

A historical comparative analysis of european and asian interior spaces through cultural background

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Abstract

Interior design entered the human life together with the need for housing, and has been developed in respect to several needs. But after a certain point, the development process has shown an improvement in their separated into different branches. Different lifestyles of different communities living in different geographies, in short, cultural differentiation have caused variation in interior design. Throughout the history, culture, by means of its elements, creates different lifestyles in the same periods of time, and influences the formation of interiors.

The aim of this study is to explore cultural values, that play important role in design process of interiors, shape our daily lives and thus, to assess how they influence interior designs. The study mainly focuses on cultural differences in Asian and European societies, where these differences can be clearly observed. Examining Asian and European cultures also gives us an opportunity to understand the similarities and differences of interior design principles. The information obtained by the historical analysis was synthesized, classified and finally interpreted. In conclusion, both in western and far eastern cultures, according to the periods, many elements within the concept of culture as climate, human values, religion, thinking, trade, class distinction, type of management, personal interests, social events, industrial and technological developments were found to have influence on the lifestyles and interior design.

Keywords: Culture, European Culture, Asian Culture, Life styles, Volume Design, Dwellings, Architecture-Interior Architecture-Space

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1. Introduction

According to the definition by the Turkish Language Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*), culture refers to “the entire body of outputs of a people or a society in material and spiritual domains of life; that is, basic needs such as food, clothing, housing and shelter; ideas, skills, beliefs; traditional, religious, social and political systems and institutions; the whole range of opinions, perceptions, attitudes, behaviors and ways of life.” (Ankara Eğitim Enstitüsü, 1979) Proposed by the science of anthropology in response to the question of why people and societies do resemble or differ from each other, the concept of “culture” has impacted, through its components, the ways and spaces of life in the course of history. Various impacts of these components such as history, economy, technology, religious beliefs, traditions, geography, family-social structure, government etc. during different periods of history also affected the lifestyles of societies as well as their living spaces and spatial volume design; and changed the evolution process of interior and spatial design across cultures. In order to demonstrate the role of culture in spatial design, the present study handles the European (Western) and Asian (Far-Eastern) cultures and by way of document analysis, it examines the lifestyles and spatial designs of both societies in the course of history. It reveals discrepancies between societies, lives and spaces; the underlying reasons of such discrepancies, the impact of each cultural element and the difference it generates. The study is inspired by my master thesis titled “An Analysis of Spatial Volume Design in Far-Eastern and Western Cultures in the course of history and according to ways of life” (*Uzakdoğu ve Batı Kulturlerinde Hacim Tasarımlarının Tarihsel Süreçte ve Yaşam Biçimleri Doğrultusunda İrdelenmesi*).

2. The relationship between culture–lifestyle–space in European and Asian Cultures in the course of history

The first hominid species, dated to approximately two million years ago, was known to be able to control fire and use furnace, but was not in need of shelter on climatic reasons. The second known species, homo erectus, however, was forced to build shelter as they migrated to colder regions. The ovoid-shaped huts with sidewalls in the archaeological site of Terra Amata, built of branches fixed onto the sand, also known to be the first architectural works in history. This period witnessed a deliberate making of living spaces, which was impacted by climatic and geographical conditions of each region. The first example of housing by modern humans, termed as “homo sapiens sapiens”, was a much more sophisticated version of these earlier shelters. With the warming of the climate in Europe and Asia around 10 thousand years ago, humans started creating permanent dwelling units and settled down to a sedentary way of life. During this period known as the Neolithic Age, [...] humans discovered agriculture, [...] and changed from hunter-gatherers to producers of food. Families close to each other settled down altogether in the same location to create the first villages in history (Şahin, 2004). The houses of the period in question are likewise trapezoid-shaped structures covered with branches, with their hearths in the middle marked with stones and their walls covered with plaster and lime. From this period onwards, the impact of culture, via climate, upon the materials is clearly seen. To illustrate, the Neolithic village of Skara Brae in Scotland, dated back to 2500 BC; all houses, and even shelves, tables and beds were entirely made of stone due to lack of timber in its nearby.

With the start of social life, once the humans grouped in certain areas to live altogether permanently [...] and developed original solutions so as to overcome the rigors and challenges of life; societies began to differentiate from one another, which, in turn, led to the emergence of different cultures. Among these, the European culture, which falls under the scope of our study, was periodized into four main phases marked by certain social developments as critical turning points. In turn, these phases were further considered under several sub-phases based on important social phenomena, impacting cultural factors and significant political changes. In contrast, on the basis of historical

developments with crucial social impacts, the Asian culture was periodized into three main phases, which were further divided into sub-phases again based on cultural factors and political changes. The study makes an attempt to compare and contrast both cultures by establishing correspondence between their respective historical periods. It tried to analyze the Asian culture drawing upon the Chinese, Korean and Japanese cultures, i.e. the oldest and most sophisticated cultures with considerable interaction among each other.

2.1. Antiquity – First Period

2.1.1. Greek and Hellenistic Cultures vs.– Jomon, Jeulmun, Xia and Shang Cultures

The foundation of European culture is ancient Greek cultures. The eminent features of Greek culture are the concepts of *polis* and democracy, temperate climate conditions and a system of philosophy based on human and nature. The emergence of cities and city-states resulted in a public way of life. Urban structures designed as open spaces thanks to the mild climate were now where people spent most of their time. Thus, under the influence of natural philosophy and adapting to the nature and the existing fabric, the extremely small and sloppy houses were designed in the form of irregular houses in streets of irregular pattern. As urban planning came to prominence, houses now assumed a regular rectangular plan just like the cities. Emanating from the *megaron* type, these houses were over time added new volumes for household production activities, with separate spaces created for men and women (Rızaoğlu, 2012) “As Homer relates in his poems, men and women used to live separately in Hellenic houses; [...] that is why the *megaron* section is the men’s part (reception area) in hall-type plans, while the women’s part was separated with a wall. The air and light penetrates into the house through the doors opening to the hall and the roof lamp; the houses are two-storey structures, with the top designed as flat roof.” (Unsal, 1960) Construction material of the houses is stone, i.e. the most abundant material in the region. The predominant factor of the period is the Greek philosophy maintaining that everything in the nature is governed by a certain law. Placing human at the center, this system of thought saw human – human dimensions as the scale and standard of structures.

On the other hand, the Jomon, Jeulmun, Xia and Shang cultures of the same period in Asia initially led a non-sedentary lifestyle and lived in caves. Following sedentarization, dwellings were replaced first by houses on deep shafts and later by those on shallow ones. The principal affecting factors of the period are climatic and geographical conditions. Due to humidity and high rain precipitation as different from Europe, ground floors of these deep-shafted houses were paved with a sort of plaster or clay to avoid humidity, while the exterior facades were covered with reed or straw, which were abundantly available in the region. Though they appeared to be primitive compared to its European counterparts, these types of dwelling had the same layout with the early Greek houses which developed from the *megaron* type. Strong family ties and familial hierarchy are the commonalities between both dwelling types, which had a hearth at the center that assembled together the whole family and was used for cooking and heating (Rızaoğlu, 2012).

2.1.2. Roman vs. Yayoi, Qin, Han, Iron Cultures, Early Christianity vs. Yamato, Wei ve Three Kingdoms Cultures

Starting from the 8th century BC in Europe; growing cities, flourishing urban life, climatic differences, polytheistic and monotheistic systems of belief were the factors affecting the design of space in the Roman Empire. Stretching over a vast territory, Romans needed closed spaces due to the regions that

were cold in winter and hot and arid in summer. Rapid population growth required the construction of massive structures such as public baths and theatres, which helped the socialization of the Roman people. “[...] the fora were crowded at every hour of the day. As the fora offered better living conditions than at home, Romans spent more of their daily lives outside rather than at home. For the houses had small windows, it was rather dark and gloomy inside.” (Frederic, 1974) As people flourished through trade, they started to care more about their houses. In Roman stone houses that were developed out of deep-shafted houses or megaron-planned types, the central hearth was replaced by a basin to provide, depending on the season, cooling effect in summer and provide the water demand of the house in winter. Consequently, the spaces were positioned around the basin. This dwelling type where lower storeys were employed as manufacturing sites or salesroom depending on commercial activities became more complex with the addition of new areas with various functions such as dining, sleeping and cooking. Further, population growth and urban life brought about the emergence of first multi-storey buildings. As far as the pagan age is concerned, religion also played a role as another crucial factor, encouraging the design of special areas for religious rites and traditions in the interior spaces of houses. With the establishment of Christianity as the official religion, the European culture of later centuries was dominated by religion, with the most important spaces shifting to those reserved for worshipping, which were shaped by belief and cult.

From the 4th century BC onwards, impacting factors in Asian cultures were social life progressing with agriculture, climatic conditions, and beliefs which evolved into religious creeds over time. The most important transformation of the period is the sedentarization process with agriculture. Various areas of work that resulted from irrigated farming now led to segregation of classes such as the rich and the poor, which found echo in living spaces as well. As deep-shafted houses failed to properly preserve the crops under humid climate conditions, people built first ground-level houses, and later on elevated houses. Initially used as storages, these houses could only be used by high-class people due to class segregation. During the Yamato period this class distinction somewhat declined and such houses were now also inhabited by people of modest means. Likewise, wood also emerged as a building material. Such transformation had its origins in the abundance of forests as well as the practice of worshipping the natural. “*The Shinto religion was born out of the primitive response of man confronting the forces of nature, and of the conviction that it is a must to challenge these forces, which, however, are impossible to conquer*” (Ayverdi, 1972). In the Shinto belief, family is a religion per se, and the family hearth and the household are both shrines. Later on, as religion came to occupy a much more important place in daily life, so did rise sacred spaces and structures of worship within such spaces that evolved out of the elevated house type. The principal commonality between the

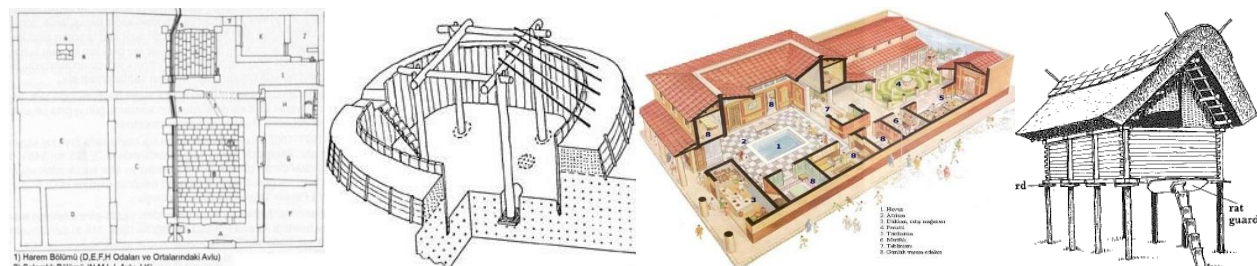


Figure. 1. (a) Greek house, men-women's part; (b) Jomon's pit house; (c) Roman housing plan with various function; (d) Yayoi's elevated house

Asian and European cultures of the period is that they both considered family and house to be sacred; and thus, the spaces of worship evolved out of the dwellings in both.

2.2. Middle Ages – First and Second Periods

2.2.1. Romanesque Culture vs. Asuka, Nara (Tang, Unified Shilla) and Heian Cultures

Starting from the 5th century, European culture was dominated by religious beliefs and services: While structures of worship rose in prominence, houses lost their significance. *“Until the development of castle as a concept, houses were still primitive structures according to modern standards.”* (Matthew, 1988) From the 9th century onwards, besides religion, feudal regime and frequent wars were factors determining the design of spaces during the Romanesque period. The rise of feudal lords, who reduced peasants to subjugation together with their lands, made it impossible to talk about personal dwellings. During the period in question, the only full-fledged structure was the strongholds and castles of feudal lords. These were uncomfortable buildings with thick walls built for defense, providing minimum standards of living. Wars had the same impact on buildings of worship as well: For this reason, fortresses and churches have similar space characteristics. The intensity of religious belief was strong felt in space designs. The quest for attaining the divine led to the creation of dark spaces with building components soaring to the skies, where one could only contemplate God.

During this period, Asian culture presents similarities with European culture. In Asia, which came under the influence of a new religion of Indian origin from the 6th century onwards, Buddhism as this new religion came to determine everything from lifestyles to space design. As Buddhism maintained that ‘it would be misleading to focus on a secular life, therefore, the place of living is temporary and trivial’, sacred buildings gained prominence, downplaying the importance of other buildings and their interior space design. With this new doctrine spread from China, it was the Chinese culture that would dominate for a long period of time. With the Tang dynasty in the 7th century, the emphasis was now on towns and urban planning, which was also reflected in housing plans of the period, resulting in the design of houses with regular rectangular layout. Under the religious influence, a part of the house was always reserved for prayer. As an entirely Chinese characteristic of the period, interior spaces had elaborate, ostentatious and luxurious characteristics as a result of greater prosperity. Another striking element of the period was a deeply-rooted belief and tradition called geomancy. It was this belief that determined both geographical positioning and alignment of buildings, their layout and interior space design, as well as their construction materials. On the other hand, climate factor brought about different types of layout (such as I-shaped, L-shaped, U-shaped, and square) developed as a protection against cold. Crystallization of social classes, and thereby stronger familial hierarchy, shaped building



Figure. 2. (a) Romanesque era, monastery dark interior spaces; (b) Nara era, house with space separatists; (c) Gothic era, merchant house, fireplace; (d) Muromachi era, spaces for production and commerce in houses.

layouts and interior spaces on the basis of distinctions such as elder-younger, men-women and master-servant. Particularly the sections reserved for men and women were now distinctly separated.

2.2.2. Gothic Period Culture vs. Kamakura (Song, Yuan and Koryo) and Muromachi (Song, Yuan)Period Cultures

With the rise of scholastic philosophy after the 12th century, religious beliefs in Europe now gained a new dimension. In order to maintain loyalty to God, religion and the Church, spaces were now designed with great height to overpower the beholder. Spaces were now opened to light, as light came to be considered sacred as part of the religious belief. The stained glass technique was developed to obstruct too much light. “[...] the use of colored glass was regarded as an ornament proper for the house of God, and a means to duly express his glory.” (Gozzoli, 1978) The development of commerce and towns as other important factors of the period led to the rise of a new social class. Towards the end of the period, it was this merchant class and their lifestyle which came to dominate the housing space, for the contemporary domestic life was shaped by the impacts of social status and wealth upon lifestyle. Consequently, the military class was indifferent to the house and domestic life since they spent most of their lives at wars and in fortresses. The bourgeoisie with increasing commercial wealth, on the other hand, brought interior spaces – dark and gloomy as a result of religious oppression and wars – to a level that could compete with comfortable and luminous palace structures, and turned them into livable spaces in time. In these houses, a part of which was used as stores as part of commercial activity, special space was reserved for prayer since religious beliefs still occupied a central position in human life (Rızaoglu, 2012). Kitchen, dining room, bedroom, living room and fireplace constituted other important interior elements.

From the 12th century onwards, Asian society also underwent a political transformation and came under the rule of feudal lords. This was the beginning of the Second (Middle) Age for Asia. Here, similarly to European culture; feudalism, religion and wars were influential upon the lifestyles and space designs. The Zen school now secured an important position in life together with soldiers as a new social class. Afterwards, temples as well as housing layout types and interior space layout were now shaped by the tenets of Zen Buddhism, which presented a philosophy of life. Again, as in Europe, with the revival of towns and cash-based economy in towns, concepts such as production and commerce started to impact upon space design, with a part of houses reserved for manufacturing and

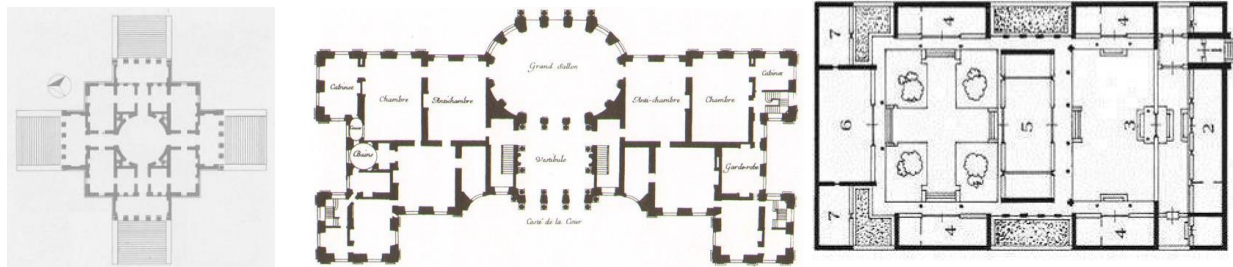


Figure. 3. (a) Renaissance era central form villa; (b) Baroque era U layout, vaux-le-vicomte; (c) Qing era central form house with two courtyards

sales activities.

2.3. Early Modernity –Second and Third Periods

2.3.1. Renaissance and Baroque Age Cultures vs Azuchi Momoyama(Ming,Choson) and Edo(Qing) Period Cultures

Starting from the 15th century in Europe, reason and human rose in prominence vis-à-vis religious beliefs. With the re-introduction of the Classical-Age philosophy, human dimensions and proportions were now used as the scale and standard of interior spaces, and the bourgeoisie that flourished thanks to trade emerged as the decisive factor of the period. “For the Renaissance man who, unlike the Middle Ages, was eager to bring order into domestic life, treating it as a work of deliberate

contrivance, all that has to do with the plan and arrangement of the house should be great, durable, and costly, but the daily life within it should be as simple as possible." (Burckhardt, 1977) This understanding was also reflected in all sorts of structures, the emphasis was now on central forms such as square or circle, in the midst of which man could feel himself as the measure of all things.

Epidemics, wars and famines of the 17th century led people to better seize the day and lead a better life, an understanding which brought about a more elaborate, comfortable but at the same time more luxurious design of spaces. Particularly in societies where people sought to obliterate the traces of wars, there was an extensive use of luxury, pomp and over decorating. This was used as a show of power and authority by the emperors and the nobility which grew stronger under the absolutist monarchies in the design of mansions, and by the established religious institution in religious monuments. This is the reason why the interior spaces of churches and palaces of the period looked very much alike. The crucial factor of the period is the monarchical regime and the king. As kings saw themselves as the center of government, now there was a new U-type layout of symmetrical arrays, at the center of which lies the King's privy chamber. This central layout type was also used by nobles and rich families in castles, mansion houses and urban residences (Tufekçioğlu, 2015).

A similar process took place in Asia during the 16th century. As was the case with politics, arts and architecture under the auspices of the ruling class under the feudal regime. Consequently, in the design of interior spaces, personal tastes were on the forefront as the eminent characteristic of the period, which is most distinctly observed in fortresses. During the period in question, strong fortresses and castles rose to prominence as a result of large-scale attacks and wars. These structures differ from their European counterparts in the use of endemic materials such as wood and tatami. Even though they were principally military defense structures, they were also conceived to be palace complexes and decorated in line with personal tastes as they were the residence of feudal lords.

During this period which started earlier than in Europe; rulers, the aristocratic class (that followed the model of the latter), and even the rich merchants who flourished under the new monetized economy, used pomp, splendor and extravagant elements in the design of living spaces, and preferred to adorn them with vivid colors, in order to present themselves as pompous, mighty and prosperous. As a sign of greatness depending on such hierarchy, privy sections of the spaces reserved for the ruler always featured a special, exclusive design. This was highly influenced by strict class and status (domestic) discriminations in China, which served as the principal cultural source of Asia from the 7th century onwards (see Tang Period, 7th century). Such discriminations were felt in structures through architectural style, measures, colors and decorations. As a result, as was in Europe, the period witnessed the development of a layout type, at the core of which lay the spaces reserved for the Emperor. Furthermore, certain legendary, mythical and superstitious beliefs, chiefly geomancy, Zen Buddhism and Feng shui, also had substantial impact upon interior design. All these reasons pertaining to the worldly life, the power of religion in life and spaces considerably diminished from the period onwards.

2.3.2. Rococo and Neoclassical Cultures vs. Edo (Qing) Period Cultures

Starting from 17th century, Asian, Japan in particular, due to its adherence to traditions in the face of the Christian influence from Europeans, closed itself to the West, and experienced an authentic cultural development, but still continued to read books and used the items imported from Europe. Therefore, the vivid colors, intense and eloquent decoration observed in the interior spaces of the period bear strong resemblance to the Baroque and Rococo periods in Europe. During the period, members of the ruling class such as generals still desired to exhibit their power and greatness, while merchants were eager to show off their wealth in buildings, which resulted in such coloring and decoration of interior spaces. On the other hand, a simpler and more moderate layout and interior

space design emerged in the period, under the influence of the Emperor, who derived his divineness and glory from God without any need to prove so. This era of peace experienced under this period of closure created a new social lifestyle based on pleasure and entertainment, which resulted in greater importance of towns and public space. In cities, [...] a type of layout which emerged in the 17th century, centering around imperial spaces, came into prominence. From the 18th century onwards, this layout type was converted into another one for houses that placed the head of the household at the center, and arrayed other members of the family around him on the basis of hierarchical family relations in order to reflect the patriarchal social structure of the period (Rizaoglu, 2012).

In the 18th-century Europe, internal spaces came to be dominated by the upper class and its personal tastes and visions. Growing weary of the pompous life and over decorated internal spaces of the preceding period, the nobility turned towards a simpler and refined lifestyle: They started to decorate their houses with elegant patterns and pastel colors; attempted to illuminate gloomy spaces through more windows, and covered surfaces to conceal the frame. In this case, which was particularly observed in religious buildings, the aim was to convert the tough and ugly world outside into an elegant and joyful world inside. The emphasis was now on private life as social life become more refined and courteous. Hence, spaces with different functions were created in these buildings where the priority was more on comfort, and this led to the enlargement of spaces. In result, from this period onwards, we see an enriching design of interior spaces. Also, the individual's desire to lead a more private life due to the emphasis on privacy brought about a new type of building called the recreational house.

From the mid-18th century, people decided to go back to the most natural state of humanity which was believed to have its roots in the Classical culture. Consequently, humanity underwent an enlightenment process and came to re-value human and reason. This led to a loss of function for religious spaces and the use of mathematical measures, geometrical forms and proportions as well as classical details and arrangement in civil buildings such as houses. The decisive factor in space design was now the bourgeoisie who secured equality through the Revolution of 1789 as well as the lifestyles



Figure. 4. (a) Momoyamo era Ninomaru castle-palace; (b) Rococo era, Amelienburg villa; (c) 19th Asian house with european style furnitures.

of this class.

2.4. Modernity – Third Period

2.4.1. 19th -Century Industrial Culture vs. Meiji Culture

From the 19th century onwards, advances in industry and technology as well as nationalist thought were influential upon the European lifestyle and space design. Industrial developments led to the emergence of industrial towns around factories and the rise of a new type of building called working-class houses occupied by the new working class – including people from the lower class origins – who fluxed into these new towns. Due to rapid population growth, people now lived in smaller spaces, which created a new type of multi-purpose housing where many activities took place within the same space. As a consequence of the French Revolution, this period witnessed to arousal of a nation-state

consciousness in society. These nationalistic ideas led to the revival of national tastes in art and architecture; [...] and the Mediaeval Gothic culture and architecture as a national way of expression was reflected first in public spaces, and later in civil buildings and interior spaces of houses. Particularly in Britain, internal space is dominated by dark colors and environment reminiscent of the dull and gloomy religious air of the Gothic era. Stained glasses always featured religious figures (Rizaoglu, 2012). Technical advances, on the other hand, introduced new materials such as iron, metal and glass. From the second half of the 19th century onwards, the bourgeoisie as the driving force of the society were lured by luxurious products as every segment of the society had now access to mass-produced goods. At the same time, a design concept was adopted that made use of plant-derived forms aiming to establish a link with nature in daily life in the face of tasteless mechanized production. From then on, internal spaces transformed into crammed and rich spaces making use of organic and asymmetric patterns. Employing the new materials brought about by the industrial advance such as metal, iron, steel, glass and ceramic; this vision lent a modern look to internal spaces. However, it lost its popularity from the 20th century due to the extreme costs of handworkmanship.

Upon these industrial developments in the 19th century, the Asian continent now believed in the need for using European technology, and ushered in an era of modernization. Through communication and cultural exchange, many innovations in Europe were now transferred to Asia. European culture became a model in many areas from the form of government, legal and monetary systems to the class system abolished upon inspiration by the ideas of equality and freedom. Thus, a new notion of society and lifestyle was adopted, and new construction materials were introduced simultaneously with Europe. In fact, during the same period in Asia, the Mediaeval Gothic culture revived in Europe was observed in public spaces, which also rose under European influence. Consequently, Europeans were the decisive factor in the social life of the era. Nevertheless, strongly attached to their ancestral traditions, Asian societies did not break off from their traditional ways of living in their private lives and thereby in housing spaces. Although new construction materials were introduced in living spaces until the 20th century, most people were content with adding to their traditional homes a few

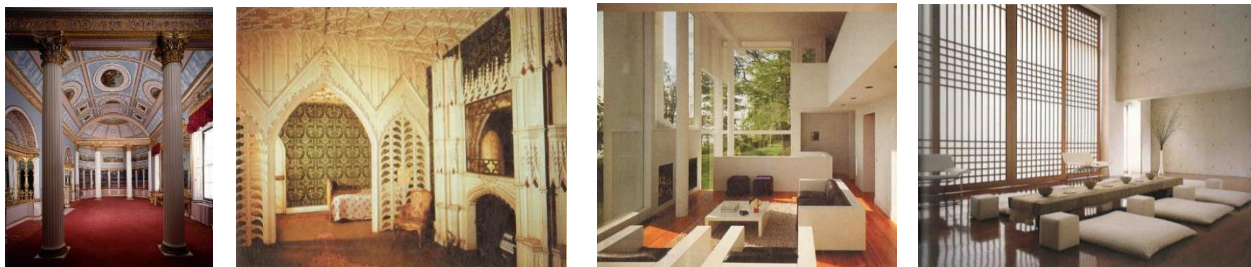


Figure. 5. (a) Neoclassical house; (b) 19th Gothic-revival house; (c) 20th Minimalist modern house; (d) Showa era traditional and modern house

European-style rooms and furniture which served the functions of dining, reception and entry (Rizaoglu, 2012).

2.4.2. 20th-Century Modern Culture vs. Taisho, Showa and Republic Period Cultures

New inventions of the 20th century ushered in an entirely new lifestyle based on science, technology and communication. From then onwards, the principal concern in the European culture was to determine how people would or should live under these industrial-technological innovations. Thus, it would be now architects and designers to shape the spaces, who cared more about functionality rather than ornament, simplicity as well as construction materials and methods. On the other hand, experiencing technological innovations, people now started to care more about their living spaces, in which they sought for pleasure, comfort and ease. Thus, there was now an attempt to ascribe

different functions to each space in order to provide comfort, to associate main living spaces with the landscape or the garden in order to provide pleasure, and to draw upon technology and planning in the kitchen spaces in order to provide convenience. “*Kitchen was the best-planned part of the house and now gradually introduced with electrical appliances*” (Burnett, 1980). Likewise, appearing for the first time, the open sitting areas constituted a novelty introduced by modern lifestyle. Advancing at a tremendous pace from the second half of the 20th century, technology led to the re-structuring and separation of interior spaces according to human needs, or the creation of new spaces with newly-assigned functions in indoor environments. Changing with technological innovations in our present day, this modern lifestyle is maintained in spaces intended for functionality and aesthetics, which are shaped by the use of technological devices and new materials.

On the other hand, with the industrial advances taking place during the 20th century, European influence was felt even more strongly in Asia. Due to rapid population growth, European-type high-rise culture was introduced to Asia from Europe. However, the most important transformation took place with the Second World War: As a result of the war with the United States, American lifestyle, besides European culture, started to penetrate Asian societies. Therefore, depending on technological innovations, spaces emphasizing modern lifestyle and functionality also gained prominence in Asia. Still, with their strict adherence in traditions deeply rooted in Buddhist-Shinto religious beliefs, Asian cultures always managed to preserve their traditional lifestyles and space designs in coexistence with their European and American counterparts. Consequently, both lifestyles do exist side by side today (Rızaoglu, 2012).

3. Conclusion

Both in European and Asian cultures lifestyles as well as architectural and spatial design was influenced by various factors such as climate, human values, religious beliefs, systems of thought, commercial activities, class distinctions, forms of government, and accordingly personal tastes and certain social developments (whether positive or negative) throughout history, and by industrial-technological advances as far as the modern era is concerned. However, Asian culture was additionally influenced by productive activities, family ties and even familial hierarchy, respect for the elders, traditions and superstitions which did and did not turn into religious beliefs. Particularly religious beliefs and cults prevailed for a long period in both cultures. However, in the case of Europe, established in the culture through fear and repression, religion later declined in importance due to the developments taking place from the 19th century onwards. Our present day has witnessed the emergence of a modern lifestyle and living spaces whereby change takes place with innovations and religio-moral values are of lesser weight. However, deriving its power from atavistic traditions, the element of religion in Asian culture was deliberately helped persist to the present day, thanks to its teachings enjoining the good rather than serving as a source of fear through repression. On this reason, although these societies underwent similar industrial-technological changes with Europe – and now even take the lead in such domains – they still preserve their moral values and ancestral beliefs. In our present day witnessing a nascent global / universal way of life and culture; both cultures, drawing upon industrial-technological advances, still undertake innovative efforts architectural-interior-space design. Yet, it should be remarked that Asian culture has been able to sustain such advances by preserving humano-social values, familial ties, mutual love and respect, and solidarity. In this respect, it represents an example of attaining the level of advanced civilizations without losing one’s own national values.

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