

Learn with **manga!**

Bunriha Kenchiku Kai

Episode 1

True stories

The Night before the Storm

Written by Waiko Waida Y田Y子

In unraveling the history of Japan's modern architecture,

no discussion is complete without mention of **Bunriha.**

Roughly 100 years ago,
six students from the
Department of Architecture at
Tokyo Imperial University started

"Japan's first architectural movement,"

although theirs is a story
not widely known.

Go back to..

1920



Contemporary painters...
I'd guess you're familiar
with Klimt's work.

Hodler's fine, as well.

Sutemi Horiguchi

For sculptors,
I'd recommend like
Metzner...and.Meštrović.

There he goes!
Horiguchi's at it again!

That confidence!
It's what makes it feel like
the muse herself is speaking through him.

Shigeru Yada

Keiichi Morita

Mayumi Takizawa

Mamoru Yamada



Oh, Ishimoto!
You're here.

How's everybody?

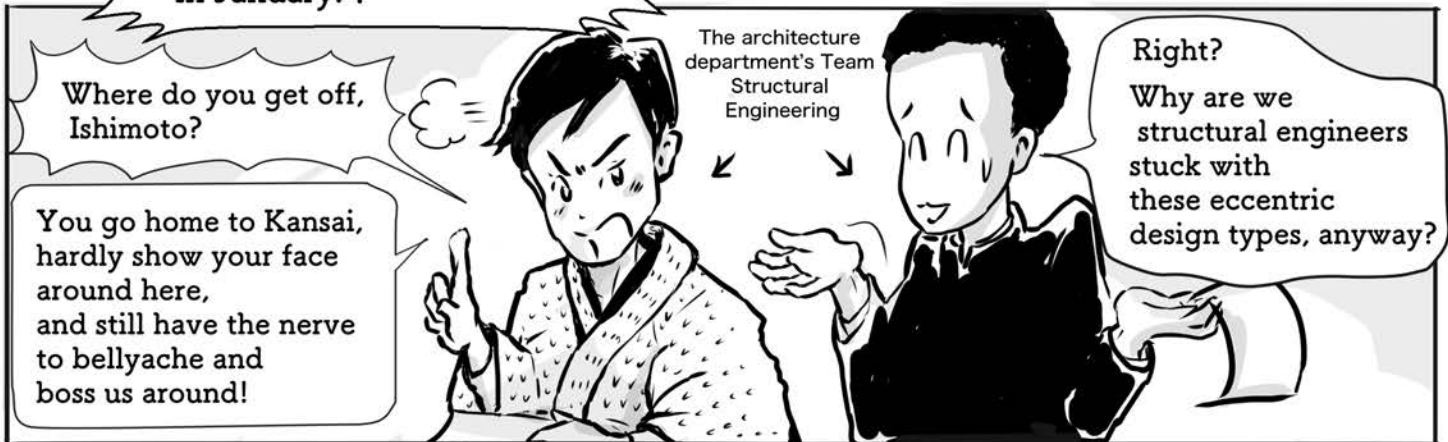


No, not yet.

So, you decide
what you're calling it?
The group?

Kikuji Ishimoto

What?
You're all slower'n molasses
in January. !

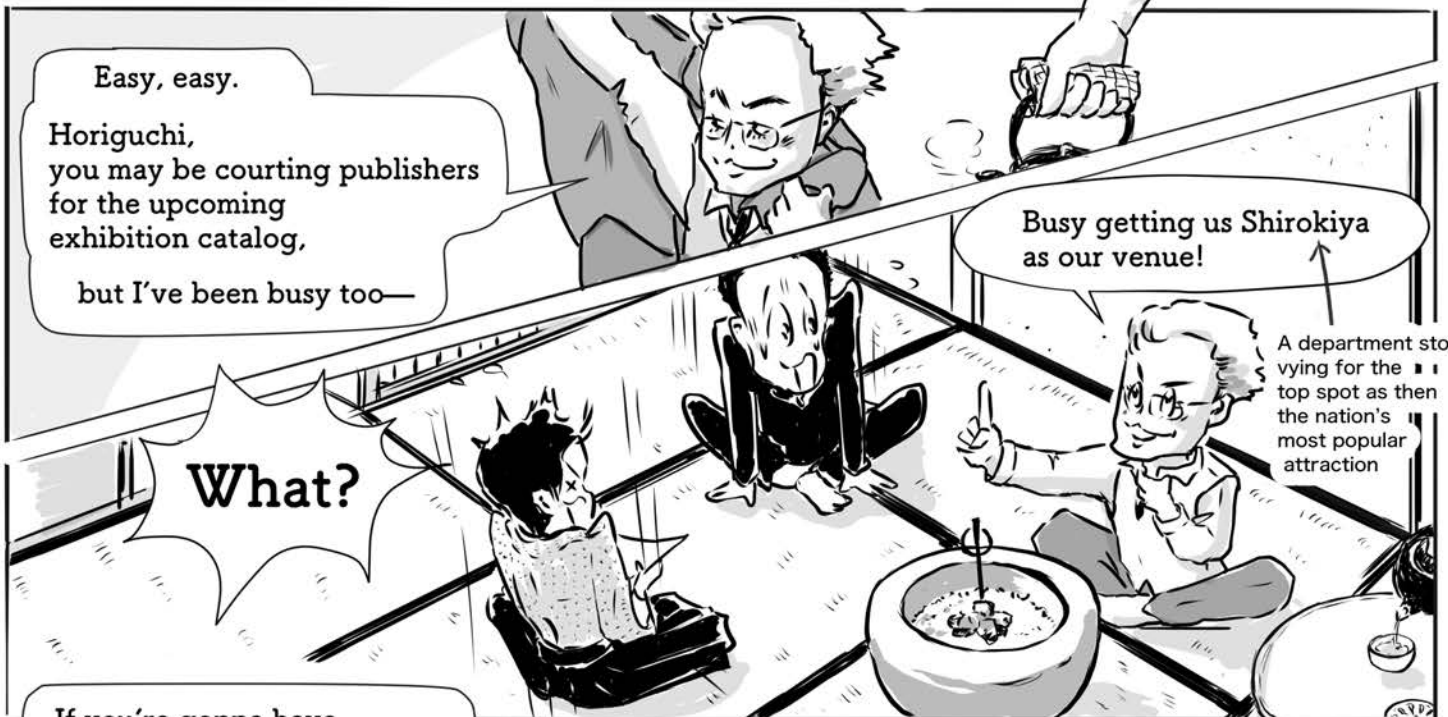


Where do you get off,
Ishimoto?

The architecture
department's Team
Structural
Engineering

Right?
Why are we
structural engineers
stuck with
these eccentric
design types, anyway?

You go home to Kansai,
hardly show your face
around here,
and still have the nerve
to bellyache and
boss us around!



Easy, easy.

Horiguchi,
you may be courting publishers
for the upcoming
exhibition catalog,

but I've been busy too—

Busy getting us Shirokiya
as our venue!

A department store
vying for the
top spot as then
the nation's
most popular
attraction

What?

If you're gonna have
an exhibition these days,
you gotta go big or go home.



They really are
a breed apart in Osaka!

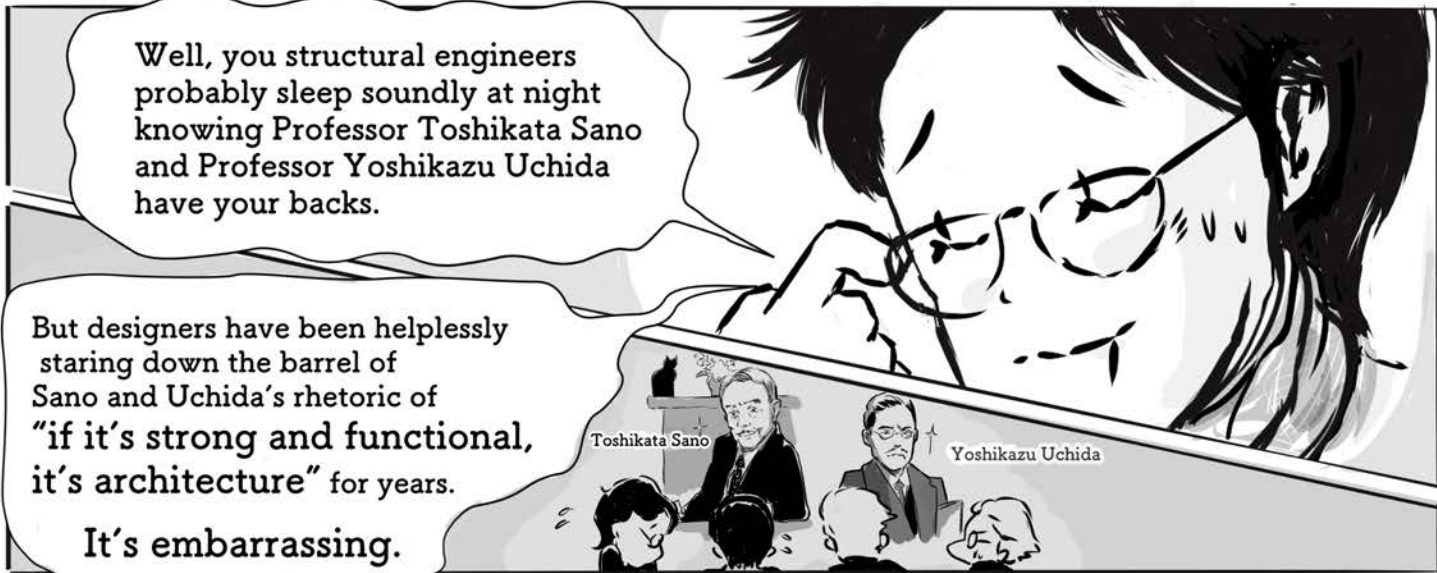


Team Architectural Design

But what's this group supposed to be about, anyway?

Maybe we should clarify, at least once.

.....



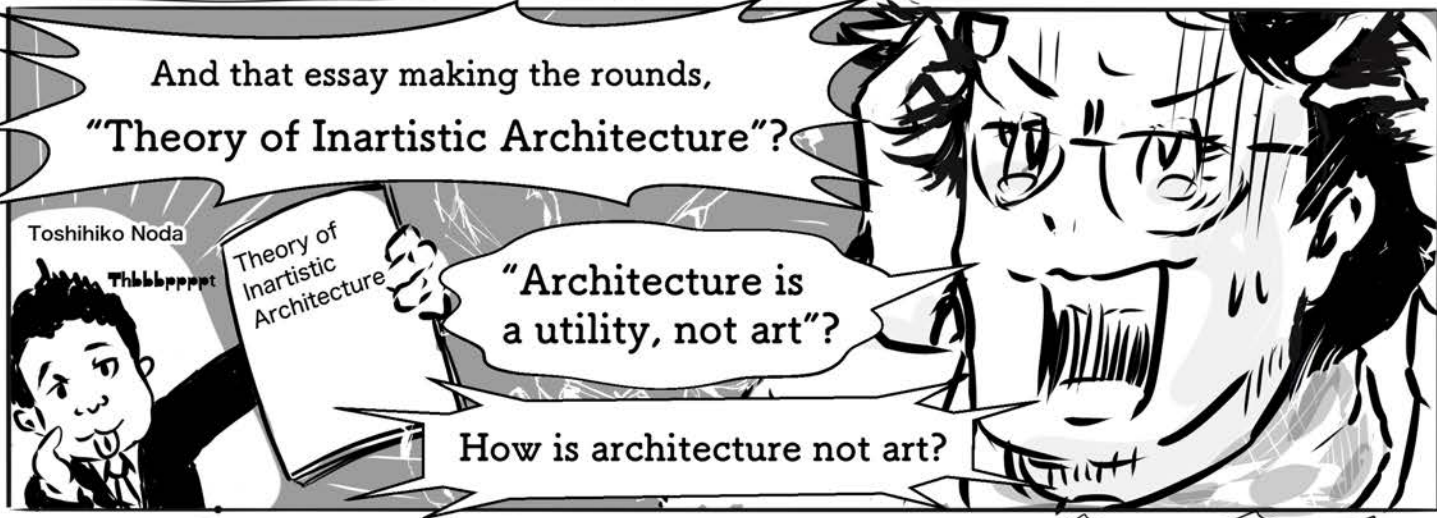
Well, you structural engineers probably sleep soundly at night knowing Professor Toshikata Sano and Professor Yoshikazu Uchida have your backs.

But designers have been helplessly staring down the barrel of Sano and Uchida's rhetoric of "if it's strong and functional, it's architecture" for years.

It's embarrassing.

Toshikata Sano

Yoshikazu Uchida



And that essay making the rounds, "Theory of Inartistic Architecture"?

Toshihiko Noda

Thhhhhppppp

Theory of Inartistic Architecture

"Architecture is a utility, not art?"

How is architecture not art?



wouldn't abandon architecture.

The goddess of beauty

Peace, my friends...

You can't give in to trends!

Look! I'm Aphrodite!

You'd reduce architecture to a commodity?

Yamada gets like this when arguments heat up... But maybe it's for the best, to cool us down some.

The three of us attended a painting class after school...

I wish we could do something like that.

Self-expressing freely... like the Shirakaba school.
※

Professor Chuta Ito gave a lecture on history of Western architecture and the Vienna Secession.

History of Western Architecture

Modernist architecture began with the Secession

Chuta Ito

J. Olbrich

Otto Wagner

We'd daydream about it on our way home.

They roped me in when we went to China for field training.

So, why are we here?

Enough! The name! The name!

We need to decide!

What names are up for consideration?

Seinen Kenchiku Renmei (Federation of Young Architects)

Bunriha Kenchiku Kai (Secessionist Architectural Group)

Boring.


But if we're all individualists, what's the point of aligning under one style?

There are a thousand things we're trying to do. Do we even need a name?

Why limit ourselves?


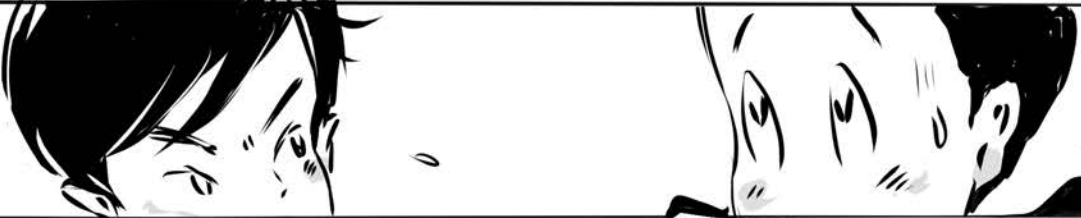
No!

Was supposedly marked for his keen sense of design despite being a structural engineer



We need an **-ist** ("ha")
in the name.


People pay attention
to **-ists** !



No way,
you pulled that
out of your—

We're seceding from
architectural styles of the past.
Let's go with **Bunriha Kenchiku Kai!**

Our own
Secession...



Hmm...
Like a catchphrase...
I bet the press would eat that up.

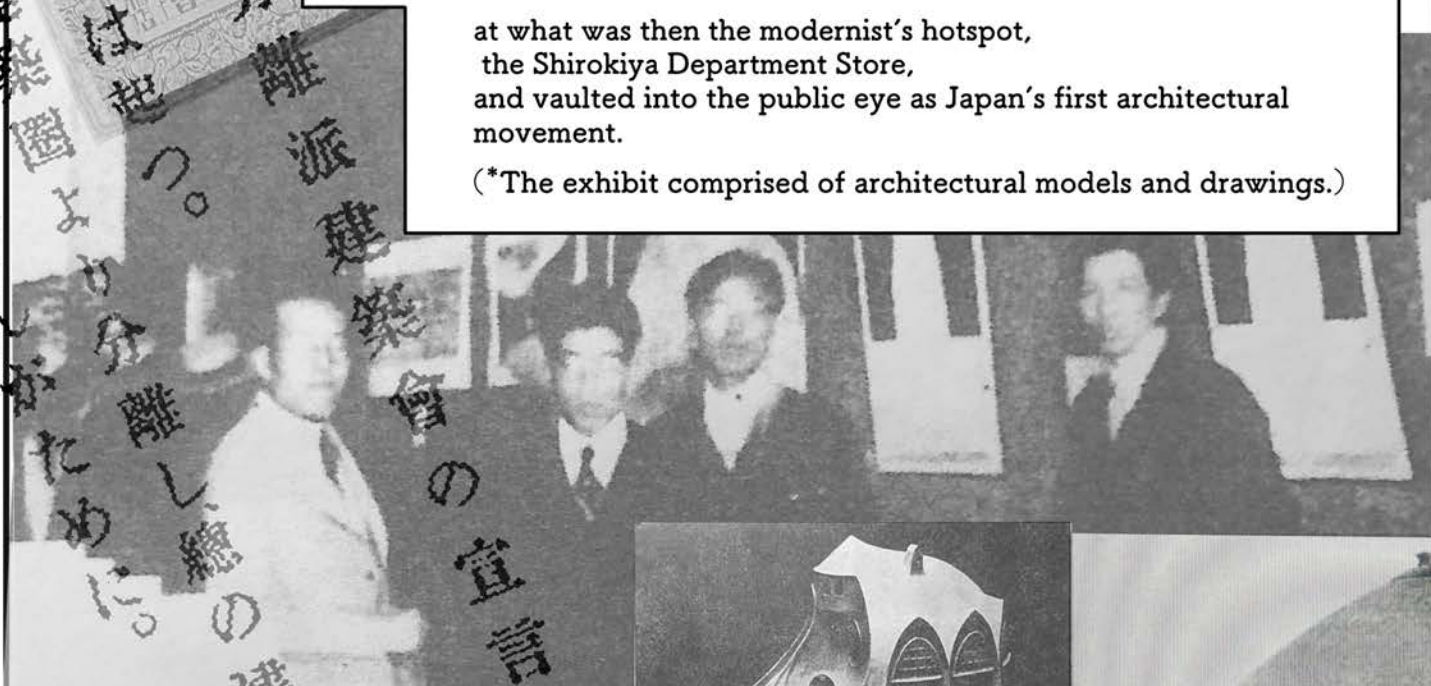
Heh...

And so-

with a bold manifesto that began with the phrase "We rise," Bunriha Kenchiku Kai held their Exhibition on Architecture* on July 18, 1920,

at what was then the modernist's hotspot, the Shirokiya Department Store, and vaulted into the public eye as Japan's first architectural movement.

(*The exhibit comprised of architectural models and drawings.)

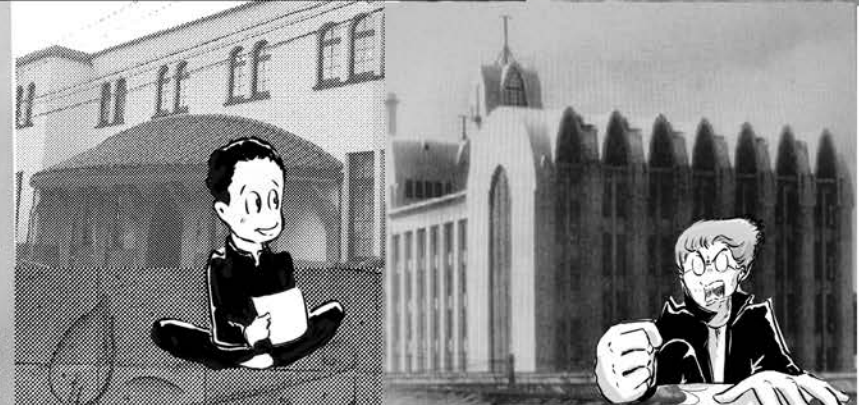
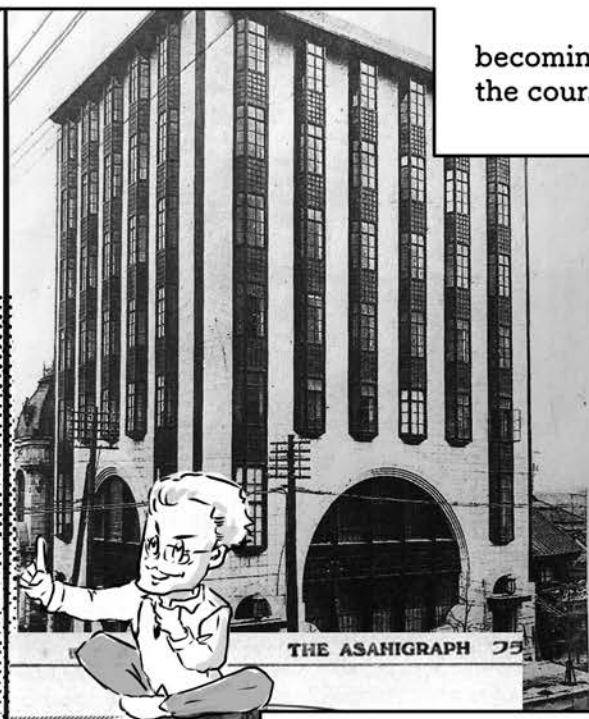


100 Years of BUNRIHA: Can Architecture Be Art?
© Waiko Waida

The unique buildings dreamed up by the members of Bunriha influenced later architecture, and their movement spurred the rise of other architectural movements,



becoming a watershed that forever changed the course of architecture.



What was the "architectural sphere of the past" from which they were trying to secede?

What lay ahead in the future of their ideas?



Learn the whole story at the exhibition,
100 Years of BUNRIHA: Can Architecture Be Art?