (above the seat of the host) adds variations to the room's upper space.



Perspective drawing of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies



Model of Japanese-style room

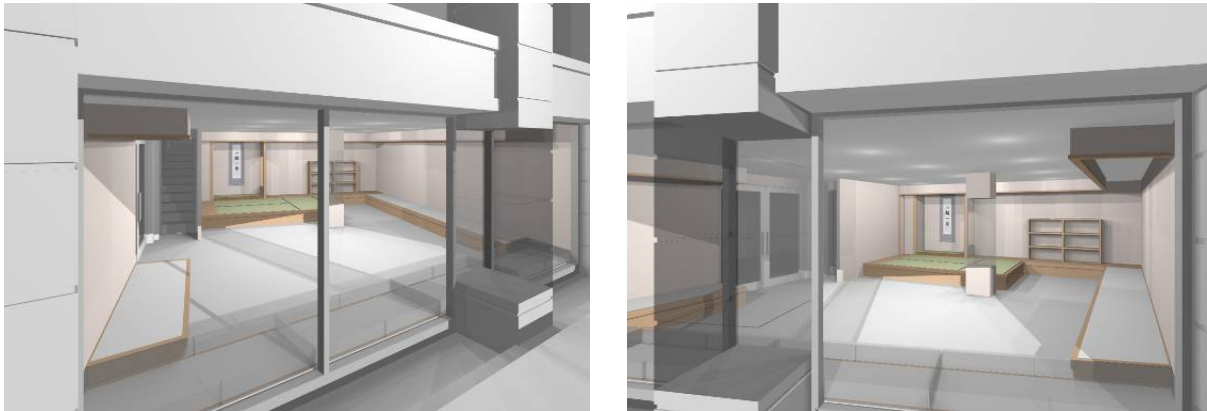


3. The secondary design (2010.01.22)

The interior of the tea room was modified into a space with a 3-*tatami*-mat space and another with display units adopting *tatami* mat of a specific gauge system.

We set the Standard dimensions of this room as 1 *sun* corresponds to 3.03mm, and designed it as an exhibition space centered on the three-mat room of *Kyo-ma* size (i.e. 6*shaku* 3*zun* long (955x1910cm) mat), which is the basic dimensions of *tatami* in the tea room. This Japanese-style room has *tokonoma*, or alcove, at the front of the room, where different seasonal decorations can be displayed. Incidentally, the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies faces Ciragan St. with a large opening to it. So, we designed the institute to be a big showcase for passers-by, through which they can enjoy a glimpse of an interior event. The Japanese-style room itself is designed as one of the exhibits. And display units lie along the wall inside the room, so that one can, appreciate every display from outside. The total structural design is based on traditional Japanese style.

We installed a hanging shelf to store exhibits which are expected to increase in the future. In addition, under floor space was devised so that it can be used as the storage by applying step-type doors on the floor below exhibition units.



Perspective drawing of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies

4. Design for execution/ Designer's supervision

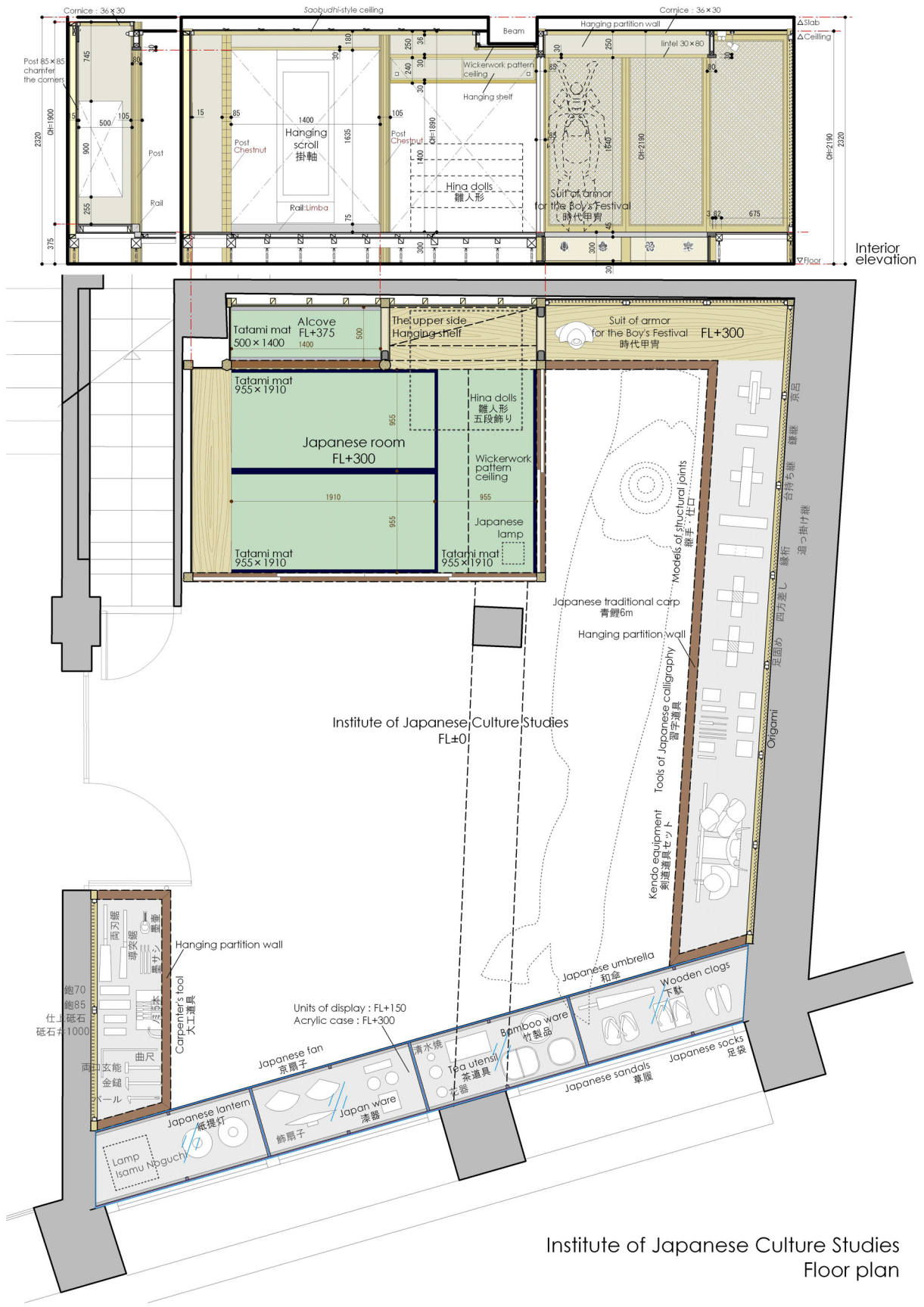
We designed the institute to be constructed entirely with materials from Turkey except *tatami* mat and *shoji* paper.

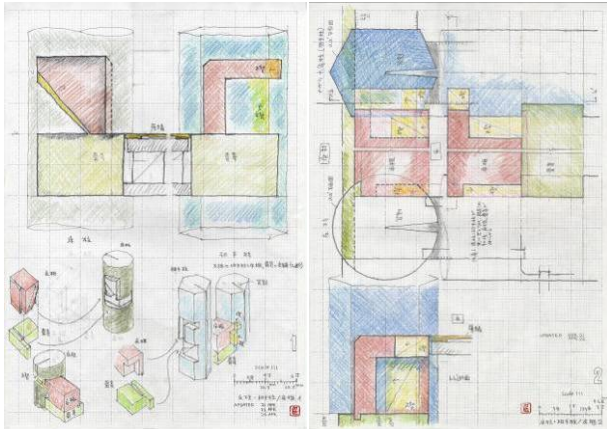
For the post of the alcove, a chestnut log was selected in the mountain of Turkey and brought back and used unpeeled. For the other post to complement it, an octagonal chestnut log, which was processed by a Turkish carpenter, was used. In addition, materials for downside frame of alcove, a wood sheathing or ceiling board were chosen from the ones locally available and easily processed, e.g. pine wood. As for *tatami* mat, the one donated by MWU as an exhibit was used after being pasted on a plywood of the same size. The ceiling of Japanese-style room is of *saobuchi*-style and that of the exhibit space is of a wickerwork pattern. We intended the introduction of various traditional designs through its variation. As for mud wall, we had a painted color swatch of mud wall sent from Japan and coordinated the color while referring to the standard color samples in cooperation with a Turkish dauber.

In addition, in an attempt to assimilate the designs of Turkey and Japan, we put the traditional lattice panel of Turkey before the mud wall. In fact, windows of traditional Turkish houses had lattices of various designs, which were used as blind shade or blindfold. We devised a system panel applying the lattice on which exhibits can be flexibly attached or placed. We installed openwork of typical traditional pattern, which is usually seen on Iznik tile, on the door of the storing space under the floor. The openwork serves as a vent under the floor or a pulling handle to open/close step-in type doors.

The *shoji* has crosspieces on both sides to make it look as beautiful on whichever side it may be seen. The lattice of the *shoji* was crafted by a Turkish artisan, and *shoji* screen paper donated by MWU was applied with traditional technique and was completed in collaboration with students of BU.

This exhibition room was constructed by Turkish carpenters. And it seemed easier for them to use steel bundles for the groundwork of the floor. In addition, it was necessary to keep the expected additional load on the existing building as little as possible, because it was virtually difficult to grasp a proof strength of the skeleton or the wall or a state of the ceiling groundwork. Furthermore, we adopted a method of construction which enables a fine adjustment because of the vague horizontal plane and vertical plane of the existing building. In Japan, unlike in Turkey, it is common to connect a pillar and a beam without using building hardware and screw nails. Therefore, we made drawings of each jointing part for cut materials to be used for such items as alcove posts and frames, which needs to be built up without using nails.





The carpenter cooperated with the teacher of BU and built the Japanese room
 Left : Full-size detail drawings of alcove



The wickerwork ceiling



Right : Tatami mat



The students of BU put the Japan paper on the shoji



The chestnut tree processing



Visit of the chancellor of MWU



Perspective drawing of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies



5. Exhibits

About 90 items were donated to the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies by MWU including Japanese architecture-related pieces such as carpenter's tool, models of structural joints, lamps and Japanese paper as well as tea utensil, traditional items related to people's daily lives such as kimonos, Japan ware and bamboo ware, *hina* dolls, suit of armor for the Boys' Festival etc. Books on Japanese building, art or culture and the thousand origami cranes made by Japanese students are also displayed.

Models of structural joints were made by a Japanese artisan who specializes in tea ceremony room-related work upon our request. They represent sophisticated skills of Japanese wooden building, and at the same time it makes good teaching materials itself which helps one further understand structure and system of joints while he engages in its knock-down or built-up. Incidentally, every traditional carpenter tool exhibited along with the toolbox of traditional style is of practical use. Likewise, tea utensil, tools of Japanese calligraphy, kimono etc., can be used in daily life.



The alcove of a Japanese room



Interior of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies



Interior of the Research Center of Japanese Culture Studies



Japanese traditional carp streamers were put up in front of a building of BU