

JAPAN

SOUTH KOREA

Ruqaiyah Bandukwala

Trip Highlights (Abridged)

Tokyo

Tsukiji Fish Market
Senso-ji Temple
Kobe Beef!
Hama-rikyu Gardens
Shibuya & Asakusa
Meiji Jingu

Kyoto

Fushimi Inari Shrine
Kiyomizu-dera Temple
Kennin-ji Temple
Gasha's street
Arashiyama Bamboo Forest

Osaka

Dotonbori
Ebisubashi Bridge

Jeju Island

Bing-su
Island Cliffs & Religious Statues

Seoul

Gyeongbokgung Palace
Bukchon Hanok Historical Village
Waterfront Ramen
Gwangjang Food Market
Starfield Library

Travel Statement

My upcoming journey to Japan optimistically aims to enhance my understanding of the built environment, explore and exercise different approaches to sketching, and draw inspiration from the rich tapestry of Japanese art and architecture. Japan, with its unique urban fabric and architectural marvels, presents an opportunity to immerse myself in a culture renowned for its meticulous craftsmanship, harmonious integration of tradition and modernity, and conscious relationship with nature. These conceptual frameworks invoke curiosity in my own approach and perspective on design, and inspirations such as Yayoi Kusama, Kengo Kuma, and Sanaa Architects urge me to explore this region further. By navigating Japanese cities, I will develop a nuanced perspective on urban design, observing firsthand how these complex spaces are organized and interconnected. Sketching, a fundamental tool in the architect's arsenal, and a skill I continue to enjoy refining, will take on new dimensions in Japan. Through my sketches and journals, I can capture not just physical forms but the essence of Japanese design principles, along with my personal experience and expression of the travel. To continue engaging with the larger region of Southeast Asia and take advantage of the month-long trip, South Korea will be the last destination I plan to go to. Ultimately, this travel itinerary is a transformative step towards enriching my global perspective on the built environment, fostering a deeper and more authentic connection between my sketches and the dynamic urban landscapes that I aspire to contribute to in the future.



Wagyu & Seafood

Japan

In Anthony Bourdain's field notes about Tokyo, the late chef and author wrote "If I had to eat only in one city for the rest of my life, Tokyo would be it. Most chefs I know would agree with me." I too agree. The effortless richness of the food reflected the quality of the meats and the standards to which they kept their distribution. With such little ingredients and such little preparation the cuisines were regularly amazing.

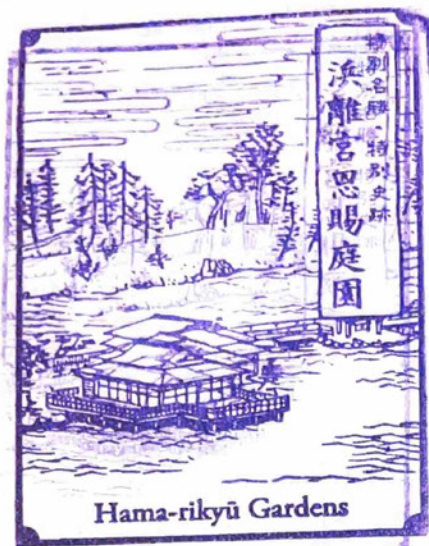
From the hole-in-the-walls to the chains, the expectation for great food was the baseline. And it only went up from there. Not to mention, not only was it healthy, but it was incredibly affordable.











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Hama-rikyū Gardens

東京都立 特別名勝・特別史跡

浜離宮恩賜庭園



個人/一般
Adult

¥300
クレジット

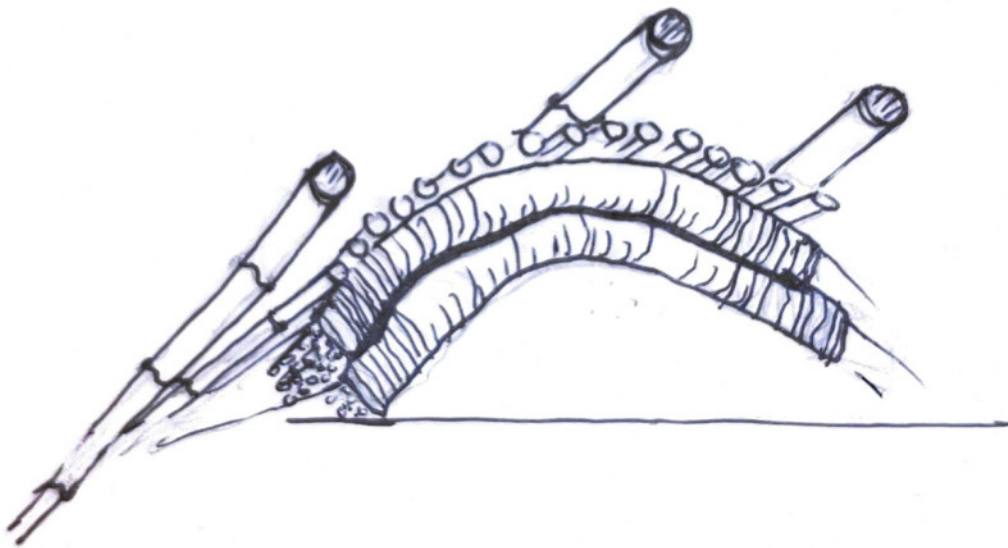
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Tokyo Metropolitan Gardens



Hamarikyu Gardens Tokyo, Japan

After eating my weight in seafood/beef at the Tsukiji Fish Market, I meandered to what could only be described as the truest example of an urban oasis. The gardens revealed themselves in layers of landscapes. From vast wildflower fields near the entrance to forested temples and reconstructed teahouses beyond, the FiDi-like feel of the city is forgotten as one moves further into this serene park.



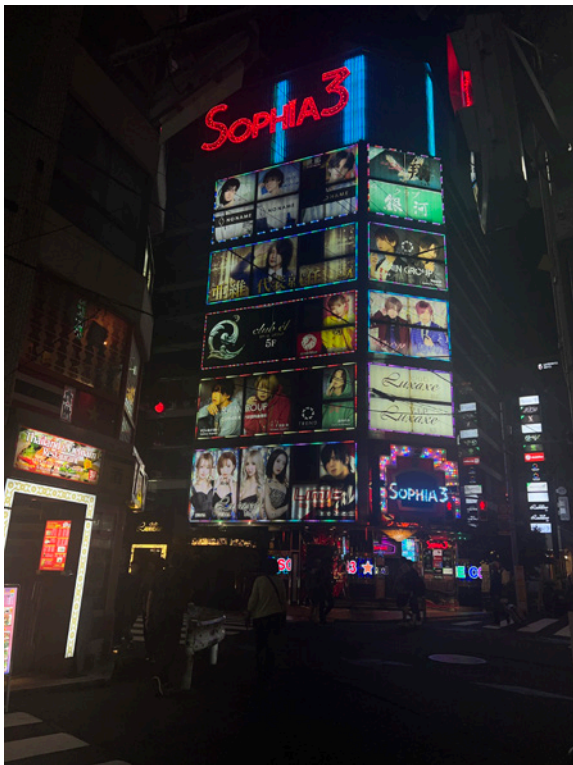




Higashishinsaibashi Osaka, Japan

The streets of Japan are fascinating. However short or narrow, blocks remain full of signs, lights, lanterns, electric cables, vents, traffic signals, restaurant posters, and so much more. The density of the linear perspective is overwhelming and indigestible as a pedestrian. You never know what to look at. Everything catches your attention. Activity consumes the streets and only makes room for cars when it is necessary, creating a human-scale, people friendly atmosphere.





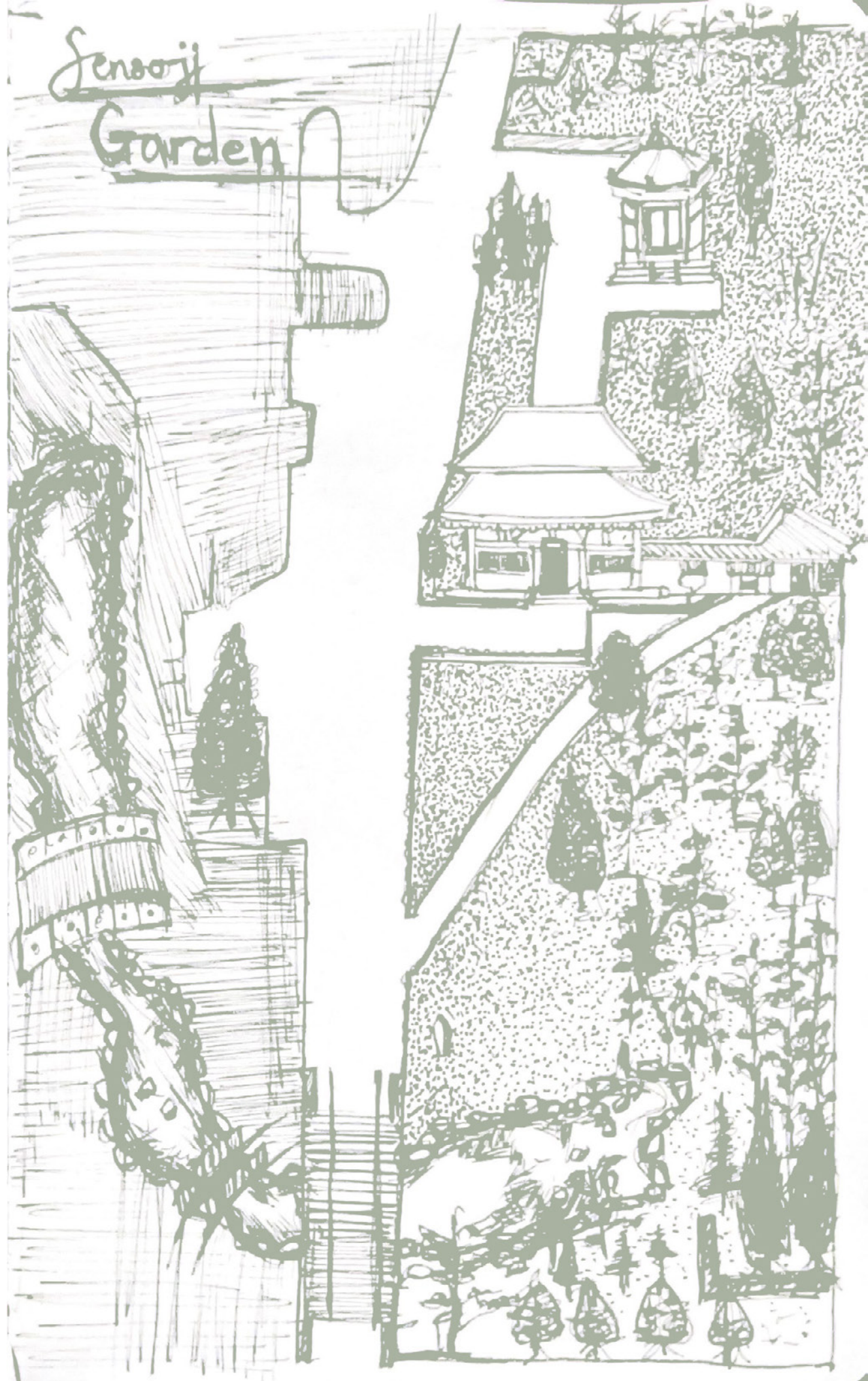


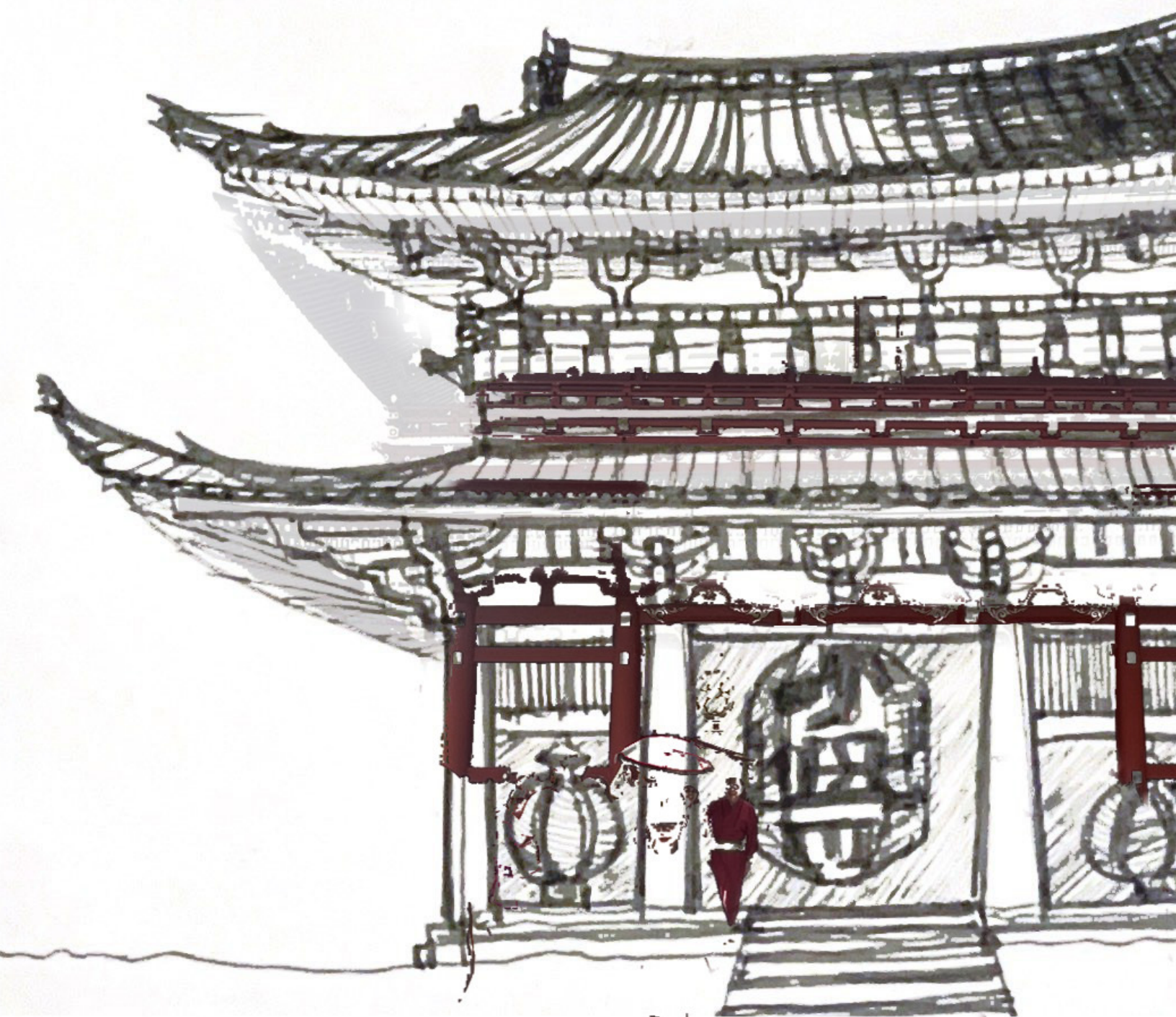
Sensoji Garden

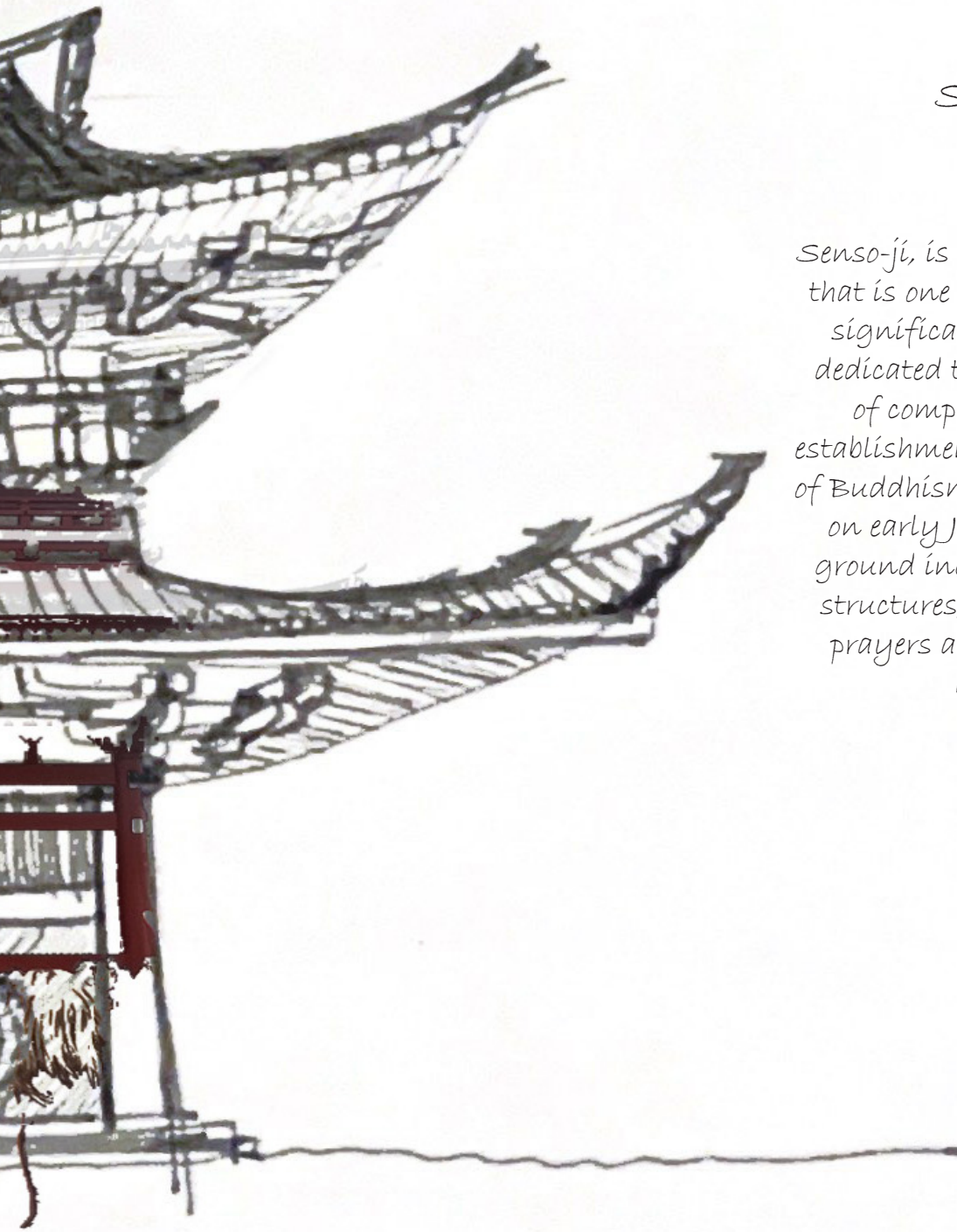
Asakusa, Japan

A tranquil place in a busy environment. Adjacent to the bustling Senso-ji Temple--crowded with tourists visiting its tall, five-story pagoda and large gates--lays a peaceful garden tucked away. Temple treasures, such as wooden panels depicting historical scenes or small golden dragons are scattered through out the garden. A pond rests on one side of the garden, adding an element of calmness and surprise altogether within the context of the surrounding city.

Senooji Garden





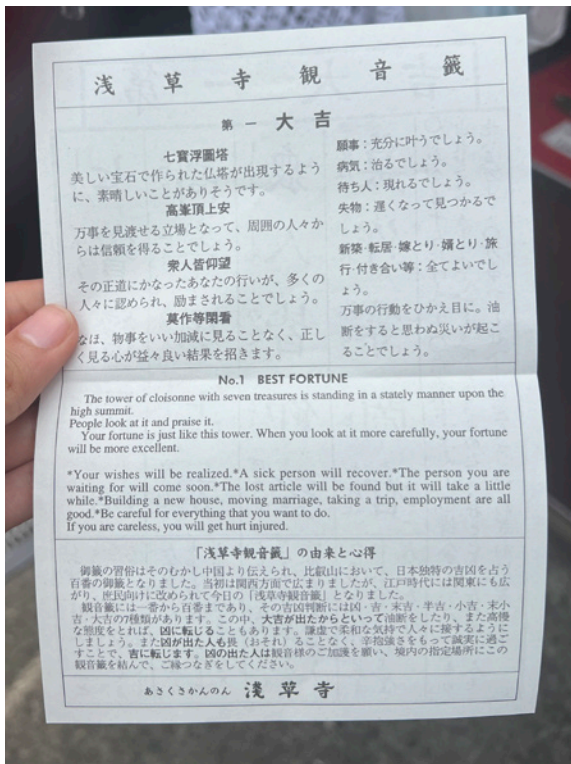


Sensoji Temple

Asakusa, Japan

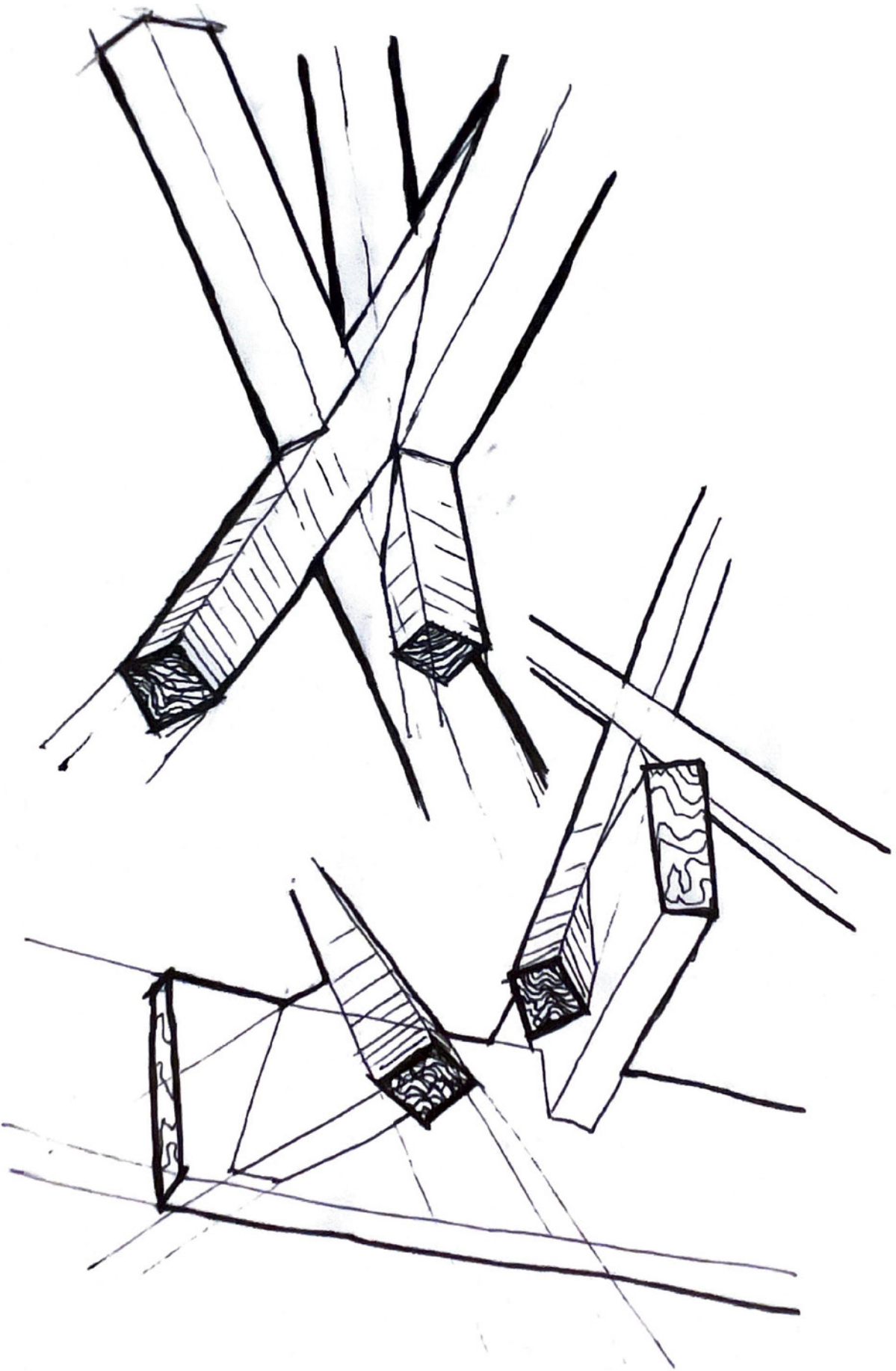
Senso-ji, is an ancient Buddhist temple that is one of Tokyo's oldest and most significant historical temples. It is dedicated to Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion. The temple is an establishment that reflects the influence of Buddhism and its complex structures on early Japanese society. The large ground includes multiples gates and structures, such as the main hall for prayers and rituals, a pagoda, and numerous gates.







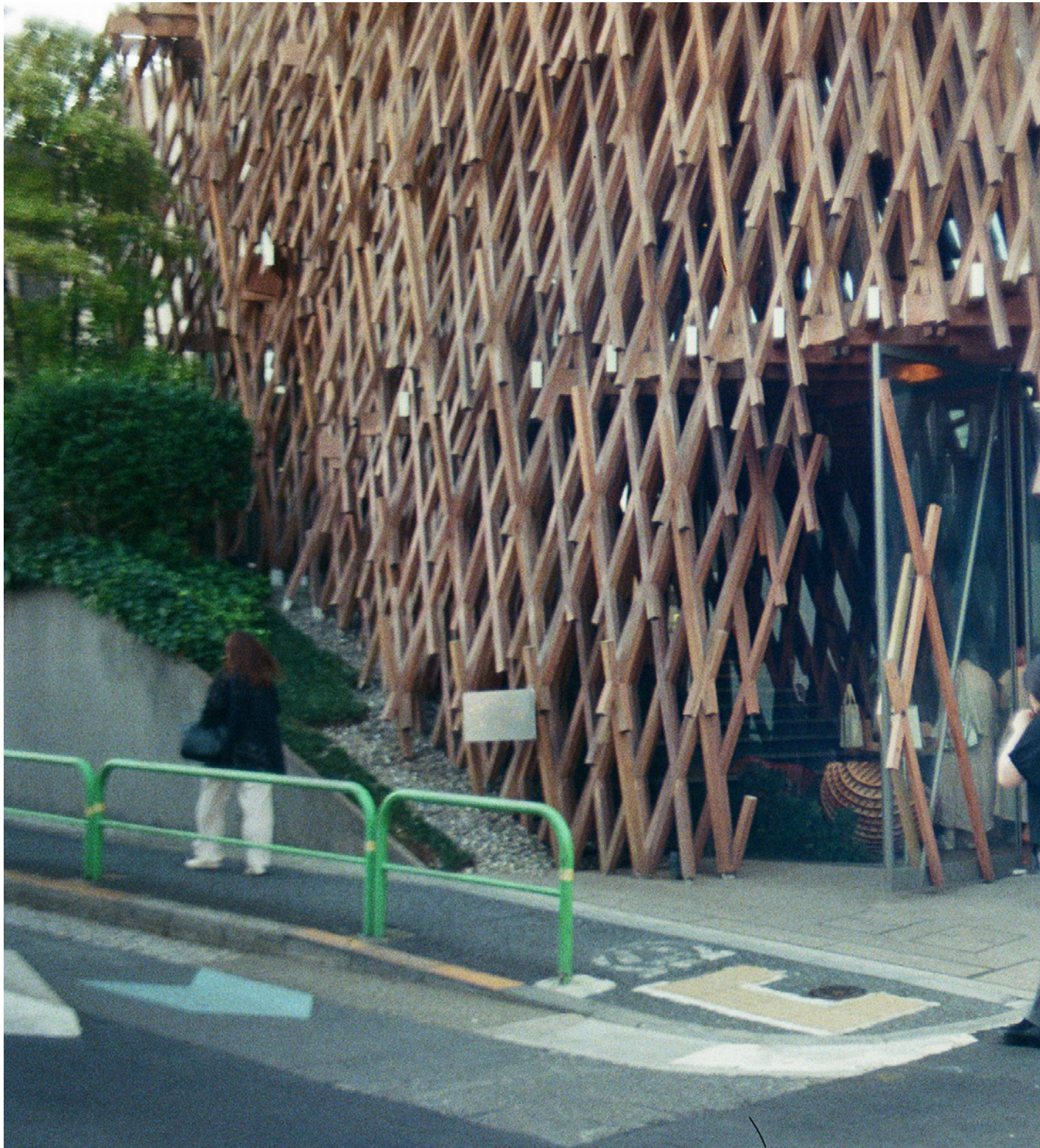


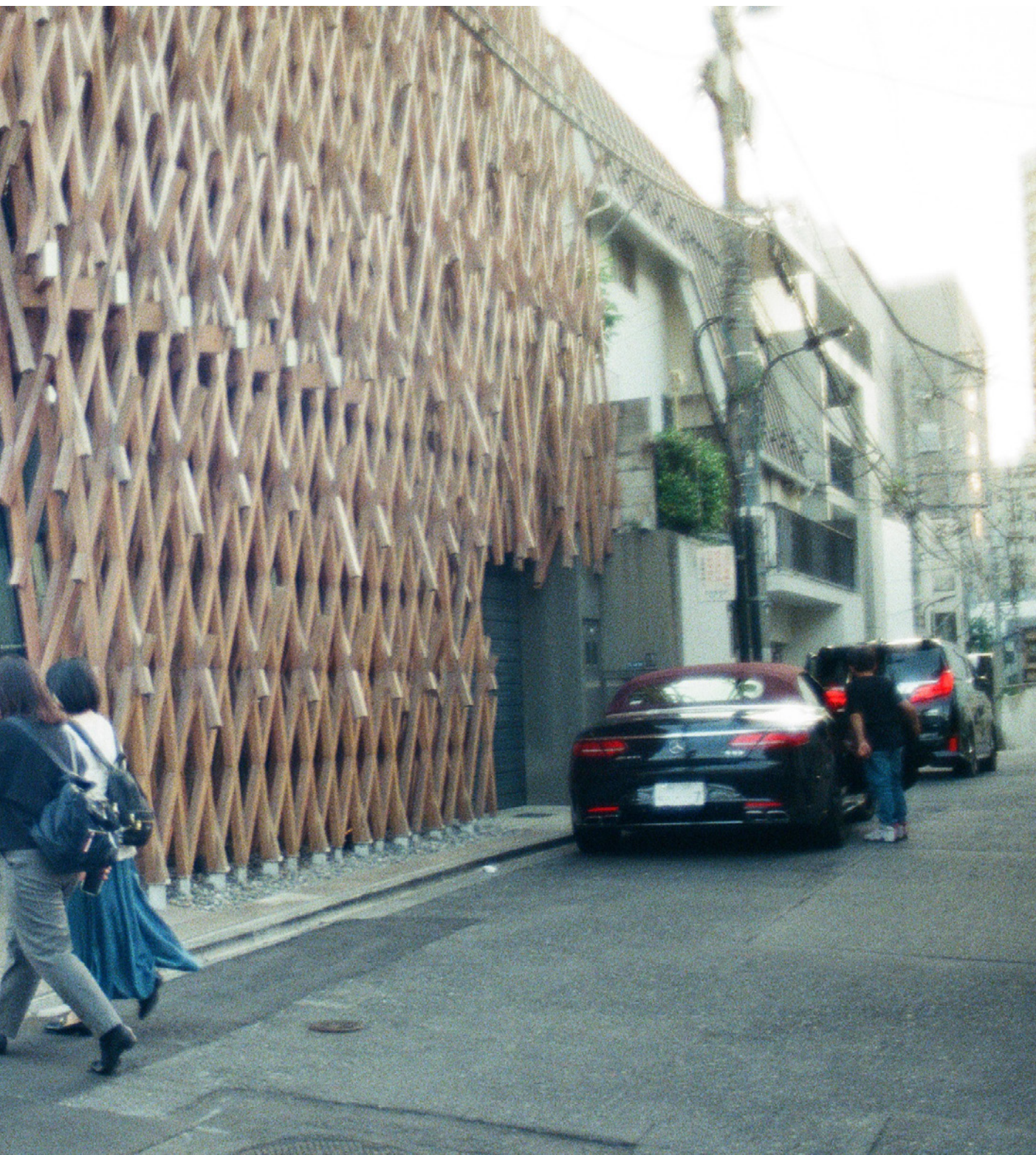


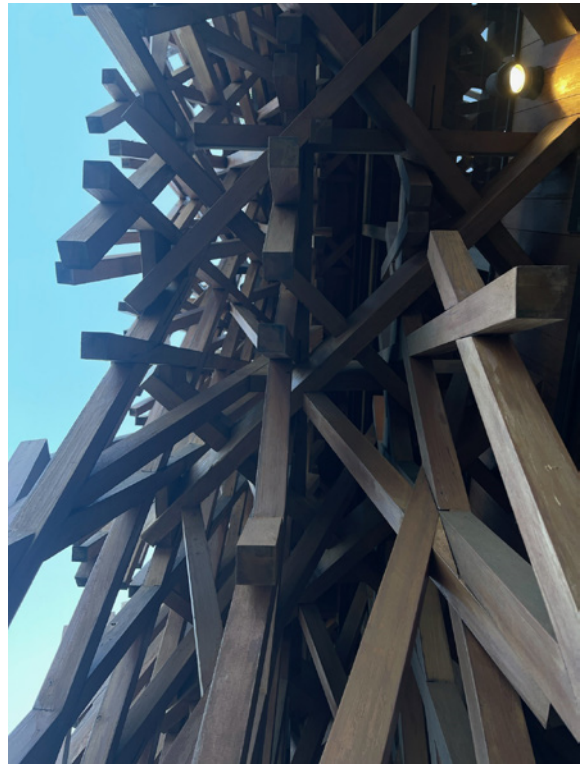
Kengo Kuma

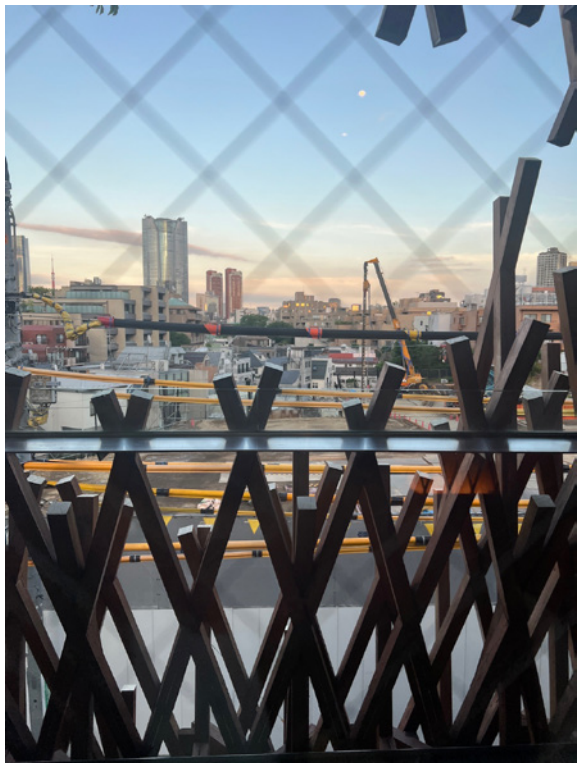
Tokyo, Japan

Japanese architect and wood joint connoisseur, Kengo Kuma's projects span the entire breadth of scale and typology. Two of his Tokyo projects, Sunny Hills and Japan National Stadium exemplify his range. At Sunny Hills, you can spend as little as five minutes in the tea room (as one such visitor did, downing her tea and rushing out without so much as a glance at the accompanying biscuits), or spend upwards of an hour trying to comprehend the system of logic between the intersecting, interlocking joints.











Fushimi Inari Taisha

Kyoto, Japan

At the base of the mountain Inari sits a shrine which is approx. 250 meters above sea level. Trails up the mountain lead through nearly 10,000 gates with many smaller shrines scattered through out. Every year worshipers and devotees hike up the mountain as part of a sacred religious journey. A seemingly infinite number of orange Shinto openings hover over like canopies on the trails. Each step is marked by a gate, inching the observer/hiker, closer to the top of the sacred mountain.











KIYOMIZU TEMPLE

音羽山 清水寺

Kiyomizu-Dera Kyoto, Japan

Nestled within a forested, hilly landscape, this Buddhist temple juts out from above the treeline, providing stunning views afforded by the structural system. While not nearly as strenuous a hike as that to Fushimi Inari, the narrow streets on the outskirts of the city are lined with plenty of shops selling goodies to keep weary travelers fueled.















Jéju Island

Korea

Seafood. Sand. Dol
Hareubang. Repeat. Jéju is the
home to famous oranges and
black pork. Visiting in the
off-season provided a tranquil
experience sandwiched between
the chaos of Japanese and
Korean urban environments. I
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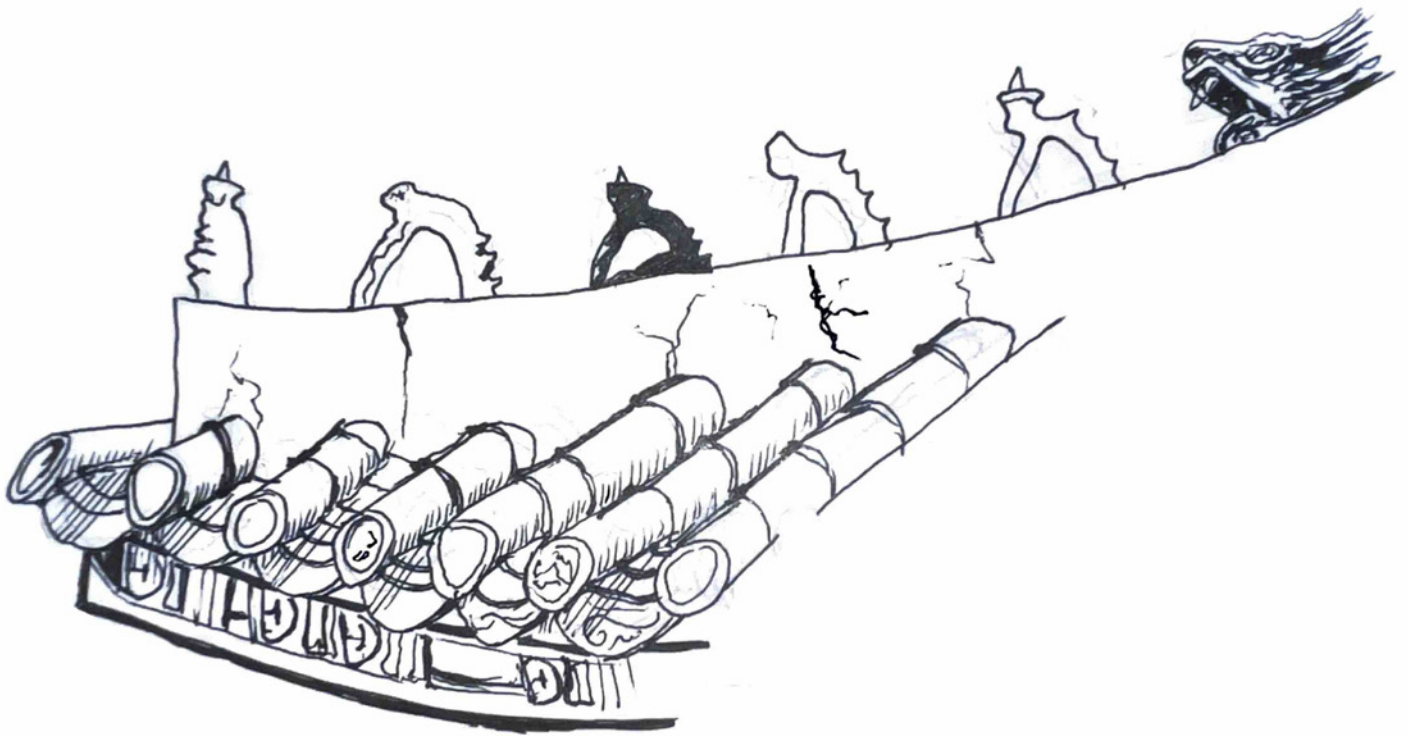
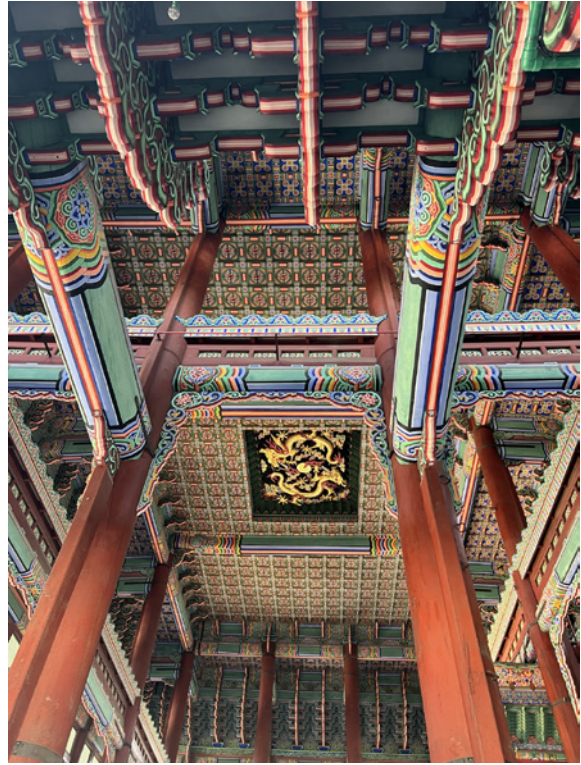


Gyeongbokgung Palace

Seoul, Korea

Gyeonghoeru Pavilion sits at the center of the Gyeonghoeji Pond, overlooking the Gyeongbokgung Palace. Now preserved, the pavilion was once used as an open air entertainment area for important foreign visitors of the palace. The palace beside is viewed with the mountains as a backdrop, creating a serene and cooling environment for people to experience. Wearing traditional Hanboks inside these palace grounds was welcomed and encouraged, inviting locals and tourists to enjoy Korean history and culture together.







South Korean DMZ

38th Parallel

Visiting the DMZ is one of the most popular day trips from Seoul. Its proximity to North Korea, as well as the ability to peer through magnified lenses deep into North Korea, entices tens of thousands of visitors yearly. I saw farm workers and bicyclists and a large gathering of people under multi-colored umbrellas. The highly controlled and scripted nature of these tours is noteworthy. Rather than painting the North as an adversary, my guide reiterated her hopes for reunification and acceptance towards those who had defected from the North.



DMZ 곤돌라 탑승권
파주임진각평화곤돌라

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평화곤돌라
PAJU IMJINGAK
PEACE GONDOLA



DMZ

