Journey to the East: 
_Jūnikai_, Japan’s first skyscraper

_José Antonio Alfaro Lera_

One century after the Great Kanto Earthquake devastated Tokyo and Yokohama in September 1, 1923, the remains of the foundation of the _Jūnikai_ (Twelve-Stories), or _Ryōunkaku_ (Cloud-Surpassing Tower), the first Skycraper of Japan, have been discovered in the old Asakusa Park, in Tokyo. It was designed by the Scottish sanitary engineer William Kinnimond Burton (1856-1899), and inaugurated in 1890. Contemporary of Adler and Sullivan’s first high-rise buildings in Chicago, it was the icon of the Asakusa Park, a copy in Japan of the cheerful western entertainment districts such as Broadway or Montmartre. The Ryōunkaku was the focus of several pages of Japanese modernist literature and its powerful presence in Tokyo’s skyline made it one of the symbols of the country’s opening to the west, which started with the Meiji Restoration, a time of transformations in which domestic intimacy moved from the strict horizontality of Japanese dwellings—embodied by the delicate platforms built to observe the moon in the town of Katsura—to the vertiginous verticality of the new forms of high-rise living of modern towers.

Keywords
Japan, Skyscraper, _Jūnikai_, Asakusa, William K. Burton.

Resumen
Un siglo después del Gran Terremoto de Kanto, que arrasó Tokio y Yokohama el 1 de septiembre de 1923, en el antiguo Parque de Asakusa de la capital nipona, se han descubierto los restos de los cimientos del primer rascacielos del Japón, conocido como el _Jūnikai_ (Doce Pisos) o _Ryōunkaku_ (la Torre que perfora las nubes). Proyectado y construido por el ingeniero higienista escocés William Kinnimond Burton (1856-1899), fue inaugurado en 1890. Coetáneo de los primeros edificios en altura de Adler y Sullivan en Chicago, era el icono del Parque de Asakusa, replica japonesa a comienzos del siglo XX, de los alegres barrios occidentales de espectáculos como Broadway o Montmartre. Protagonista de varias páginas de la literatura modernista japonesa, con su potente presencia en el perfil de Tokio fue uno de los símbolos de la gran apertura de Japón a Occidente iniciada con la Restauración Meiji, una época de transformaciones, en la que la intimidad doméstica transita de la estricta horizontalidad de la casa japonesa, encarnada en la delicadas plataformas para observar la luna de la villa de Katsura hacia la vertiginosa verticalidad de los nuevos modos de habitar en altura de las torres modernas.

Palabras Clave
Japan, Rascacielos, _Jūnikai_, Asakusa, William K. Burton.

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From East to West: Recurrent Travels

In 1868, the Meiji Restoration ushered in the modernization of Japan, which had been cut off from foreign influence under the Tokugawa dynasty throughout the Edo period (1603-1868). The nation sought the keys to political, cultural and economic transformation in the western model. A number of diplomatic expeditions were dispatched to Europe and America to learn about western educational systems, technical knowledge, culture, social structures and economies. The best known of these missions was Iwakura (1871-1873), led by Iwakura Totomi, who headed a group of over one hundred travelers that included ministers, historians and chroniclers, as well as a group of seventy students who were to finish their training in the west and would experience an intense cultural and technological transference on their return to Japan. Not since the so-called Iberian Century had there been an opening-up on such a scale. Here, now, comes the greatest revolutionary epoch! These are the two great events, the restoration of the Imperial power from the lands of the last Shogun after the end of several wars, followed by the opening of our communication and the forming of our treaties with the western world!

Wakon Yosai—“Japanese spirit, Western learning”—was one of the mottos of the Meiji era, which, along with the notion of Kyohei Fukoku—“enrich the country, strengthen the military”—took Japan to the top of the world’s economies in the early 20th century, but also led to the birth of a fearsome military power with an aggressive expansionist policy.

The recognition of western culture paved the way for a period of devoted admiration, which was especially intense in the field of architecture. In the 1870s, as a result of the aforesaid expeditions, the Japanese government invited numerous western architects to the country and entrusted them with a two-pronged mission: to design the new buildings of modern Japan and instruct the next generation of technicians in the country’s universities. These were generally imposing, solid buildings on two or three floors that, in the intertwining and confusion of the various styles, reflected well the atmosphere of ferment and preparation of European architecture from the late 19th century. The adoption of the eclecticism of fin-de-siècle western architecture as the visual model for the country’s new public buildings was merely another phase...
in the incessant back-and-forth between Japan and the west with exhilarating results that refuted the pessimistic foreboding of Toynbee, for whom “the great development of our era is the coming together of east and west, the overriding impact of which has been the destruction of the way of life of all non-western peoples.”

In the mid-19th century, before the European architects arrived, there had been a formidable infiltration of the Japanese concept of domestic space. A people so prone to producing images as the Japanese had no problem seducing the western cultural elite who had converted to Japanism, with its simple mass-produced prints aimed at the lower classes: the *Ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. With an intense visuality, far-removed from realism and prioritizing representation, their flat colors and impossible perspectives are the key to a new way of looking that imbued impressionist and cubist proposals, with an influence that was also palpable in the avant-gardes at the forefront of modern architecture.

The western sense of domestic space had been characterized by the strict limits between the built and nature, understood, to a greater or lesser extent, as distinct spheres. Japanese houses, with their intense horizontality and undefined boundaries, suggest a new intimacy in which the light and delicate built object expands and dissolves within its external environment to bring transitional spaces front and center.

Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the main vectors of the revolution of modern domestic space resulting from Japanese influence. *“Japan has appealed to me as the most romantic, artistic, nature-inspired country on earth. If Japanese prints were to be deducted from my education, I don’t know what direction the whole might have taken.”* In his “prairie houses”, there are fundamental echoes of the *sukiya* style of Japanese dwellings, such as the *engawa*—the veranda surrounding the house that Wright transformed with broad overhangs with deep planes of shadow—and the *tokonoma*, a ceremonial central space, a role that Wright assigned to the fireplace and chimney, the *axis mundi*, the point from which all the house’s rooms seem to unfold.

The paradigm was to be the Katsura Imperial Villa, a recreational palace built in the 17th century and inspired by passages from the primitive novel *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*), which praised the sensual reflection of the moon.

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6 Joao Rodrigues SJ, José Luis Alvarez Taladriz, *Arte del Cha* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1954), IV.

7 The term *Japanism* expresses the powerful influence of Japanese art on western culture in the second half of the 19th century, through universal exhibitions and the changing tastes of collectors and their extensive imports.

8 Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints were woodcuts made by a four-color process applied through wooden plates that were fundamental to the popularity of “Japanism” in late 19th-century Europe. Their influence on western art has not waned since then.

9 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Autobiografía: 1867-1944* (Madrid: El Croquis, 1998), 35.
in the Katsura River. The radical abstraction of the pavilions in the Katsura palace complex was analyzed by Bruno Taut in a series of drawings entitled Gedanken über Katsura (Thoughts about Katsura), completed in 1934 after his visit to the palace. “Architecture reduced to pure essence. Astonishing. I feel as innocent as a child. Satisfaction which stems from real longing (…) a beautiful sight—the eye becomes a purveyor of the spiritual. This is the wonder that Japan offers us.”

Taut also dedicated to Katsura the final chapter of his 1937 book, Das japanische Haus und sein Leben (Houses and People of Japan), a work that was widely read by modern western architects. In 1954, Walter Gropius, after visiting the Imperial Villa, wrote in great excitement to his friend Le Corbusier, declaring that he had found something at Katsura that was in parallel to his architectural principles. In 1955, Le Corbusier closed the circle by visiting Katsura with his host and disciple, the Japanese architect Junzo Sakakura.

Figure 3. W. K. Burton along side of sumo wrestler Ozutsu, or Taiho, around 1890.

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William Kinninmont Burton, Engineer Extraordinaire

One of the leading lights from this journey to the east was the encyclopedic Scotsman William Kinninmont Burton.11 This engineer from Edinburgh seems to occupy a somewhat discrete role in the chronicles of this period, although his involvement in Japan’s transformation is beyond question. With the devotion of a sanitary engineer, he designed the water supply and sewerage systems for major Japanese cities, built Tokyo’s first skyscraper and founded the Japanese Photographic Society.12
13 The list of his contributions is so extensive that the possibility that Burton led work on the island has to be considered. It seems probable due to his status as consultant and coordinator of teams of young Japanese engineers.

14 See Burton, William Kinnimond. 1884. The ABC of Modern Photography. London: Piper & Carter. The use of gelatin as the base for the suspension of the silver halides that form the emulsion, or light-sensitive layer, of photographic paper reflects one of the great advances made in photography in the late 19th century.

15 During his Japanese period, W. K. Burton undertook a number of studies and published a series of works that combined scientific documents and traditional prints. He also embarked on an intense collaboration with Kazumasa Ogawa (1860-1929), a local photographer whose work Burton commented on in various articles published between 1890 and 1894 in a number of British photographic magazines.

16 His observations on the effects of seismic waves on structures based on early photographic plates of elastic waves, as he set out in his article On the application of photography to Seismology and Volcanic Phenomena, were premonitory. In The Great Earthquake of Japan, 1891, Burton documented the effects of an earthquake measuring 8.4 on the Richter scale that hit Japan on the morning of October 28, 1891. Ogawa’s photographs showed that modern western-style buildings and the new infrastructure of the Meiji era did not withstand the process of the day.

17 See Burton, William Kinnimond. 1883. Out-of-doors life in Japan. Tokyo: K. Ogawa.

18 William Kinnimond Burton, Wrestlers and wrestling in Japan (Tokyo: K. Ogawa, 1895), 2.

19 In the late 19th century, the race to build high was being run around the world, with the 330-meter-high Eiffel Tower unveiled in 1889 at the Paris Universal Exhibition. The formal principles of this new style were established during the rebuilding of Chicago after the Great Fire of 1871, thanks to elevators becoming increasingly common and the possibilities offered by new metal structures, which allowed buildings to be constructed without load-bearing facades. William Le Baron Jenney, Richardson, Sullivan and Adler all designed high-rise buildings, which grew inexorably higher, from the first examples, such as William Le Baron’s ten-story, 42-meter-high wooden structures.

Burton was also an extraordinary photographer of great technical skill. In 1884, before traveling to Japan, he had published The ABC of Modern Photography, “a manual of photography for beginners on the assumption that the gelatine process is now the process of the day.” The impact of this practical guide was considerable, as is evident from the continuous reprints to the present day.

Burton’s hobbies and knowledge would seem to be aligned with exact predestination. It is no coincidence that before designing the Jūnikai, he concentrated on investigating the possibilities offered by photography in the study of the effects of earthquakes and natural disasters on buildings. Burton also focused on the prints showing traditional life in Japan and the changes underway. Out-of-doors life in Japan documented the opening up of the hermetic domestic life in the country and the blurring of its boundaries with a new exteriority. In Wrestlers and wrestling in Japan (1895), Burton combined the keys to traditional Japanese wrestling with Ogawa’s excellent portraits. He wrote “The wrestlers themselves seemed to me to be about the most good natured and kindly lumps of humanity that I have ever come across, and it was a pleasure to observe the good feeling that evidently existed amongst themselves, and the way in which they enjoyed the work—or play—that they were going through” and reflected at length on the hermetic tradition that played with the form and weight of the human body in a sacred space; a sudden, gloomy ballet, a beautiful likeness of the effort required to sustain the momentum that inspires architecture works.

The Ryōunkaku

Japan’s first skyscraper was a contemporary of the first high-rise buildings in Chicago. Around 1890, Burton received his first commission to erect a tower
Donald Richie, in his preface to *Asakusa Kurenaidan (The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa)*, looked to Tanizaki to describe the hypnotic, bizarre life in Asakusa; a curious syncretism of tradition and distorted reflections of western myths—the razzmatazz of Broadway, the bohemian air of Montmartre or the decadence of Berlin between the wars.

Later, in an unfinished novel, *The Mermaid (Kojin)*, Tanizaki tells what Asakusa was like in 1918. Its attractions were ‘plays of the old style, operettas, plays in the new style, comedies, movies—movies from the West and Japanese productions, Douglas Fairbanks and Onoe Matsunosuke—acrobats balancing on balls, bareback riders, Nariwa bushi singers, ger gidayu charters, the merry-go-round, the Hanayashiki Amusement Park, the Twelve Story Tower, shooting galleries, whores, Japanese restaurants, Chinese restaurants, and Western restaurants—the Rairaiken, won ton mein, oysters over rice, horsemeat, snapping turtles, eels, and the Café Paulista.

The symbol of this place was to be Tokyo’s first skyscraper, designed by Burton. Unveiled in 1890, the *Ryūunkaku* (**“Cloud-Piercing Tower”**), also known as the *Jūnikai* (**Twelve-Stories**), was an imposing 69-meter-high brick structure that, for decades, would be the city’s highest building, twice as high as Nikolai Cathedral. Under its panoramic observation platforms at the top of the building, there were floors selling Chinese products, exhibition halls and entertainment venues; an immense, eclectic showcase of city life and activity in overlapping levels.

In his 1914 novel, *The Nightside of Japan*, Taizo Fujimoto included a costumbrista description of the building and its surroundings:

At the east end of the street there stands a tall hexagonal brick building in twelve stories; its name is the *Ryūunkaku* (Tower piercing through clouds), and popularly called *Jūnikai* (Twelve Story Tower). When the tower was first built the elevator was furnished for visitor; but shortly afterwards as there happened an unfortunate event, owing to incomplete adjustments of the machine, it was abolished by order. You step up to the top of the tower by the spiral stepings and, in rooms of each story, various kinds of toys and other articles are sold, or fine pictures and photographs are hung against walls. In 1911, one winter night at about eleven, a young man jumped down over the balcony of the eleventh story of the tower and killed himself, crushing his body upon the ground. After this event, the windows and balconies above ten story are entirely covered with wire-nets.

Stepping down the tower you enter a beef shop (gyū-ya) just below the tower; it is now one o’clock A.M. and there some twenty or thirty laborers or workmen of the lowest class are drinking sake, and devouring beef, pork, or even horseflesh from the boiling pans on square tables arranged in a broad, dusky room. When you enter the room, your nose is attacked by the stinging smell of bad sake and boiling flesh, mixed with the odor of cheap tobacco smoke, which fills the room and whirls like dense clouds. Maid-servants of ugly face and on rusty garment carry bottles of sake and plates of flesh, and their chattering and laughing with customers are noisy and disgusting. Among these customers there may be thieves, pickpockets, and gamblers, who have come in this house in triumph for their victories. They drink and drink till morning, and it is not seldom that they make quarrels at last, throwing bottles and breaking porcelain.

The precedents for a building of this height in Japan went back to the pagoda towers at the Todaiji complex, which, with approximately 100 meters, were the world’s highest vertical structures of their time. The recurrent earth tremors that brought down the pagodas called for a height limit in monumental buildings of 31 meters in the Edo period.24
Images of his native Scotland would have also been present in the first stages of design revere. On Calton Hill, in Edinburgh, there stands a tower-monument to Admiral Nelson, built between 1807 and 1815, and the Astronomical Observatory, where a camera obscura was installed to capture spectacular panoramic views of the city. In Princes Street Gardens, there is a monument to Sir Walter Scott, built in 1846 as an enormous neo-Gothic needle standing 61 meters high. However, perhaps the clearest point of reference was the tower-monument to the 8th-century Scottish hero, William Wallace, unveiled in Stirling in 1869. This tower by John Rochead was conceived as a panoramic observatory over the land in which Wallace conducted his military campaigns. Its height—70 meters—coincides with that of the Ryōunkaku. The two buildings also share a similar anatomy: an imposing shaft jutting skyward supporting a lighter, openwork crown: arches and tracery in Stirling, wood and metal in Tokyo.

This annular structural approach—which can still be seen in many modern skyscrapers—optimizes the inertia of the building in contrast to the horizontal stress it is subject to, both wind and seismic, which are the major challenges facing high-rise construction.

However, Burton did not directly apply this age-old technique to flexible wooden frames, which are extremely effective in terms of resistance to earth tremors: “When it came to articulating natural materials the Japanese were not as thorough in adopting Western carpentry techniques and framing procedures, types and methods of tool use, in the Meiji period, for the simple reason that their own technology was better. The shortcomings of Western style brick construction in both seismic and climatic terms are well known, as the Japanese soon discovered. Again, in timber-frame buildings Western style diagonal bracing proved less than effective. Traditional building design in Japan was based on the ‘flexible frame’ principle now widely used for high-rise buildings. Diagonal bracing makes large flexible frame structures rigid and hence liable to damage in a severe earthquake, as was discovered in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake. Western style diagonal braces and tensioning devices, added to the main Shoin complex of Katsura Imperial Villa in the Meiji period, were systematically removed in the recently completed restoration project.” See William Coaldrake, Western Technology Transfer and the Japanese Architectural Heritage in the Late Nineteenth Century, Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (1994): 51.

The numerous ukiyo-e prints from the period showing views of the Ryōunkaku bear witness to the popularity of the new tower. With their didactic simplicity, they depict a building with a wide-ranging hybrid of styles, basically a slender ten-story prism of brick crowned by an altogether lighter two-floor pointed structure. Halfway between pagoda and campanile, Burton’s formal hesitancy expressed his desire for syncretism. With practical ingenuity, he used local materials to conceive the new building as an octagonal tubular structure, with a load-bearing brick exterior that was strengthened at the edges, and an interior core for the elevator. The question of the need for openings was resolved by the use of semicircular arches, adapted to a brick construction though a serial distribution that imposed a classical, neutral composition—better suited to the inclusion of local forms. A lighter structure was added on top of this shaft: Japanese construction tradition based on wooden frameworks resurfaces here in the form of a light steel structure.

Beyond its eclectic conventionalism, the Jūnikai was an unprecedented typological revolution. The assortment of uses in a high-rise building, so commonplace in modern skyscrapers, was unique at that time. New ways of living were found on its floors, characterized by a functional diversity and an increasing blurring of the boundaries between domestic and public. A new way of looking at nature emerged: from the observer lying prostrate on light platforms looking up at the moon over the Katsura Imperial Villa, to the dominant gaze over the Kanto plain from the top floors of the Ryōunkaku, interested not only in nature but also in the human life seething below.

The Ryōunkaku witnessed the splendor that accompanied the turn of the century. It resisted the destruction of the great earthquake of 1891, documented by Burton himself with the splendid woodcuts by K. Owaga, with the inclusion of a number
of metal reinforcements in the cracked ceramic. Nevertheless, the vast quake that struck the Kanto region at midday on September 1, 1923 put an end to a history that had lasted over thirty years.28

Ryōunkaku’s final moments were narrated by Yasunari Kawabata:

That symbol of old Asakusa, the Twelve Story Tower was beheaded in the 1923 earthquake. Until then, I’d been a student living in a boarding house in Hongo. I’d always liked Asakusa, and so less than two hours after that 11:58 A.M. earthquake, I was in my way there with a friend, going to determine the damage. (…) The Twelve Story Tower was surrounded by buildings still on fire when my friend and I got there, but the fire hadn’t yet gone as far as the stalls and theatres of the Rokku. (…) After things had calmed down a bit, the demolition team came out to blow up the corpses of the bigger buildings left. The stump of the Twelve Stories was among these. … then there was the bang of the first detonation, and we saw a waterfall of bricks. I thought that one side of the tower would stay standing, sticking up like a sword, but it fell down with the second explosion. And we all cheered—hurray, hurray—and then burst out laughing. Remember? After the last sword of a wall fell, all those people down there raced up until the brick mountain was black with them. We were so surprised. It was like soldiers seizing a brick mountain. From far away, all of us watched and cried with happiness. Why? Shouting hurray when a tower collapses and scurrying up the bricks even before the smoke had settled?29

In little over a decade, Burton had managed to leave an indelible mark on Meiji Japan that survives to this day.30 The melancholic memory of the Ryōunkaku, his mastery of photography as an innovator among a people who longed for images, which moves from ukiyo-e prints to photographic plates, and his role as a sanitary hero—the savior of a Japan that had been devastated by illnesses stemming from unsafe water—are the valuable contributions he made to the intense technical and cultural exchanges taking place between the west and Japan, reflecting the mutual admiration that existed between the two in the early 20th century.
It is no coincidence that one of the few photographs of W. K. Burton to survive to the present day is his most Japanese portrait. Like a proud 19th-century successor to the missionaries from the Iberian Century, he shunned the then current fashion of yōfuku—or western dress—and appeared in traditional Japanese attire against a background that was typical of chanoyu—or the Art of Cha (Tea). As befits a guest and in keeping with tradition, he is sat on a tatami with his back to the tokonoma. There is an ikebana to his right, a floral arrangement of plants and ceramics, and the accoutrements used in the tea ceremony at his feet, “the Japanese solution to the solitude-company dichotomy.”  

The look is inverted. Burton, the photographer subjugated by Japanese style-life, is portrayed static and frontal like one more character in the ukiyo-e prints of the period, which revealed a domestic intimacy, so jealous of its privacy, composing graphic stories of multiple vignettes with impossible perspectives that surprised unsuspecting life with a didactic and exhaustive gaze, with multiple registers, from naive scenes to the most sensual passages.
The abundant Junikai’s representations, such as the plates of Utagawa Kunimasa IV, prefer the vertical section as a method of narrating their bustling inner life. An anatomical, pre-cubist viewpoint predating by a century the exhaustive lists of Georges Perec: “I imagine a Parisian apartment building whose facade has been removed - a sort of equivalent to the roof that is lifted off in Le Diable boiteux, or to the scene with the game of go in The Tale of Genji - so that all the rooms in the front, from the ground floor up to the attics, are instantly and simultaneously visible.”

Transcending its historicist skin, the Ryōunkaku advances the kinematic revolution of the modern promenade with its helical staircase that renews the traditional engawa, tightening the spatial dimension by incorporating time. The characteristic quietism of Japanese domestic interiors is subverted: horizontal planes are detached and stacked vertically to form a panoptic tower of exposed intimacy.

Built to withstand earthquakes, with a defiant will to permanence, the Junikai has in its structure the germ of its spatial innovation. The circulation is located on the perimeter, like an ascending porous wall of spiral staircases that mediates between inside and outside, giving priority to movement in a sequence plane that blurs any condition of limit to illuminate a new specie of space of a dynamic and mutant nature that shares many of the key features of contemporary Japanese architecture.

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If you want to look out over the loveliest landscape in the world, you must climb to the top of the Tower of Victory in Chitor. There, standing on a circular terrace, one has a sweep of the whole horizon. A winding stairway gives access to this terrace, but only those who do not believe in the legend dare climb up. The tale runs:

On the stairway of the Tower of Victory there has lived since the beginning of time a being sensitive to the many shades of the human soul and known as the A Bao A Qu. It lies
dormant, for the most part on the first step, until at the approach of a person some secret life is touched off in it, and deep within the creature an inner light begins to glow. At the same time, its body and almost translucent skin begin to stir. But only when someone starts up the spiralling stairs is the A Bao A Qu brought to consciousness, and then it sticks close to the visitor’s heels, keeping to the outside of the turning steps, where they are most worn by the generations of pilgrims. At each level the creatures colour becomes more intense, its shape approaches perfection, and the bluish form it gives off is more brilliant. But it achieves its ultimate form only at the topmost step, when the climber is a person who has attained Nirvana and whose acts cast no shadows.

Otherwise, the A Bao A Qu hangs back before reaching the top, as if paralysed, its body incomplete, its blue growing paler, and its glow hesitant. The creature suffers when it cannot come to completion, and its moan is a barely audible sound, something like the rustling of silk. Its span of life is brief, since as soon as the traveller climbs down, the A Bao A Qu wheels and tumbles to the first steps, where, worn out and almost shapeless, it waits for the next visitor. People say that its tentacles are visible only when it reaches the middle of the staircase. It is also said that it can see with its whole body and that to the touch it is like the skin of a peach.

In centuries, the A Bao A Qu has reached the terrace only once.26

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Digital Collections of Keio University Libraries. George S.Bonn Collection of Ukiyo-e in the Meiji period.

Figure 2. Le Corbusier and his disciple Junzo Sakakura in the Villa of Katsura,1955.
Le Corbusier Foundation.

Figure 3. Plate XII from.
William Kinnimond Burton, *Wrestlers and wrestling in Japan* (Tokio: K. Ogawa, 1895), 69.
Harvard University - Collection Development Department, Widener Library, HCL.

Figure 4. Theater Street with a view of the Ryounkaku skyscraper, around 1912.
Author: Oswald Lübeck.
Deutsche Fotothek.

Figure 5. Parcheesi of Ryounkaku.
Ukiyo-e by Utagawa Kunimasa IV.
Meiji era, November 1890.
Unmounted woodblock prints on four sheets of paper with paper flap; ink and color 95.5 x 37.2 cm (37 5/8 x 14 5/8 in.).
Printed and published by Fukuda Kumajirō at No. 19, Hasegawa-chō, Nihonbashi.
Minneapolis Institute of Art. The Mary Griggs Burke Collection.

Figure 6. Ryounkaku Tower in Great Japan, Twelve-Story Tower Upright Building of 220 Shaku About 66.7 Meters.
Creator: Shimada Tanzan, 1890. Size: 50.6cm x 36.2cm.
Collection of Edo-Tokyo Museum.

Figure 7. Remains of the Ryounkaku after the 1923 Earthquake.
Rafael Pazos. 2014. The Historical Development of the Tokyo Skyline.

Figure 8. Portrait of William Kinnimond Burton.
Creative Commons.

Figure 9. Brocade Picture of the "Pavilion Above the Clouds" Sugoroku (Ryounkaku kikai sugoroku).
Ukiyo-e by Utagawa Kunimasu IV. 1890.
woodblock print with collage elements on medium thick laid paper.
Five Colleges and Historic Deerfield Museum Consortium.