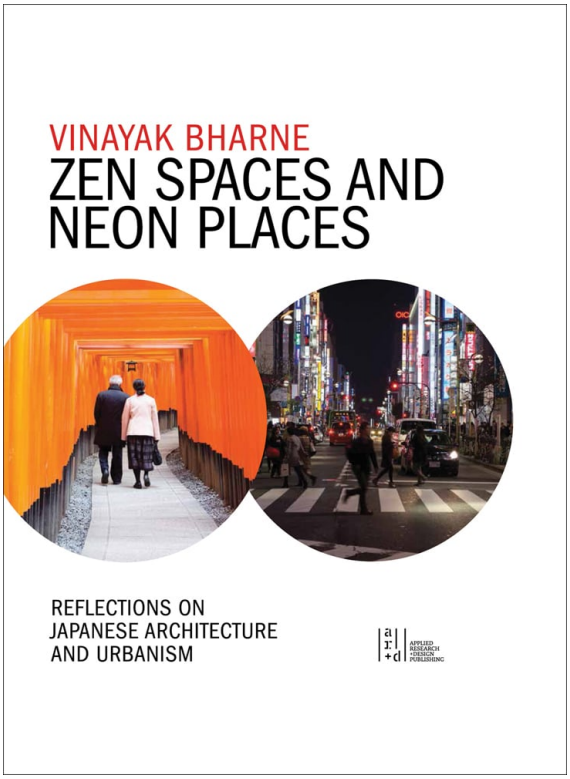
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Zen Spaces in Neon Places: Reflections on Japanese Architecture and Urbanism

Vinayak Bharne

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- *Zen Spaces & Neon Places* captures the multifarious interweaves of the Japanese built environment - its historic buildings and post-industrial cities; monastic gardens and digital streetscapes; modern landmarks and theme parks; and concurrent propensities for kinky love hotels and contemplative tea huts
- Combining two decades of scholarship, fieldwork, and personal experience, this landmark volume reveals how Japan's cultural treads have endured through negotiations, shifts and mutations, making it an unprecedented continuum wherein seemingly contradictory things and events tend to seamlessly coexist

This book shifts the emphasis on how we choose to read Japanese architecture and urbanism: It focuses on phenomena and meanings rather than objects, and prioritizes intentions and legacies over the mechanics of design. It rereads Japanese architecture and urbanism as a creative cultural document of multiple traces. To accomplish this, the book captures the sheer breadth of the multifarious dimensions of the Japanese built environment. They traverse Japan's rich, and tumultuous architectural and urban history, shaped by Shinto, Buddhism, wars, earthquakes, democracy, modernism, the economic bubble etc. and open a rich discussion on the entire panorama of how the Japanese built environment has come to be. The places discussed in this book go from the ancient Izumo shrine to the futurism of the Sendai Mediateque, and from the advent of Kyoto to the ongoing construction of the new island of Toyosu. The book also traces which cultural treads have endured over Japanese history, and which in turn have shifted, transformed, or vanished, and highlights the paradigmatic moments in Japanese architectural and urban history, for either their significant influences on the built environment, or their deep relevance to Japan's future. *Zen Spaces & Neon Places* claims that the Japanese built environment we see today, despite all its seeming fragmentation and disjunction, is in fact a single unprecedented cultural continuum in which seemingly contradictory things and events seamlessly coexist.

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