



# Building the Japanese House Today

*By Len Brackets And Peggy Landers Rao*

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## **Building the Japanese House Today** By Len Brackets And Peggy Landers Rao

Built like a piece of fine furniture, the traditional Japanese house is universally admired for its clean lines, intricate joinery, and unparalleled woodworking. Focusing primarily on a new guesthouse in California, this elegant volume shows how a classic Japanese house can be built to offer the warmth and comfort that modern homemakers require.

Len Brackets, rigorously trained as a temple carpenter in Kyoto, has spent decades adapting the ancient Japanese design aesthetic to Western needs. Here he demonstrates step-by-step how both the traditional live-on-the-floor house, as well as models that accommodate furniture, can be constructed to provide such modern essentials as central heating, insulation, computerized lighting systems, and the latest electronics. This practical and inspiring guide-with gorgeous, clear photos and diagrams-is an indispensable resource for those who'd like to live in a Japanese home, for professionals who want to build them, and for any reader who delights in Japan's age-old aesthetic traditions.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Book thoughtfully explores a culture of building in which even the smallest joinery detail is revered --and features lovely photos." -- *Dwell Magazine*, December 2005

"For anyone who loves the simple elegance of the traditional Japanese house, this book is a gift from the gods." -- Sarah Susanka, author of *The Not So Big House*

"Len Brackett is a remarkable timber framer, whose Japanese-style buildings are literally works of art." -- *Fine Homebuilding*

"Lush volume...20 pages of detailed drawings...informative chapters on drawings, wood, joinery...you can almost smell the cedar scent." -- *Sacramento Bee*, July 15, 2006

"With more than 200 stunning photos and helpful illustrations...a winner...Single most important sukiya living book of 2005." -- *Journal of Japanese Gardening*, Nov/Dec. 2005

An account raisonn  of the adaptation of the Japanese timber frame style in California...beautiful building...pictures are superb." -- *Timber Framing Magazine*

#### About the Author

Peggy Landers Rao writes on Japanese design and architecture. The coauthor of *Japanese Accents in Western Interiors*, she lives in Armonk, New York.

Len Brackett, who served a long apprenticeship in traditional architecture in Kyoto, has been building Japanese houses in the U.S. for 30 years. He lives in Nevada City, California.

Aya Brackett, Len Brackett's daughter, is a photographer and a photo editor at *Dwell* magazine.

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Chapter One Design A deceptively simple cottage is tucked into the backyard of a home in California. Sheltered by towering trees, it is notable for two reasons. Although built in the 21st century, it exemplifies classic Japanese techniques and proportions refined over hundreds of years. Yet it also incorporates contemporary technologies and technical innovations for maximum comfort and energy efficiency. On entering the cottage, one's first sensation is the delicate fragrance of the cedar. Since the wood is unsealed, its fresh scent will last for decades. The finely planed surfaces invite touching, much like fine furniture. Visitors run their hands over the various woods – Port Orford cedar, sugar pine, Western red cedar, English walnut and American chestnut – and exclaim at their glass-like quality. The building is a small, private joy, giving no hint of its existence to passers-by on the street. Why and how was it built?

This book explains its construction – or more precisely, its evolution. The aim of this book is to demonstrate that Japan's extraordinary architectural tradition can be a realistic choice in the modern world by presenting that process in detail, supplemented with examples from other Japanese-style houses built in the United States.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Karen Taylor:**

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#### **Armida Shipman:**

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