

In depth knowledge about the japanese cultural studies essay



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INTRODUCTION: The following reading provided us an in-depth knowledge about the Japanese culture and space. The reading starts with a definition of MA, which is the concept of space and time. In simpler words, it is the natural distance between two or more things. In Japan, MA is measured in terms of intervals and extends to all aspects of life. Which is how the art of MA came into existence. Man perceives space by dividing it into areas and these areas are connected to views of cosmos that prevail in the history. For example, the visualization and formalization of 'ma', an idea in the Japanese culture. Spaces are believed to be fundamentally void. Even solid objects are believed to contain voids capable of receiving 'kami', which descends in the void in the solid object. The Japanese perception is different from the western civilization perception. On one hand, the western space and time concept gave rise to absolutely fixed images of a homogeneous and infinite continuum and on the other, the space and time never fully separated but were conceived as correlative and omnipresent. Aspect of Kami: God is Kami. Kami has no physical body; its body and essence exist as a vacuum, "a place entirely void of matter." But "void" does not mean "nothing is there." Rather, to the Japanese. "There is a hollow there," as "nothing (mu) exists there." Kami as itself always perceived as a location or other ways of expressing the sense of yonder. Kami never stays, it is always moving from one place to another. In Japanese culture, kami describes the area of the structure of the house. Processes of a shrine came into existence because of kami, a space enclosed for Gods. The visual representation of the process by which the kami descends from heaven to the mountain top dwells or rocks to transform into different buildings and passes through the tori gate. In the medieval period kami became integrated with the everyday life of the

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Japanese culture and also became an important part of living. Concept 1: Himorogi The HI of HIMOROGI means the activity of fama (soul), MORO refers to mon (forest) and the whole word means "the holy place where kami descends." It is basically marked by four poles and in the center the kami dwelled. Even the natural tomb or white sand is used in the center of the four poles. Himrogi is an altar. The altar, set in a specific place roofed and surrounded by fences became a shrine. This alter is temporarily set up and to sanctify the boundary, a rope (shimanawa) is used. The white paper enclosing the space is called kekkai and a column at the centre is yorishiro. To invite the kami divinities freely floating above, branches of the sakaki tree (Cleyera ochracea) were set in an upright position and a round mirror (shinkyō). The kami were worshipped as the most important of spirits because of their great sanctity. The form of the spirit was held to be global and both spirit and global shape were called tama in Japan. The round shape objects are basically the symbols of spirits in Japan. White sand shaped into a cone was among the symbols used to mark a place where the kami descended also called Rissa. It also formed many important elements on sand rock gardens. Concept 2: Hashi Hashi means both edge and bridge and in ancient times, a ladder. The basic concept of Hashi is the connection of edges or connection of one world with another. For example, upper level to lower, one world to another, plate to mouth, etcetera. The author talks about RECONSTRUCTED VERSION OF THE IZUMO TAISHA SHRINE. A bridge, built from the earth to the realm of the divine, rose from a platform, a link between man and God. The author describes different parts of Hashi. The bamboo platform for moon viewing was also called hashi as it bridged the inner world of the room and the outer world of the garden. It is used in <https://assignbuster.com/in-depth-knowledge-about-the-japanese-cultural-studies-essay/>

Japanese gardens because it forms connection between spaces. There is a small legend telling us of many Buddhist priests setting sail on coffin-shaped ships from a sacred place called Kumano, the jutting tip of the Ku Peninsula, in quest of becoming living Buddhas. These ventures were called Fudarakai. The author tells us about how Buddhism when introduced to the Japanese made changes to the thinking of people. Concept 3: YamiThe ancient Japanese believed that spirits called kami permeated the entire cosmos. 'Yo' the root of the word means neither world nor night. The fudomyoo (acala) were believed to appear in darkness behind the alter yami. Many rituals that were used to invite spirits to the earth later developed in public ceremonies. The 'noh' stage tells us about the Japanese conception of the universe and demonstrates how the descent of kami takes place. The author talks about the painting yogozu where it shows the mysterious situation of the descent of kami. In the painting, the faint shadow implies the presence of kami and speaks about mystery. OMIZU-TORI is a very old magic ritual performed in the todaiji temple. The Japanese think that the kami descends in a sacred mirror or reflection like the sun or between the mountains. Therefore, the buildings in japan are built in linear fashion making it difficult to find a center. Concept 4: SukiThe SU of SUKI means aperture, but in the Edo period it had many connotations. Suki means structural units or a living space. It is a space surrounded by walls on four sides but originally these spaces were wall-less in japan. Due to the warrior classes, these suki's were developed where the tea master would arrange the space and the interiors. The author talks about okoshiezu. Traditional Japanese architecture space was characterized by lack of fixed walls. The okoshiezu demonstrates that even the tea house with flexible walls was a

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combination of 2D faced bases. Soan are cottages or space that were added to the large space for tea ceremony. But these were constructed by strict rules and regulations and hence of poor material and counter architecture. The vessel used in tea ceremonies was not only of Japanese origin but also imported and were displayed according to the taste of the tea master. The alcove was one of the most important place in the house and the design of this place was always revolving. Concept 5: Utsuroi Originally the word utsuroi meant the exact moment when the kami spirit entered into and occupied a vacant space. It is the way of sensing the moment of movement. The sense of kami's sudden appearance gave birth to the idea of Utsuroi.

TTAGASODE-ZU BYOGU (screen depicting kimono) Byobu, a folding screen, was invented to divide a large open room temporarily. Ornamental byobu were sometimes decorated with designs painted against a background of old foil. The autumnal grasses or akigusa are a part of Japanese history because autumn foreshadows the extinction of life autumnal scenes capture the very moment of times passing. In the middle ages, tatami were used to cover floors. The use of four posts was used to mark space and divided it into different areas. The gankogata painting marks the absence of depth and how it cannot be appreciated from a stationary view point. Concept 6: Utsushimi It is a place where life is lived. The author gives an example of a photographer who took pictures of various dwellings and showed how they were different from one another. The traditional private house was a micro cosmos. Buddha and the gods related to daily life were worshipped and displayed. Their placement depended on their roles. The storage space or the kurazashiki was usually a storage or a hollow space but was later used as a living space. Kamado was a kitchen space from where the source of food would come and

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was of a female concept. The photographs also showed tokonoma which belonged to a young pop star which had his trophies instead of the scrolls.

Concept 7: SabiSABI, known for its importance in haiku , refers to the tips of things and also to the precise moment when something moves. Hi means the activity of the soul.. Thus SABI expresses the feeling of one who recognizes tama (a spirit) moving towards the tip of something. SABI also came to mean rust. Sabis are the signs ephemeral, the state of body after the spirit has departed. It is the cycle of death and birth. The author describes gakizoshi in which he believed that all visible, physical phenomena undergo incessant transformation. Here, a group of starving ghosts, incarnations of grotesque spirits, invade the home of a noble family. The scroll of kuzoshi emaki depicts the nine stages of decomposition of a beautiful woman's corpse and how it comes to an end. The author talks about Hiroshima and says that century may not escape but destiny of destruction but does provide the basis of new.

Concept 8: SusubaiSusubai means play alignment of style. The author says that because kami descends into an empty place there is a need for the sign of exit. He also talks about how in Japanese cities the change in new kitsch is required. He talks about Japanese caramon gate that shows unique components of primary importance. The top view of the Tokyo village shows how the city is one architectural unit divided into small lots with connections through gardens. The author says each Shinto sect has its own architectural style, which establishes the design of all its accoutrements; the buildings of branch shrines, the omikuji box, the kami-dana (altar) in a private house. This style is the " trade mark" of the sect. However, the author also talks about how today in japan the style has been copied, not only from all over the world but between classes. For example, the chidore

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gale. Concept 9: MichiyukiThe word Michiyuki is a combination of two words, michi means way and yuki means go. This also means movement from one place to another. By Japanese concept, the space is divided invisibly by one's movement and breathing. The author gives an example of the gardens where several free routes are made with different viewpoints. He also talks about the Tokaido road that has 53 stations on it with different viewpoints. The author says that in the Kabuki theater, the hanamichi, a narrow, bridge-like promenade passes through the audience to theStage and the exposition of man's journey through time is basic to the Kabuki drama and is often interpreted by characters who travel from one place to another. Given an example of free flowing path, the author talks about kaiushiki garden and the rojiniwa narrow paths. He describes the paths as stepping stones towards the destination with different view points. Discrete Gods: The two main Japanese religions are Buddhism and Shintoism. Buddhism and Shintoism were not to be compared with Islam or any other religions of the west. Unlike them, Japan's religions do not rest on dogma, nor are they given to missionary activity. They do not seek to impose themselves on anyone. Buddhism and Shintoism coexists so harmoniously that a family may turn to one religion for its marriage ceremonies and the other for its burials. Through the diagrams given by the author, he wants to convey that the gods revered in Japan in all their picturesque multiplicity are not conceived as imposing, majestic persona entities. Rather each god, existing in a place that is unreal yet described with exquisite imagery gathers together the convergent forces emanating from a local spiritual climate. ReviewIn the end however, I found the reading to be confusing and difficult to interpret. The soul reason behind this was the religious details and difficulty in understanding the relation of <https://assignbuster.com/in-depth-knowledge-about-the-japanese-cultural-studies-essay/>

them with architecture. Moreover, the language barrier made it a little hard to recall and connect previously discussed topics. Thus, requiring a constant need to flip back pages. The aligned of the text made it hard to understand and the pictures were unclear. On the positive note, it was a perfect dive into the Japanese culture and architecture. The minute details of the buildings and past made it interesting in spite of the previously mentioned negatives. The concept of the reading were well interrelated and had been put together to create a chain of thought. The diagrams next some of the text explanations helped understanding the concepts pictorially.