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Traditional Domestic Architecture of Japan (Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art, Vol. 21)

Teiji Itoh

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Traditional Domestic Architecture of Japan (Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art, Vol. 21) Teiji Itoh Dust jacket notes: "Traditional Japanese domestic architecture is epitomized in the minka: the houses of the common people built during the feudal age that preceded Japan's entry into the modern world in the late nineteenth century. Of the many forms in which the Japanese architectural genius has expressed itself, probably none has more immediate appeal for the Westerner than these commoners' dwellings in country and in town. Their functional beauty and quiet understatement reflect a tradition of design and craftsmanship that commands the admiration of professional architect and layman alike. In fact, modern architects, both Japanese and Western, have found in the minka a source of inspiration for new concepts of design and the effective use of space....[T]hey embody the ideals of Japanese domestic architecture in their most vital form. In a word, the minka is the essentiail Japanese house. In this engagingly written and generously illustrated book, the reader is introduced to the minka in all its significant aspects: its place in Japanese architectural history and in the social scene of the feudal age, its structural variety, its adaptation to environmental conditions, its role as a symbol of social status, and its functional and aesthetic values. At the same time, the book gives appropriate attention to the people who built these houses and lived in them - the farmers, the townsmen, the merchants, the lower-level government officials, the innkeepers, the less affluent samurai - and to the variations in structure and style determined by the occupations and preferences of the owners. Of particular interest is the wealth of detail in which the distinguishing features of the minka style are presented and discussed. The abundant photographs (19 in full color and well over 100 in black and white), drawings, and other illustrations cover the full range of achievement in the minka form during some three centuries."

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