Summary descriptions of modern buildings to visit in Japan

Fuller descriptions, with more photographs and links to other web sites, are at www.galinsky.com

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galinsky buildings in Japan
listed in date order in the following pages

- Tokyo:
  - National Museum of Western Art 1959
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  - Tokyo International Forum 1996
  - Gallery of Horyuji Treasures 1999
  - Maison Hermes 2001
  - International Library of Children’s Literature 2002
  - Prada Store 2003
  - Christian Dior 2004
  - Tod’s 2004
  - Omotesando Hills 2006

- Yokohama International Passenger Terminal 2002

- Sendai Mediatheque 2001

- 21st Century Art Museum 2004

- Church of Light 1989
- Chikatsu-Asuka Museum 1994
- Sayamae Museum 2001

- Oyamazaki Museum 1995

- Komyo-ji Temple 2000

- Yamamura House 1924
- Chapel on Mount Rokko 1986
- Hyogo Prefectural Museum 2001
- Himeji City Museum of Literature 1991

- Art Site Naoshima 1992
- Marugame Museum 1991
- Water Temple 1991
- Awaji Yumebutai 2000
The Yamamura House, situated on a ridge overlooking the affluent city of Ashiya, was designed in 1918 by Frank Lloyd Wright as a retreat for the family of a local sake brewer, Tazaemon Yamamura. Construction began in 1923 and was completed in 1924 under the direction of two of Wright's disciples, Arata Endo and Makoto Minami. In 1974 the Yamamura House was designated an Important National Cultural Asset. It was later opened to the public under its new name, the Yodoko Guest House.

The structure, clad in softly textured Oyaishi stone, is composed of a symmetrical series of steps which ascend the sloping landscape. Wright was careful to limit each section of the house's design to a maximum height of two floors, thus maintaining his philosophy that architecture should develop out of its natural surroundings.

Upon entering the house one is presented with a number of features unique to Wright's design style. Mahogany framework and decorative light fixtures accent the wide staircase. An intentionally narrow stone corridor leads to a spacious salon, where an abundance of natural light is provided by two symmetrical windows on the east and west walls. Decorative doors on the south wall open out to a spacious balcony with spectacular views of mountains and sea. But the focal point of the salon is clearly the massive Oyaishi stone fireplace, which constitutes the north wall.

Steven Robbins 2005

How to visit

From Ashiyagawa Station on the Hankyu Kobe Line cross the river to the east side and walk north for about 5 minutes.

From JR Ashiya Station walk west to the Ashiya River and then follow the river on the east side towards the mountains for about 10 minutes.

From Hanshin Ashiya Station cross to the east side of the river and walk towards the mountains for about 20 minutes.

The Yamamura House is open 10am to 4pm Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and National Holidays.

For more information visit www.yodoko.co.jp/geihinkan/index_e.html, email info@yodoko.co.jp or telephone +81 797 38 1720.

Also located in Hyogo Prefecture not far from the Yamamura House is the former Koshien Hotel, designed in the Frank Lloyd Wright style Arata Endo. Today it stands as the Kami-Koshien Campus of the Mukogawa Women's University.
The National Museum of Western Art, one of three museums designed by Le Corbusier according to his prototype for a 'museum of unlimited growth', was originally established to house and to display the Matsukata Collection. Kojiro Matsukata, once-president of the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Company, collected paintings, sculpture and prints during his travels to the west.

Located within the woods of Ueno Park, the museum is approached through a landscaped plaza. Its blank textured facade of green pebbles set in concrete panels is suspended on pilotis. The horizontal rhythm of the facade is interrupted only by a large window with a projecting concrete balcony and stair.

The organization of the building is based on a spiral within a square. An upper level of galleries wraps around a central double-height court, penetrating it with balconies at several locations. A ramp within the skylit central court winds its way to the upper gallery level. In addition a pinwheel pattern of circulation along linear paths leads to the exit stairs.

The museum, begun by Le Corbusier, was later completed by his students. In 1979 a new wing was added to the Main Building creating another central courtyard between it and the existing Main Building, this courtyard open to the exterior. Further construction to the museum was completed in 1997 with a below-grade addition of the Special Exhibition Wing containing galleries for temporary exhibitions and an auditorium.

Kari Silloway 2004

**How to visit**

The museum is a two-minute walk from JR Ueno station (Park exit), seven-minute walk from Keisei Ueno station or eight-minute walk from Ueno station of Ginza or Hibiya subway lines.

It is open 9:30am-5pm Tuesday-Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, and 9:30am-8pm Friday. Last admission is 30 minutes before closing time. It is closed Mondays and December 28-January 4. Free days for Museum collection: The second and the fourth Saturday of each month and November 3. For more information see www.nmwa.go.jp or telephone +81 3-3828-5131.

Also located within Ueno Park not far from The National Museum of Western Art is the Gallery of Horyuji Treasures by Yoshio Taniguchi and The International Library of Children's Literature by Tadao Ando.
The small wedding Chapel is located high above Kobe, Japan on Mount Rokko, discretely tucked behind a non-descript adjacent hotel. Ando uses the materials of concrete, glass and light to create a powerful spiritual place through a rich spatial sequence of light and darkness, direct and indirect natural light.

The chapel is an almost square concrete volume that is flanked by an adjoining vertical bell tower and a tunnel of translucent glass. To access the chapel one enters from a back exit of the hotel, past a small pond and into a long tunnel of frosted glass which is flooded with a milky white light. The end of the tunnel is open with a view of nature, but no sign of a chapel.

To the right at the end of the tunnel is the entry to the chapel. One enters into a dark vestibule with a curved concrete wall that directs the visitor into the chapel, a hint of light spills from a vertical slit in the curved concrete wall demarcating the threshold between corridor and space of worship. This main concrete volume opens up with its high ceiling and side wall of natural light that is open to an exterior space bound by an exterior concrete wall. There is a boundless space between interior and exterior. While one can see into this exterior space, one cannot physically enter into it, only spiritually.

The altar space seems to be magically illuminated by light that falls from an unseen slit in the ceiling above it and by a long and skinny vertical window to the side of it. The light-bathed concrete walls change form over time, through the passage of light, constantly animating and redefining the space. The dialogue between hard, direct light from the exterior 'room' and the soft, abstract light creates a space that has the power to transcend and transform and then bring one back to the physical world.

Kari Silloway 2004 with special thanks to Ko Teramoto

**How to visit**

From JR Osaka Station take JR Tokaido Line (express) to JR Rokkomichi Station (22 minutes). From the South side of this station take the free Rokkosan Oriental Hotel bus (about 30 minutes) to the Hotel. For the time schedule of the bus and a map see www.roh.co.jp/ac.html (in Japanese only).

For reservations to see the chapel (and for the current hotel bus schedule) telephone +81 78-891-0333. Also see www.roh.co.jp (in Japanese only) or email roh@gao.ne.jp

The chapel is part of the Rokkosan Oriental Hotel.
Located in a quiet residential neighborhood in the suburbs of Osaka, the small Christian church made of silky smooth concrete sits modestly within its environment. The communal church consists of two rectangular volumes that are both cut at a 15 degree angles by freestanding concrete walls. One indirectly enters the church by slipping between the two volumes, one that contains the Sunday school and the other that contains the worship hall.

The space of the chapel is defined by light, by the strong contrast between light and shade. In the chapel light enters from behind the altar, from a cruciform cut in the concrete wall that extends vertically from floor to ceiling and horizontally from wall to wall, aligning perfectly with the joints in the concrete. From this cruciform shape an abstract and universal light seems to be floating on the concrete wall, its rays extending and receding over time with the movement of the sun. Light is also permitted to seep into the interior from the slicing of the volume by the freestanding concrete wall. The darkness of the chapel is further accentuated by the dark and rough-textured wood of the floor planks and the pews which are built out of reused wood used during construction as scaffolding.

In contrast to the darkness of the chapel the interior of the Sunday school is built of lighter colored wood with a smooth surface. The volume of the Sunday school opens up to a double height space with a mezzanine level that contains a small kitchen, bench and table which are used for congregation gatherings. The volume containing the Sunday school also has light that penetrates the space through the slicing of the volume by the freestanding concrete wall.

Kari Silloway 2004 with special thanks to Ko Teramoto

How to visit

From JR Osaka station take JR line to JR Ibaraki station (13 min.). From here take Kintetsu bus to Kasugaoka-koen bus stop (10min.). The church is located to the northwest 100 meters.

Sunday worship service begins at 10:25am. For visitors with a reservation, the church is open: Sunday 3pm-6pm; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10am-6pm.

Telephone +81 726 27 0071 for reservations to see the church outside of normal worship hours and to confirm worship hours; or email kasugaoka@osaka.email.ne.jp.

For more information see also www.asahi-net.or.jp/~nv3n-krkm/ (in Japanese only).
Collezione is a collection of independent boutiques, galleries, an exercise club and a residence, held together in a concrete mesh of simple, interconnected shapes: two rectangular boxes at a slight angle to each other, with an interlocking cylinder and a cube.

The complex spaces created by the interconnection of the simple shapes creates a maze of circulation routes, intended to be dramatic and challenging. The effect is partially successful, but the concrete has not aged well, and the some of the circulation spaces are a little mean and dark, and so not as uplifting as they perhaps should be. Occasionally, though, the drama comes through.

Simon Glynn 2008

How to visit

Collezione is a few minutes’ walk southeast of Omotesando Crossing (and subway station), on the road above the Chiyoda Line. (On the way you will pass Herzog and de Meuron’s Prada Store.) Common areas are always accessible, as well as the boutiques during store opening hours. On the same street the other side of Omotesando Crossing you may like to visit Ito’s Tod’s Building, SANAA’s Dior and Ando’s Omotesando Hills.
The Museum of Literature, built to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Himeji City becoming a municipality, is located on a hill not far from Himeji Castle, one of Japan's cultural treasures. The museum, devoted to the philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji, displays material relating to Watsuji and eight other writers and philosophers from the region. It consists of two buildings designed by Tadao Ando: the first, the Main Building, completed in 1991 and a separate but adjacent Annex completed in 1996.

To enter the Main Building the visitor ascends a linear ramp that traverses the stepped shallow pool of water that is lined with crushed stone. The form of the building itself, which contains exhibition space and a lecture hall, is composed of two cubic volumes, whose structure is based on a nine-unit grid, that intersect at a thirty-degree angle. A concrete cylinder houses the exhibition space and surrounds one of the cubes, its interior perimeter lined with a ramp that that gently winds its way up to the second floor. Exterior spaces of this building provide direct views to Himeji Castle in the near distance. In this visual construction and topographical relationship Ando sets up an intentional dialogue between the old and the new.

While the older Main Building functions primarily as exhibition space, the newer Annex serves as a library and archive for the works of the writer Ryotaro Shiba. It also consists of intersecting geometrical forms which are set up on axis to the Main Building; a planar concrete wall two stories high penetrates a rectangular glass volume at an angle to it. Inscribed within the glass volume, at a forty-five degree angle to it, is a concrete cube whose interior perimeter is lined with a stairway. A shallow pool of water on the exterior perimeter of the Annex building intersects with the glass and concrete volumes, extending the facade vertically onto the reflective surface of the water. A horizontal window placed at floor and water level of the concrete wall that wraps to enclose a double-height lounge area allows for a continual relation between exterior and interior and a constant play of surfaces between the reflection of the glass and the reflection of the water.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

Take City Bus bound for Oikedai or Shosha Eki from JR Himeji Station in Himeji to Ichinobashi Bungakukan Mae or Shinki Bus (Route Nos. 11 - 13, 41 - 43, 45, 51, or 52) from JR Himeji Station in Himeji to Ichinobashi Bungakukan Mae.

The museum is open 10am - 5pm, closed Mondays and December 25 - January 5. For more information see www.city.himeji.hyogo.jp/bungaku (in Japanese only), email kyo-bungaku@city.himeji.hyogo.jp or telephone +81-792-93-8228.
The Temple, originally for the Shingon Buddhist Sect, is approached from a long uphill path traversing the original temple compound and cemetery. One is then directed, indirectly, through a simple series of two gesturing white-washed concrete walls of light and shadow that eventually lead one to what seems like a pool of water. The pool itself is filled to its outermost perimeter, forming a boundless horizon line about which it infinitely reflects its surroundings of mountains, sky, rice paddies and bamboo groves. The stillness of the water has a meditative effect and perhaps implications of a spiritual cleansing.

A concrete stairway which cuts the circular pool in two symmetrical halves descends down into momentary darkness from the light, below the water, and, eventually, into the sacred space of the Buddhist temple. Contrary to the monochromatic approach through the white walls and neutral concrete stair, the interior of the temple is saturated with color. The circular space is filled with an intense red-orange light which seems to be pulsating from its core, the inner most and most sacred space of the temple which houses the Buddha statue.

The vermilion red color is most intense during sunset as light radiates through a western facing window. This western light has symbolic meaning because Buddha originates from the west (India). The precedent for this relationship between temple and western light is Jodo-ji Jodo-jo temple in Hyogo-ken prefecture by Buddhist monk and architect Chogen in 1192.

Kari Silloway 2004 with special thanks to Ko Teramoto

How to visit

By train (from Osaka) take JR line to Maiko Station (45 min.). At Maiko Station follow signs leading to Ko-soku Maiko bus terminal which is located outside of and above the train station on the bridge leading to Awaji Island. Take the bus to Higashiura inter-change bus terminal. From here take the local bus to Tateishikawa bus stop (3-5 min.) or walk to Water Temple (20 min.).

There is a shuttle bus that transports people around the island to various destinations. Awaji Yumebutai and The Water Temple are two stops on this route. See www.shozen.com for more information on this bus or telephone +81 799 62 5222.

The temple is open from 9am-5pm daily. For more information call +81 799 74 3624.
To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the city of Marugame, Yoshio Taniguchi was commissioned to design a museum to house the works of the artist Genichiro Inokuma who had donated his works of art to the city.

The scale of the building operates at both an urban scale and, in the interior, on a more intimate scale. The principal facade on the plaza is a triple height plane which folds over to frame the grand entry stair and an opaque volume enclosing the exhibition space.

The visitor may enter directly from plaza level into the exhibition gallery, choose to take the grand stair to enter the exhibition gallery at the second level or to access the Art Library, Museum Hall, Workshop and Creative Studio or continue to the upper level which leads to an exterior courtyard. This courtyard contains sculpture by the artist and a wall washed with water. Another wall of glass is the facade of the café from which visitors can look into the serene courtyard whose walls frame the sky.

The museum is composed of three exhibition galleries; the first is a double-height cubic space that overlooks the entry and information lobby on the ground floor and is gently illuminated by natural light from a horizontal band of clerestory glazing. The overhanging planar roof protects the works of art from daylight while framing views out to the city from the upper level.

The second gallery, at the same level as the first, is illuminated only by artificial light, a glowing rectangular band in the ceiling where it meets the wall. Finally, the third exhibition gallery located on the third level is more rectangular in volume and larger in area.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

By Shinkansen super express change at Okayama Station, take an express train on either the Yosan line (toward Matsuyama) or the Dosan line (toward Kochi) to Marugame Station. The museum is immediately to the right as you exit the station. Time required: Tokyo to Okayama approx. 4 hours, Okayama to Marugame approx. 35 minutes.

Opening hours: 10am to 6pm (last entry 5:30pm), closed December 25-31.

For more information see http://web.infoweb.ne.jp/MIMOCA/index_e.html or telephone +81 877-24-7755.
Naoshima is a small island in Japan's Inland Sea that is home to local fishermen as well as a development for the arts. The Museum and hotel are located on the southern edge of the island on a steep hillside with interventions extending to the rocky shore line and beach below. The Museum is intended to be accessed by boat. A stepped plaza along the shoreline functions as the museum's entrance when arriving by boat as well as housing an underground annex.

The composition of the Museum's main building consists of three overlapping cubes and a circle, with a rectangular guest wing attached at an angle to it. The simple geometrical volumes of the Museum are built within the hillside so as not to disturb the beauty of the natural landscape but to become a part of it. The oval shaped hotel Annex is situated higher up the hill above the museum and is accessed by a cable car or walking paths from the museum. The annex houses several guest rooms for visitors. The entry corridor to these rooms is enclosed in glass which traverses a stream of flowing water. On one side there is a view to the sea and the other a view to a water plaza. Connected to this corridor is an oval shaped cut out volume of which in the center is a pool of still water filled to its edges reflecting the surrounding volume and the sky above.

Also located on Naoshima Island is another part to the Museum complex, the Art House Project, involving the restoration of old houses and the transformation of these houses into works of art by artists. Tadao Ando is responsible for the design of one of these “Art Houses”, Minami-dera, built to house the work of artist James Turrell.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

From JR Okayama station in Okayama take JR Uno line to Uno Satation. From here walk 2 minutes to Uno Port. Take the Shikoku Kisen Ferry to Naoshima Miyanoura Port. From the port take the Naoshima town bus to Benesse House: Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum.

The museum is open 8am-9pm daily. For more information please visit www.naoshima-is.co.jp or email naoshima@mail.benesse.co.jp.

To visit the Art House Project reservations must be made in advance at the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum. Telephone +81 87 892 2030 or fax +81 87 892 2259. There are interesting and affordable facilities to stay in overnight that are part of the Art Site Naoshima. Reservations can be made (and are recommended) by telephoning the above number or through the internet site or email.
This important site in Japanese history, located in the southern part of Osaka Prefecture, contains more than 200 ancient burial mounds (kofun) including four imperial tombs. The museum is dedicated to exhibiting and researching prehistoric kofun culture.

The building, located within a natural environment of plum trees, ponds, and walking paths amongst the surrounding hills expands beyond its concrete volume. It integrates itself within the landscape in the form of a stepped concrete roof with a protruding concrete volume and concrete walls that continue into and frame the landscape. From the top of the stepped roof plaza visitors can observe the entire burial mound landscape. This stepped roof also doubles as an exterior auditorium for performances and lectures.

On the interior the display areas are intentionally dark, exhibiting objects as they were found in the tombs, giving the visitor a feeling of being transported back to ancient times.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

From Shin-Osaka Station take the Midousuji Line subway to Tennoji. At Tennoji follow signs to the adjacent Abenobashi Station. From here take the Nagano Line of the Kintetsu Railway to Kishi. From Kishi take Kongo bus to Hannan Neopolis.

The museum is open from 10am to 5pm Tuesday-Sunday.

For more information telephone and to check opening times please call +81 721-93-8321 or visit www.mediajoy.com/chikatsu.
The architecture of the Oyamazaki Museum consists of both old and new: an existing Western Tudor-style villa owned by Shotaro Kaga, an entrepreneur in Osaka, who built this villa in the 1920's based on an architectural style he had seen when he studied in England; and a new addition by Tadao Ando. In order not to overwhelm the existing villa, the tranquil concrete geometric volumes of Ando are set within the ground in close proximity to the existing building so that from the exterior they read more as elements strategically placed within the landscape rather than a building.

These geometric elements consist of a horizontal rectangular volume that contains circulation leading from the existing villa, a smaller vertically oriented rectangular volume which contains an elevator and a cylindrical volume containing an exhibition gallery. When seen from above these elements blend into the landscape with their roofs covered in crushed stone and grass.

When seen from the garden, which contains the man-made and the natural, the concrete rectangular circulation volume becomes a wall next to which a cascade of water falls to lead to a small pond of water reflecting the entire volume. The height of the concrete wall diminishes with the clerestory glazing which allows one to see through the volume to the sky; its opaque material at its base reads more like a carefully placed stone. The full-height vertical glazing at the end of the volume allows the exterior to flow into the interior and the interior to the exterior, the axis aligned with a stone path that meanders throughout the garden.

Kari Silloway 2004 with special thanks to Ko Teramoto

How to visit

From Osaka take JR Kyoto Line (Express 25 minutes) from Osaka Station to JR Yamazaki Station. From here the museum can be found by walking 10 min. to the north or by taking the free museum bus which runs every hour between 10:05-4:05 at 05, 25, 45 minutes. Or from Osaka take the Hankyu Kyoto Line from Hankyu Umeda Station (Express 36 minutes) to Hankyu O-yamazaki Station; from here walk 10 minutes to the north.

From Kyoto take JR Kyoto Line from JR Kyoto Station (Express 14 minutes) to JR Yamazaki Station or take Hankyu Kyoto Line from Kawaramachi Station (Express 24 minutes) to Hankyu O-yamazaki Station.

Opening hours: 10am-5pm (last admission 4:30pm) Tuesday-Sunday; Closed Monday and 28 December-4 January. For more information telephone +81 75-957-3123 or see www.asahibeer oyamazaki.com (Japanese only).
Located on a complex site in the center of Tokyo, on the edge of the Ginza commercial and entertainment district and the Marunouchi business district, The Tokyo International Forum is Japan's largest congress center. It was built following an open international competition in 1989 held by the Union Internationale des Architectes, which was won by the New York architect Rafael Vinoly.

The sweeping form of the volume that contains the Glass Hall, the main entrance lobby to the entire complex, forms an arc that follows the lines of the bounding railway to the east. This volume is intersected on its east side by a lower narrow rectangular curving volume clad in metal which houses meeting rooms. The west side of the complex is demarcated by four almost cubical volumes, three Halls that contain large performance spaces and one that contains a versatile conference room. Each of these volumes is treated as an independent building, primarily accessed through their respective lobbies along the adjacent street, but also through the Glass Hall where a pedestrian ramp lines the interior perimeter winding its way up to pedestrian bridges that pierce its glass facade and span an exterior plaza located between the east and west side buildings toward the performance hall's suspended volumes.

The granite-paved exterior plaza between the arc form and the cubes is a public plaza that allows pedestrian traffic flow through the site. This public plaza also contains vegetation particular to Japan, sculptural installations, outdoor seating areas, access to the subway concourse one level below grade, cafes and shops, while allowing access to the performance hall lobbies and to the Glass Hall.

The structural system of this dramatic atrium space is extremely light, its transparent facade and ceiling made possible by an innovative truss system of arched steel beams in compression and cable elements in tension in repetition over its 225 meter length, all supported by only two columns located on the center of the longitudinal axis at each end of the hall. This hull-like form of the ceiling structure seen through the laminated glass facade creates a distinctive mark on the Tokyo skyline.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

The Forum is a one-minute walk from Yurakucho Station (connected by B1 concourse) or a five-minute walk from JR Tokyo Station (connected by B1 concourse with Keiyo Line at Tokyo Station).

For opening hours and other visitor information please visit www.t-i-forum.co.jp/english/index.html or telephone +81 3-5221-9000.
The Gallery of Horyuji Treasures, one of the museum buildings in the Tokyo National Museum complex in Ueno Park, replaces an existing building on the same site that had served mainly to preserve the works of art in storage of the Horyuji collection. The Horyuji Treasures consist of over 300 valuable objects, mainly from the 7th to 8th Centuries, which were donated to the Imperial Household by Horyuji Temple in 1878.

In contrast to the visual overload and physical density of Tokyo the calm and refined Gallery building operates through its minimalism. Its character is subtly defined through a spatial play of transparency, opacity and reflection and the relationship between vertical and horizontal planes, solid and void, and interior and exterior.

The approach to the Gallery, which is situated among historically significant buildings, is an indirect and asymmetrical one. At first the main facade of the building is seen on the other side of a shallow pool of water, its vertical louvers and columns reflecting onto the surface of the water. It is not until the visitor gets closer that the entry axis shifts to reveal a concrete walkway at the same level as the surface of water leading to the entry door which is defined by what seems to be a floating horizontal plane projecting from the glass facade. At the same height as this floating entry plane is a concrete wall that extends from the outer edge of the facade to define the outer edge of the reflecting pool on one side. On the side opposite the linear wall the reflecting pool is bound naturally by vegetation.

Kari Silloway 2004

**How to visit**

The museum is 10 minutes from Ueno or Uguisudani Station (JR Line); 15 minutes from Ueno Station (Ginza or Hibiya Tokyo Metro Line); or 15 minutes from Keisei Ueno Station (Keisei Line).

Opening hours are 9.30am to 5pm (last entry at 4.30pm). Exceptionally on Fridays during special exhibition periods between April and November, the museum is open until 8pm (last admission at 7.30pm); on Saturdays, Sundays and bank Holidays between April and September, the museum is open until 6pm (last admission at 5.30pm). For more information see www.tnm.jp or telephone +81-3-3822-1111.

Also located within Ueno Park not far from the Gallery of Horyuji Treasures are The International Library of Children's Literature by Tadao Ando and The National Museum of Western Art by Le Corbusier.
Komyo-ji is a new temple for the Pure Land sect of Buddhism, replacing an aging 250-year-old structure. Remnants of the old temple are seen throughout the temple site, such as the bell tower and stone foundation walls, through which one winds one’s way to the temple. Located on the island of Shikoku on the Hiuchi Sea, it is on the route to many famous springs.

The temple consists of a square laminated wood structure that is an interpretation of traditional Japanese temple architecture and joinery. It is different from Ando’s usual language of monolithic concrete construction through its assemblage of parts that compose a whole. In addition to the temple, the complex also contains adjacent buildings for community meetings, offices and housing for the monks. These surrounding volumes are constructed in concrete.

Once inside the temple the visitor circulates around the temple proper, between the inner facade containing the sacred space of the temple, which is defined by wood and a screen of frosted glass, and the outer facade of the temple. Through clear glass between the wood of the outer facade light dapples the wooden floor of the corridor, shortening and elongating, ever changing with the time of day.

The water surrounding the temple is serene yet at the same time dynamic. It quietly reflects the wooden structure into it, extending the height of the temple, and at the same time, is a surface that reflects ever changing light which dances on the monolithic concrete walls of the administrative buildings of the temple compound and through the glass between the wooden slats of the temple building into the sacred space of the temple, creating a poetic synthesis between materials and light.

Kari Silloway 2004 with special thanks to Ko Teramoto

How to visit

From JR Matsuyama station in Matsuyama take JR Ishizuchi express line (56 min.) or JR Yosan-sen local line (138 min) to JR Iyo-saiko station. From here the temple is a 10 minute walk or a 3 minute taxi ride.

A map (in Japanese only) is at www.koumyouji.com/map/index.htm.

The temple is open from 2pm –4pm daily. For more information and confirmation of opening hours please telephone +81 897 53 4583.

The temple web site (in Japanese only) is at www.koumyouji.com.
The mixed-use complex of Awaji Yumebutai was constructed on the remains of a hillside whose earth had been used for a huge landfill project for the Osaka Bay area. Through its construction this intricate complex of interior and exterior spaces not only serves in reconstructing the landscape that had been destroyed but also, through the idea of rebirth and reconstruction, serves as a memorial to the thousands who had lost their lives and the destruction of land in the massive earthquake that shook the Kobe region in 1995.

The complex is a series of intersecting geometric parts that make up a whole. It consists of a hotel, chapel, international conference center, restaurants, terracing flower gardens, water gardens, plazas that are animated through light and shadow and sounds of running water, a green house, and outdoor theater. It is a manmade construction that integrates itself into and becomes part of the landscape as it overlooks Osaka bay and descends from hillside to sea.

This rich interweaving spatial experience is constructed through a spatial sequence of interior and exterior, light and shadow, running water and still water and a framing of views to the sky, water and vegetation. The physical materials of these spaces, silky smooth concrete, rough stone, sea shells, translucent and transparent glass, water and vegetation are punctuated by more temporal materials; light sound and smell.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

By train (from Osaka) take JR line to Maiko Station (45 min.). At Maiko Station follow signs leading to Ko-soku Maiko bus terminal which is located outside of and above the train station on the bridge leading to Awaji Island. Take the bus to Higashiura inter-change bus terminal. From here take the local bus to Awaji Yumebutai-Westin Hotel bus stop.

There is a shuttle bus that transports people around the island. Awaji Yumebutai and The Water Temple are two stops on this route. See www.shozen.com for more information on this bus or telephone +81 799 62 5222.

The botanical gardens are open 10am-6pm. For more information please telephone +81 799 74 1200. For the Westin Hotel Resort and Conference Center, telephone +81 799 74 1111. For more information please visit www.yumebutai.co.jp.
The building is owned by the French luxury empire of Jean Louis Dumas and is the corporate headquarters and retail store of Hermes Japan, a company famous for its upscale hand bags and apparel. The 6,000 square meter (65,000 square feet) building contains shopping space, workshops, offices, exhibition spaces and multimedia areas all topped by a roof garden. A recess that divides the long facade in two forms a courtyard which provides access to the subway two levels below.

Located in the Ginza shopping district of Tokyo, one of the most exclusive and expensive shopping areas in Japan, a block away from the colorful Sony Building of the same proportions, designed by Ashihara Yoshinobu in 1966, and amongst the circus of signs and neon lights, the thin, tall but elegant building (45m long by 11m wide or 148ft long by 36ft wide) stands out like a piece of well-crafted jewelry; classical yet innovative. Its facade, made entirely of specially designed and fabricated glass block 45cm by 45cm (17in by 17in) each, is both aesthetically pleasing and technologically innovative.

The design intention of the architect, Renzo Piano, was that of a "magic lantern", inspired by traditional Japanese lanterns. In the daytime the translucent facade gives a hint of what is beyond, the events and objects blurred by the thickness of the glass block. As the facade wraps the corner, like a glass curtain, it changes to curved quarter blocks. The entry to the retail store is demarcated by plain clear glass. The glass curtain shuts out the constant buzz of the city through the acoustic insulation of the glass block, creating a serene atmosphere on the interior that is naturally lit through the semi transparency of the glass block.

The building is technologically innovative not only in its facade construction but also in the way that it applies traditional anti-seismic systems used in Japanese temples to its modern day structure. The structure of the building consists of a flexible steel structure, strategically articulated with visco-elastic dampers, from which cantilevered floors span to support the suspended glass facade.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

The building is located at Ginza Station subway on the Hibiya, Marunouchi or Ginza Line in central Tokyo.

The store is open 11am - 7pm, closed Wednesday. For more information please telephone +81 3 3289 6811.
Located on the Kobe waterfront between the Rokko Mountain Range to the north and the Seto Inland Sea and Port of Kobe to the south, the museum was planned integrally with the Kobe Waterfront Plaza as part of the reconstruction scheme after the Kobe Earthquake in 1995 that destroyed much of the city and took many lives.

The Museum is composed of three rectangular volumes that sit parallel to each other on a base platform of white granite, which steps up through a series of grand stairs, ramps and plazas from the Waterfront Plaza. The rectangular volumes are oriented longitudinally along a north-south axis and are separated by exterior plazas that allow for framed views towards the mountains and Kobe cityscape and in the opposite direction towards the sea.

On the waterfront side the rectangular volumes are more open with the flat concrete slab overhanging roofs forming a protective enclosure to an outdoor space and its transparent curtain wall facades. In contrast the 'backside', oriented towards the city and vehicular traffic, is less welcoming clad in a skin of dark metal.

Each of the volumes encloses another volume of concrete containing the temporary and permanent exhibition galleries, auditorium, and studio spaces. Between the two volumes are the circulation and rest areas which are animated by light and shadow.

The form of the building is very similar to that of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth which Ando was designing at the same time in Fort Worth, Texas. It was the museum in Kobe that served Ando as a prototype for the one in Fort Worth.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

From Iwaya Station on the Hanshin Line walk southward for about 8 minutes.

From Nada Station on the JR Line walk southward from the south exit of the station for about 10 minutes.

From Oji Koen Station on the Hankyu Line walk southwestward from the west exit of the station for about 15 minutes.

The museum is open 10am-6pm Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday; and 10am-8pm Friday and Saturday. For more information see www.artm.pref.hyogo.jp, email museum@artm.pref.hyogo.jp or telephone +81 78-262-0901.
The Sayamaike Historical Museum is located on the edge of Sayamaike Pond, a reservoir in Osakasayama, Japan, dating back to the seventh century which was converted into a flood control dam. The museum was built to house the relics of the site that were discovered during reconstruction and to inform the visitor of ancient Japanese water engineering.

The museum is a large rectangular box and a smaller rectangular box flanked by a water plaza. The two rectangular forms are connected by a circular form that serves as part of the rich spatial sequence into the interior of the museum.

So as not to disturb the landscape the walls above ground are made of rough cut granite stone. Following a path along the waters of Sayamaike visitors pass a wall of rough granite blocks to arrive at a concrete plaza. From here the visitor descends down a staircase, below the calm tranquil pools of water on the upper level that reflect the rectangular volumes, into a water plaza with cascading waterfalls on both sides.

The space is animated by the sound of water falling as one passes through the recessed walkway behind a curtain of water. This corridor is further animated not only by the sound of water but by light as it hits the water. At the end of this corridor one enters a cylindrical volume that silences the sound of the water and leads the visitor into the interior of the museum.

The building’s main volume, a triple height exhibition hall, was determined by the dimensions of the museum’s main archaeological relic; a 15.4 meter tall by 62 meter long wall that was excavated through the old dam. A ramp winds its way around the excavated wall to other parts of the museum exhibitions. Openings on the upper level also allow views of the excavated relic.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

From Osaka take the Nankai Koya Line to Osakasayamashi Station. The museum is a ten-minute walk to the west from the station.

The museum of open from 10am-5pm Tuesday to Sunday.

For more information please call +81 72-367-8891 or visit www.sayamaikehaku.osakasayama.osaka.jp.
The Mediatheque is located on a tree-lined avenue in Sendai, its transparent facade allowing for the revelation of diverse activities that occur within the building. Along this main facade the six 15.75-inch-thin floor slabs seem to be floating within the space connected only by the 13 vertical tube steel lattice columns that rise up from ground floor to roof, similar to the trunks of trees of a forest.

The tubes are both structure and vector for light and all of the utilities, networks and systems that allow for technological communication and vertical mobility, including elevators and stairs. Each vertical shaft varies in diameter and is independent of the facade, allowing for a free form plan which varies from floor to floor.

The main entrance leads to a double height hall that consists of an information counter, an open square that supports film screenings and other events, a café and retail shop. Through the transparency of the facade and the continuation of the curtain wall to the ground this space reads as a continuation of the surrounding city.

The interior of each level of the mediatheque is designed by a different designer. On the ground floor Kazuyo Sejima places the administrative offices behind a translucent screen. The second and third levels house the Shimin Library and include a browsing lounge with internet access with furniture designed by K.T Architecture. The fourth and fifth levels contain gallery space; one level an exhibition space with moveable walls and the other an exhibition space with mainly fixed walls with rest area seating by Karim Rashid. The sixth level houses the multimedia library dedicated to audio-visual with green and white furniture designed by Ross Lovegrove and a cinema.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

By subway from Sendai station take the subway bound for Izumi-chuo to Kotodai-koen station (3 minutes) take exit Koen 2. The mediatheque is a five-minute walk. By bus it is an approximately 10-minute ride from JR Sendai station, on a bus bound for Kotsukyoku-Daigakuboin via Jozenji-dori. Get off at Sendai Mediatheque-mae stop. By foot the mediatheque is a 20-minute walk from Sendai station.

Opening hours: Mediatheque 9am -10pm (closed December 29 – January 3). Shimin Library 10am – 8pm (closed Mondays except holiday Mondays, days after national holidays, 4th Thursday every month and December 28 – January 4).

For more information telephone +81-22-713-3171, email office@smt.city.sendai.jp or visit www.smt.city.sendai.jp.
Located within Ueno Park, The International Library of Children’s Literature, a branch of the National Diet Library, is a renovation and expansion of the former Imperial Library built in 1906 and expanded in 1929. The subtle interventions of Ando create a dynamic juxtaposition between the old and the new while creating the first national library dedicated to children's literature.

The interventions of Ando are quite simple and elegant; a glass volume that pierces the renaissance-style street facade at a slight angle to form an entry, a continuation of this glass volume on the courtyard side to form a cafeteria, and a full height glass facade on the courtyard side that encloses a lounge space between it and the existing facade flanked on each end by a concrete volume containing vertical circulation.

The transparency and weightlessness of the glass facade allows for the continual reading of the old through the new. The existing facade was restored exactly as it was and the structure of the existing building was reinforced structurally against earthquakes. This new lounge area has a columnless interior, the glass facade supported only by vertical fire resistant steel supports. Because of its transparency and weightlessness it reads as part of the terraced exterior courtyard space.

Kari Silloway 2004

How to visit

The museum is 10 minutes' walk for JR line Ueno Station (Park Exit) or from JR line Uguisudani Station (South Exit).

It is normally open 9:30am-5pm Tuesday-Sunday. (From November to February the Museum, the Media Corner, the Children's Library and the Meet the World close at 4pm.) It is closed on public holidays, Dec. 28-Jan 4, third Wednesdays of January, March, May, July, September and November.

Also located within Ueno Park not far from The International Library of Children's Literature is The National Museum of Western Art by Le Corbusier and The Gallery of Horyuji Treasures, which is part of the Tokyo National Museum complex, by Yoshio Taniguchi.

For more information see www.kodomo.go.jp (mostly in Japanese), email info@kodomo.go.jp or telephone +81 3-3827-2053.
The port of Yokohama is located on the northwestern edge of Tokyo Bay. Since the pier’s original construction in 1894, Oshanbashi Pier has contributed greatly to the development of Yokohama as Japan’s marine gateway to the world. Because of its increasing age, reconstruction of the pier’s foundation began in 1988. In 1994 the City of Yokohama held an international design competition for the reconstruction of Oshanbashi Pier won by the young London architectural firm of Foreign Office Architects. Hired in the middle of Japan’s economic slump the architects faced many difficulties and near cancellation of the project. Fortunately, the football World Cup was to be held South Korea and Japan, with the final game to be held in Yokohama. This became motivation for the construction of the project.

The new pier fits seamlessly with the new waterfront development that has transformed the area from dockyards and heavy industry to parks and an entertainment center. The ‘artificial landscape’ is an orthogonal continuation of Yokohama’s waterfront and Yamashita Park. The upper level hovers on the horizon with a continuous surface of grass and wooden walkways that ‘peel up’ for entry to the ferry terminal, shops, restaurants, conferences spaces, exhibition spaces and parking below. A series of ramps and sloped floors create a continuous surface between levels that extends from exterior to interior and interior to exterior.

This fluid, uninterrupted, multidirectional space was conceived by the architects from a circulation diagram “that aspires to eliminate the linear structure characteristic of piers and the directionality of the circulation.” The interior spaces are expansive and low, a continuation of the exterior topography that is emphasized through the continuity of materials and relation to the horizon.

Kari Silloway 2004

**How to visit**

From JR Tokyo station in Tokyo take JR Tokaido line to JR Yokohama station (25min).

From here change to JR Minato-mirai line to JR Nihon-odori station (6 min).

From exit no. 3 the Ferry Terminal is a 5 minute walk.

The park on the upper level is always open.

For more information please visit [www.city.yokohama.jp/me/port](http://www.city.yokohama.jp/me/port) or telephone +81 45-211-2304.
Prada’s Tokyo “epicenter”, in the fashionable Aoyama district, is the company's second radical approach to fashion-store architecture, following Rem Koolhaas’ flagship store in New York. The intent is “to reshape both the concept and function of shopping, pleasure and communication, to encourage the meshing of consumption and culture.”

The Tokyo store is a strikingly unconventional 6-story glass crystal that is soft despite its sharp angles – as a result of its five-sided shape, the smooth curves throughout its interior, and its signature diamond-shaped glass panes, which vary between flat, concave and convex “bubbles”.

Jacques Herzog describes these glass panes as “an interactive optical device. Because some of the glass is curved, it seems to move as you walk around it. That creates awareness of both the merchandise and the city—there's an intense dialogue between actors. Also, the grid brings a human scale to the architecture, like display windows. It's almost old-fashioned.”

At Prada Aoyama the glass walls are not the usual transparent curtain-walling (as at Renzo Piano’s Maison Hermes, across town in the Ginza district), but a transparent, structural shell. Within, the structural cores and tubes morph seamlessly into elevators, stairs, fitting rooms and display shelves, giving a sense of continuous shopping space, very much integrated into the architecture.

The Prada building sits in a corner of its site, creating a small entrance plaza – an effective gesture of restraint from an otherwise rather unrestrained building. Herzog comments on the rarity of this locally: “Tokyo is a city where not a single building relates to its neighborhood, and every building fills its whole site. We took a chance in creating a little space outdoors, like in European cities. We also reversed the typical Japanese emphasis on looking inward by giving importance to the view.”

Simon Glynn and Sam Glynn 2005

How to visit

The Prada store is two minutes’ walk from Omotesando subway station, in Minami-Aoyama (southwest of central Tokyo). Take exit A5 from the subway station, and follow Omotesando Avenue towards the southeast. You will immediately see the Prada store on your right.

The store is open daily (including Sundays) from 11am to 8pm. For more information and to check opening times please call +81 3 6418 0400.
The Dior building is a showcase for Dior’s designs, a fairly straightforward trapezoid box in Tokyo's center of fashion, Omotesando Avenue.

While the box itself is unexciting - though modulated by some variety in floor height, articulated by the bands around the building - the building's showpiece is its skin. The clean, square, outer skin of clear glass covers a second skin inside, of translucent acrylic. This gives the external facade the gentlest of hints at what is inside (while revealing nothing), and provides a glowing blank canvas for seasonal additions.

The disappointment is that inside the store the displays ignore the glazing and translucent skin entirely, so there is little continuity inside and out, and (unlike Herzog and de Meuron’s Prada store down the street) the clever skin is more billboard than place-making. This reality is recognized by the architects. As Sejima puts it,

"Mr. Arnault is a very rich man, and he wants to sell as much Dior as possible. And we are not so interested in that. We divide exterior and interior. The exterior is very beautiful and behind the wall is their intention. We try to keep some conflict.”

Simon Glynn 2008

How to visit

The Dior building is on the southwest side of Omotesando Avenue, between Omotesando and Meijjingumae subway stations (near Meijjingumae).

On the same street you may like to visit Ito’s Tod’s and Ando’s Omotesando Hills. Further down the same street beyond Omotesando Crossing are also Herzog and de Meuron’s Prada and Ando’s Collezione.
Tod’s is a substantial L-shaped building that needed to make the most of its narrow facade on Omotesando Avenue, Tokyo’s most prestigious shopping street. Ito’s innovative structure does this through concrete and glass walls in which the tree-shaped concrete limbs are structural, and wrap around the six faces of the building. The visual effect is dramatic, and the retail facade is well used: the righthand concrete ‘trunk’ is actually round the corner of the building, giving as wide a glazed entry as any curtain wall would have done.

The shape of the concrete limbs is derived from the zelkova trees that line Omoteando Avenue.

The architectural power of the non-structural curtain wall in modern architecture was to create the “free façade”. With new technologies for concrete and glass construction, Ito has found a new freedom within a structural wall. As he claims,

“The Tod’s Omotesando Building is an ambitious project embodying concepts and techniques at the forefront of contemporary architecture. With this project I am striving to transcend that architectural Modernism that characterized the twentieth century.”

Simon Glynn 2008

How to visit

The Tod’s building is on the southwest side of Omotesando Avenue, between Omotesando and Meijijingumae subway stations.

It is open 11am to 8pm seven days a week. For more information please visit www.tods.com (though no information on the building there) or call +81 3 6419 2055.

On the same street you may like to visit SANAA’s Dior and Ando’s Omotesando Hills. Further down the same street beyond Omotesando Crossing are also Herzog and de Meuron’s Prada and Ando’s Collezione.
Omotesando Hills is a large shopping and residential development that occupies much of one side of Omotesando Avenue, Tokyo’s top fashion street. Any development on that scale in such a street is likely to be controversial, and Ando’s Omotesando Hills has been much criticised - in part for turning its back on the Avenue and creating what its own developers describe as a ‘second Omotesando’ within its interior.

The development does indeed present a fairly blank face to the Avenue. Although the ground-level boutiques are accessible from the street, it’s not how they are designed to be “shopped”. But there is no shortage of bustle on this street (one of the fears about the inward-facing new mall), and the white facade provides a good backdrop to the street’s avenue of zelkova trees.

Inside, the mall descends several stories beneath ground, but maintains a fair amount of daylight from a glazed roof over the triangular atrium. The strongest aspect of the design is the spiral arrangement of the floors. The stores along the Omotesando Avenue edge of the mall follow the gradual slope of that street, rising by half a story over the length of the mall; those on the opposite side of the triangle follow an opposite slope, so that as you walk around the triangle you have descended (or climbed) one story. So if you start at the top you can wander around the whole center without using an escalator.

Simon Glynn 2008

How to visit

Omotesando Hills is on the northeast side of Omotesando Avenue, between Omotesando and Meijijingumae subway stations.

It is open 11am to late evening seven days a week. For more information please visit www.omotesandohills.com.

On the same street you may like to visit SANAA’s Dior and Ito’s Tod’s. Further down the same street beyond Omotesando Crossing are also Herzog and de Meuron’s Prada and Ando’s Collezione.