

A Study on Chinese Evaluation of Contemporary Japanese Architecture through Architectural Magazines in China

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1. Introduction

After the second World War, Japanese architecture has developed along a unique path and nowadays it comes under the spotlight of the international architecture stage. On the other side, China has begun to conduct extensive research and discussion on Japanese architectural theories and practices since China's reform and opening up in 1978 (Fig.1). In this situation, Chinese evaluation of Japanese architecture ought to provide the important perspective for Japan to clarify its position in international architecture world.

Therefore, this study analyzes articles related to Japanese architecture published on Chinese architectural magazines after 1978¹⁾, and aims to reveal the content and trend of Chinese architects' evaluation of Japanese architecture based on KJ Method and chronological analysis.

2. Topic of articles related to Japan

Topics of articles related to Japan are extracted from the titles or abstracts of articles (Fig.2). They reflect the specific issues or perspective that Chinese architects concerns about when they discuss about Japan. The topics cover not only architecture works and architects, but also urban, technology and social issues. Basically, only one topic is extract from one article.

Topics of Japanese related articles are mainly divided into 3 categories: **Works**, **People** and **Architecture Related Fields** (Fig. 3).

3. Chronological change of Topic

The left part of Figure.4 shows the evolution of Chinese architects' attention on topics of Japanese architecture. Firstly, observed from overall, during the period of 1978-89, it shows Chinese architects' exclusive interest in **Works**. However, after 1990, rise in **Architecture Related Fields** can be noticed, and it occupied more than half of the overall amounts of topics during 2010's. This reflects that Chinese interest of topics of Japanese

architecture expanded from architecture itself to all situations that formed Japanese architecture.

Next, observed from **Works**, in all periods of time, a dominant interest in Architecture(Ar) can be found, in which the Public Architecture attracts Chinese architects the most. Besides, the increasing concern about Housing & Apartment can also be noticed. On the other hand, the number of articles Urban(Ur) obviously decreased.

Next, as for **People**, the interest in individual Japanese Architects(JA) dominates the majority of People. On the whole, articles about Kurokawa Kisho, Ando Tadao and Ban Shigeru are of the largest number.

From 1978-89, Kurokawa Kisho was apparently the most focused Japanese architect as the representative of Metabolism. Also he was discussed a lot probably because he was one of the earliest Japanese architects that concerned about Chinese issue and got practice opportunity in China after 1978. From 1990-2009, Ando Tadao attracted the most interest of Chinese architects partly because his work is considered to have combined eastern culture into modern design. And in this time Yamamoto Riken's works were also concerns of Chinese architects. After 2010, Ban Shigeru became a spotlight because of his practices in Wenchuan Earthquake and Tohoku Earthquake. Shinohara Kazuo also gathered a lot of attention after his exhibition in China, and 2 special issues were published in Chinese magazines in order to introduce his theories and thoughts.

Besides, Tange Kenzo is frequently mentioned and discussed in articles concerning development of Japanese modern architecture, although there are not as many articles focus on him in Chinese magazines. Also, Chinese architects are impressed by Japanese Companies(Co). During 1990's some articles focused on Japanese Companies(Co) such as Nikken Sekkei and Nihon Sekkei, and a special issue about Nikken Sekkei was published in 2012.



Fig.1 Timeline²⁾

	Title 当今日本建筑不可或缺的微波涟漪——日本 70 后建筑师作品及思想观察 Indispensable Ripples of Contemporary Architecture in Japan: Observation on Works and Ideas of Japanese Architects Born in 1970s		Genre: Comment 2. Topics of article ① Topic: People (Japanese Architect) [Architects born in 70's] 4. Japanese Terms ② Group: Contemporary Aspect Urban Term: (Regionality) <Refined integration of microenvironment>
	Abstract ① 日本后泡沫经济时期以来,出生于 1970 年代的建筑师开始活跃于日本建筑舞台。他们深深植根于日本建筑的基础,努力反映新的时代变化,以往被强调的统一声音,被不同声调的优美合唱所取代。[……] ② <i>Since the post-bubble economy era, the Japanese young architects born in 1970s began to perform in the Japanese architecture stage. They have a very tolerant attitude to put their own observation into practice.. [...]</i>		
	Text 特别是在小建筑的设计方面,日本小建筑正在经历从封闭到向都市和生活开放的发展历程, [……] ③ 例如,在微环境的整合方面,我们也可以窥见日本小建筑精细化设计的新着力点。[……] <i>Especially in the fields of small architecture design, Japanese small architecture is undergoing a development process from closed to open to the city and life, [...]</i> ④ <i>For example, in the fields of integration of microenvironment, we can also find new highlight of refined design of Japanese small architecture. [...]</i>		

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Emerging Japanese
Architects

Chapter 2&3
Chapter 4&5

Fig.2 Example of analysis

WORKS (225)		PEOPLE (93)		ARCHITECTURE RELATED FIELDS (278)			
Architecture (171) Ar	Urban (43) Ur	Japanese Architects (66) JA	Methodology & Theory (148) MT	Society (27) So	Event (17) Ev		
Public Architecture(122) Housing & Apartment(38) Care Center & Hospital (11)	Urban Design (10) Urban Planning (11) Urban Complex(7) EXPO (8) Landscape (7)	Ando Tadao (10) Shinohara Kazuo (6) Fumihiko Maki (4) Kurokawa Kisho (7) Isozaki Arata (4) Others (49)	Form & Space & Structure (25) Function & Program based (60) Theory & Thought (22) Renovation & Restoration (8) Research Methodology(7) Rehabilitation & Renewal(6) Urban Planning & Design(20)	Policy & Regulation (13) Education System (5) Life (3)	Disaster & Previlition (5) Occupation (1)	Cooperation (4) Forum & Exhibition (8) Competition & Award (5)	
Others (11) OW		Company (9) Co		History (53) Hi	Technology (33) Te		
Temporary (7) Pavilion & Structure (4)		Nikken Sekkei (1) Kume Sekkei (1) Nihon Sekkei (1) Organization (2)		Traditional Architecture (27) Colonial Influence (11) Etymology (3) Tradition and Modernism (5) Research History (7)	Construction & Industrialization (13) New Material (2) Structure Technology (7) Green Tecnology (6) Others (5)		
		Others (2) OT					
		Landscape Designer (1) Artist (1)					

Fig.3 Topics of articles related to Japan

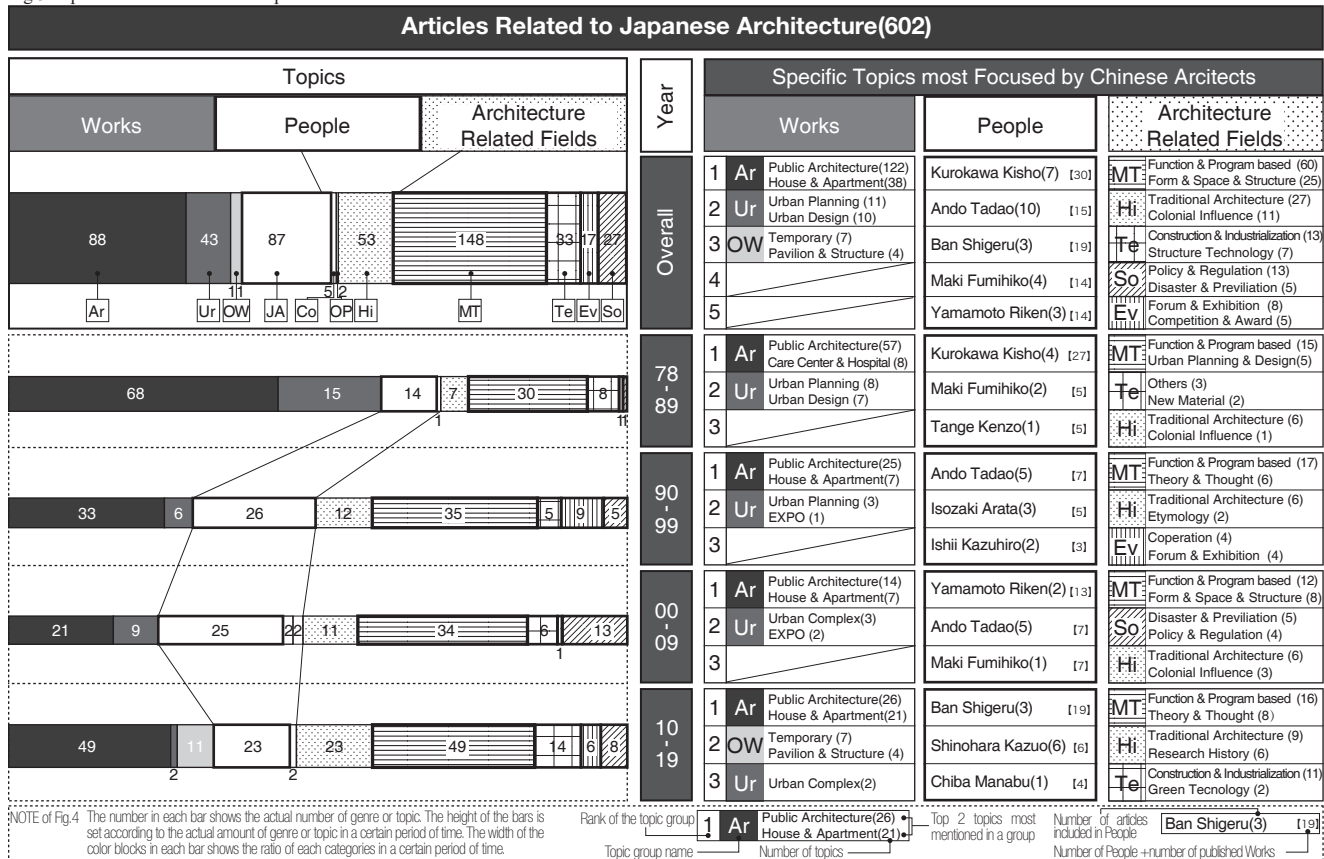


Fig.4 Chronological change of Topic

Next, in Architecture Related Fields, Methodology& Theory(MT) ranks the first in all period. In this category, Function & Program based topic is the one attracted the most concerns, in which the design methods of care center (for elderly), collective housing and TOD attract Chinese architects the most. From 1990-2000, the topic of Event(Ev) rapidly increased, showing closely cooperation and communication of Japan and China in this time. During 00's, the Society(So) obviously increased because Chinese architects started to study on Japanese experience, regulation and policy of disaster prevention after 2008's Wenchuan Earthquake.

4. Meaning and Content of Japanese Terms

From the articles related to Japan, the texts that describe the characteristic and disposition of Japanese architecture or representative Japanese architectural elements are extracted as Japanese Terms (Fig.2). Japanese Terms show Chinese architects' recognition of what Japanese architecture are and their evaluation on Japanese architecture.

In order to study on the extracted Japanese Terms, mapping analysis via KJ METHOD was applied (Fig.5).

Japanese Terms whose meaning are similar or have strong relationship with each other are classified into 19 groups. Then these Japanese Terms are further classified from two perspectives: From the perspective of time, they are divided into **Traditional Aspect** and **Contemporary Aspect**; From the perspective of fields that these terms are related to, they are divided into **Architecture**, **Urban** and **Culture/Society**. In these groups, ①《Abstract》, ⑤《Lightness》, ⑥《Duality》, ⑧《Time》, ⑨《Perception》, ⑩《Regionality》, ⑱《Life》 and ⑲《Culture & Spirit》 cross the **Traditional Aspect** and **Contemporary Aspect**, while ③《Horizontality & Continuity》, ⑬《Chaos》 and ⑰《Humanity》 cross the **Architecture**, **Urban** and **Culture/Society**.

5. Chronological change of Japanese Terms

5.1 Overall analysis

Among the 19 groups of Japanese Terms, the four most concerned groups of Chinese architects are 17《Humanity》, ③《Originality & Conservative》, ⑱《Culture & Spirit》 and ⑮《Departing from Modernism》 (Fig.5&6). Observed from individual Japanese Terms, the most spotlighted term is

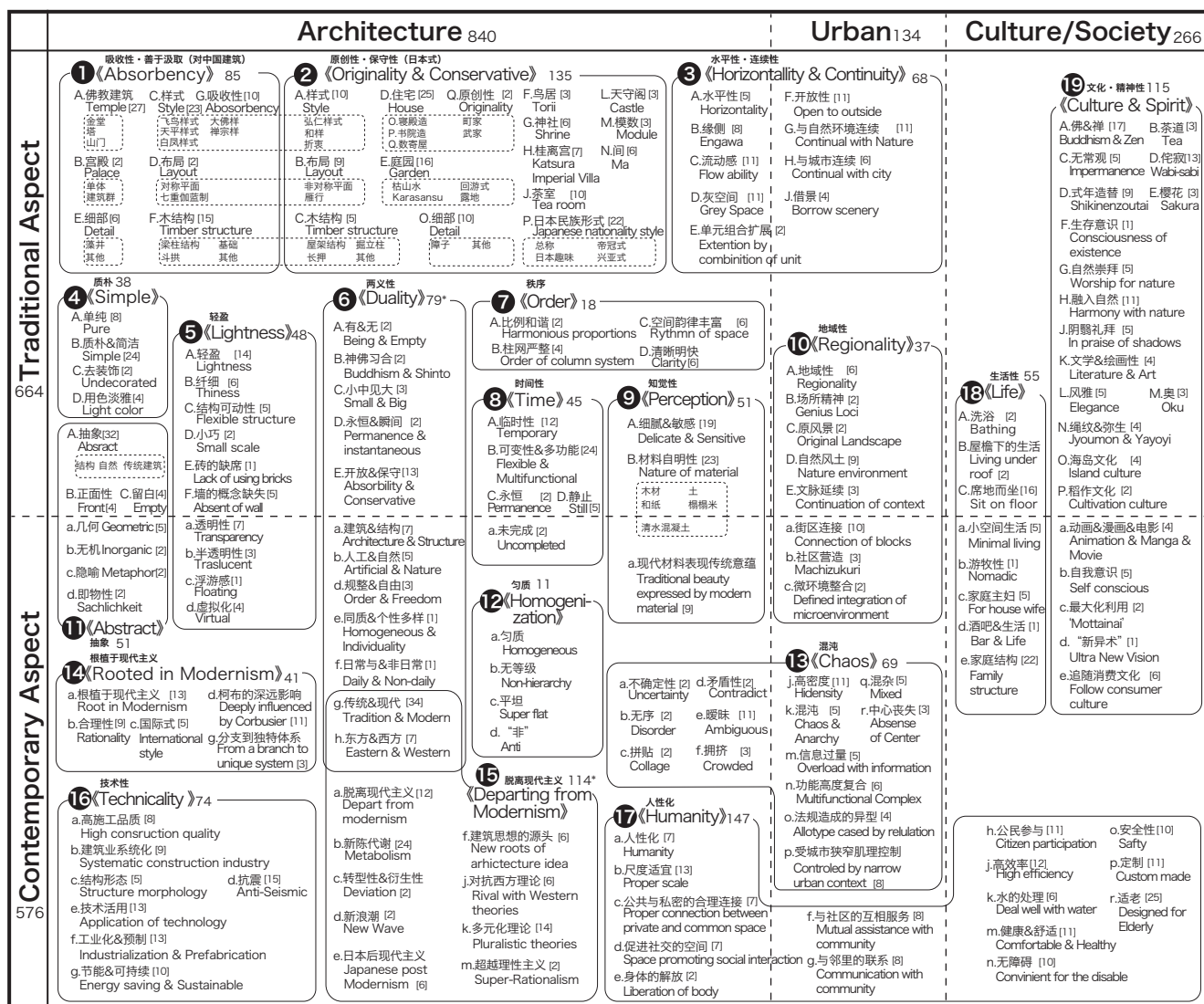


Fig.5 Japanese Terms

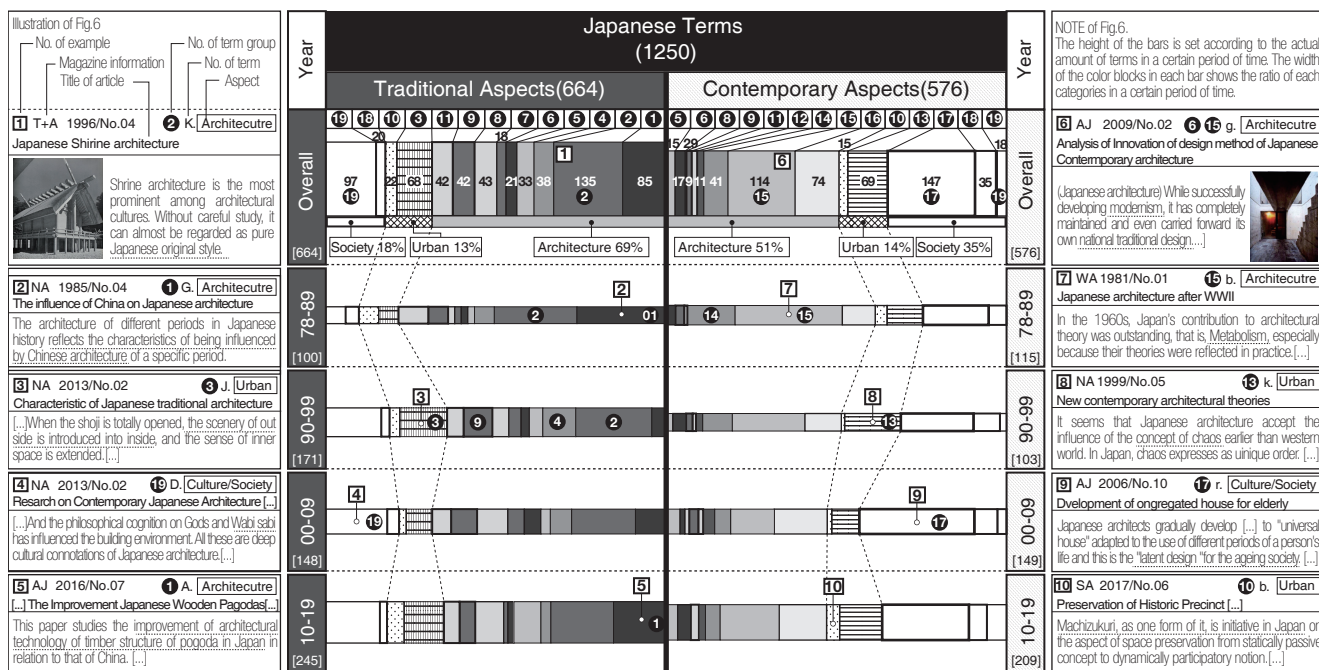


Fig.6 Chronological change of Japanese terms

<Tradition & Modern>, which shows Chinese architects are extremely concerned about how Japanese architecture reflects traditional element or image in contemporary practice. Then comes <Abstract>, <Temple>, <House(traditional)>, <Simple>, <Flexible & Multifunctional>, <Metabolism> and <Nature of Material>.

5.2 Chronological change of Japanese Terms based on Architecture, Urban and Culture/Society perspective

No matter in which aspect, Traditional or Contemporary, Japanese Terms related to Architecture is the overwhelming majority (Fig.6). Then, Culture/Society is gradually increased because Chinese architects pay more attention on ⑰ 《Humanity》 and ⑲ 《Culture & Spirit》 group. As for Urban terms, the amount of terms rapidly decreased in the period of 2000-09. We can see the fact that from the establishment of National Center for the Performing Arts of China to 2010 Shanghai EXPO, China was in a state of pursuing novel architecture forms and somehow ignored the relationship between architecture and urban situation.

5.3 Chronological change of Japanese Terms in Traditional Aspect

How Japanese Terms belonging to Traditional Aspect change along with time is shown in the left part of Fig.6. During 1978-1989, the number of ① 《Absorbency》 is obviously more than other group, which shows that one of Chinese architects' origins of understanding Japanese architecture is the close relationship between the two countries' traditional architecture. Also, ② 《Originality & Conservative》 is another group that discussed frequently by Chinese architects, in which <Japanese nationality style> ranks the first. The cause of this might be that 'Nationality Style' is a popular issue in Chinese architecture fields during 1978-1984, so they also paid attention to Japanese nationality style at the same time. From 1990-2000, the discussion of ① 《Absorbency》 rapidly decreased and the top place was replaced by ② 《Originality & Conservative》. The most concerned terms of ② 《Originality & Conservative》 in this period turned into Japanese <Garden> and <House>, which is also different with situation during 1978-89. At the same time, Other characteristics of Japanese architecture, such as ③ 《Horizontality & Continuity》, ④ 《Simple》 and ⑨ 《Perception》 were gradually recognized by Chinese architects. This process reflects that Chinese architects' recognition of Japanese architecture was departing from the influence of Chinese architecture and they were progressively aware of unique qualities of Japanese architecture. The situation during 2000-2010 basically remained the same as 1990-99, while the ⑲ 《Culture & Spirit》 group reach to a prominent number, which shows Japanese thoughts and spirit such as <Buddhism & Zen>, <Wabi-sabi> and <Harmony with nature> were interpreted from their works.

After 2010, the group of ① 《Absorbency》 is concerned by Chinese architects again. However, different with the situation of 1978-89, this time Chinese architects tend to clarify the difference between Chinese and Japanese

traditional architecture by rigorous research. The recognition of Japanese architecture become more precise and objective.

5.4 Chronological change of Japanese Terms in Contemporary Aspect

Chronological change of Japanese Terms belonging to Contemporary Aspect is shown in the right part of Fig.6. From 1978-1989, Japanese Terms related to 'Modernism' was most focused by Chinese architects. Specifically, the ⑮ 《Departing from Modernism》 and ⑭ 《Rooted in Modernism》 are ranked first and third, which shows at the beginning of China's reform and opening up, Chinese architects were eager to refer to Japanese experience of absorbing and developing modernism.

During 1990-99, the discussion of ⑬ 《Chaos》 apparently increased, because Chinese urban construction accelerated in this time and make Chinese architects began to think about urban influence on architecture. Then, from 2000-2010, ⑰ 《Humanity》 is the most highlighted group, in which <Designed for elderly> is the most focused Japanese Terms due to the fact that China is also facing problems of aging society. After 2010, discussions of Urban related Japanese issue are obviously more heated than last decade.

Lastly, during 90-99, the number of terms in Traditional Aspect is much more than Contemporary Aspect. This may be explained as Chinese architects noticed the limitation of express tradition in architecture design via discussing national style. So Japanese way of combination tradition and modern attracted their attention a lot. Except for this period, the amount of traditional terms and contemporary terms are almost equal, which reflects Chinese architects paying equal attention to Traditional Aspect and Contemporary Aspect of Japanese architecture.

6. Conclusion

As a result, the tendency of Chinese interest of Japanese architecture expand from architecture to all architecture related fields are clarified. Also, the fact that Chinese architects basically pay same attention to traditional and contemporary characteristic of Japanese architecture is figured out. Lastly, it is clear that Chinese architects' recognition of Japanese architecture gradually departs from the influence of Chinese architecture and closes to the specific characteristic of Japanese architecture.

Notes:

1). From 211 different journals and magazines included in the catalogue of Engineering Science II-Architecture and Engineering in CNKI, which is the most important academic database in China, 5 magazines are selected to be researched considering start year of publication, academic influence and region of publication (Attached Table.1). In these 5 magazines, articles simultaneously meeting the following criteria are selected as research materials: 1. Articles belonging to main part of a magazine; 2. Chinese Author; 3. Japan is main theme. 602 articles related to Japan are selected as research material.
2). Made based on *Rethinking the Cultural Value Orientation of Contemporary Chinese Architecture*, published on *Architectural Journal*, 2014, No.09+10

Abbr.	Magazine Title	Pub. Place	Start Year	Research Period	Sponsor
AJ	Architectural Journal	Beijing	1954	1978.1-2019.12	The Architecture Society of China
SA	South Architecture	Guangdong	1981	1981.1-2019.12	South China University of Tech.
T+A	Time + Architecture	Shanghai	1984	1984.1-2019.12	Tongji University
NA	New Architecture	Hubei	1983	1983.1-2019.12	Huazhong Univ. of Sci. and Tech.
WA	World Architecture	Beijing	1980	1980.1-2019.12	Qinghua University

Attached Table 1. Magazines to be researched