ABSTRACT

In the age of information, mass production and consumption, the creation of architecture is in danger of succumbing to the phenomena of strict efficiency and standardisation, resulting in the making of places that no longer have beauty in the poetic sense. Amidst the clamour for modernity which leads to the inevitable homogenisation of the built environment and loss of place, the Japanese stand out in their resistance to this trend. This dissertation focuses on Japanese poetry, specifically the haiku, and how an analysis of haiku can bring about an alternative way of viewing Japanese architecture both from the past and in contemporary times.

Since both haiku and architecture embody values which are ingrained in the Japanese way of life, the analysis of haiku yields concepts which may be similarly applicable to architecture. This study attempts to draw parallels between haiku and architecture based on concepts derived from Kenneth Yasuda’s analysis of haiku. Despite some of the concepts being interrelated, for the purpose of this paper, the distinct and important aspects are classified under the three sections: aesthetic principles, order, and meaning, forming the structure of this paper.

Through the parallel analysis of architecture based on aesthetic principles, order and meaning, it is found that haiku and architecture do indeed share common grounds. This study contributes to an alternative way of viewing architecture, that is, through the poetics of haiku, and perhaps with this new approach, we can understand how and why the Japanese dwell poetically.