

NOTABLE USERS

Toshihiko Ishibashi | Ishibashi, Tokugawa & Associates | Tokyo, Japan

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Toshihiko Ishibashi: At the Forefront of New Japanese Design



Toshihiko Ishibashi

Toshihiko Ishibashi is president of Ishibashi, Tokugawa & Associates, Architects, the firm he founded with Kotoko Tokugawa in 1985.

RAISING A FLOATING TEMPLE

Well-known and prestigious architectural firm Ishibashi, Tokugawa & Associates is making big impressions in Japan. Located in Tokyo, the team of five architects recently earned Awards for Merit for the “Chiba City Award for Excellence in Architecture” and “The AICA (Aica Kogyo Company, Limited) Jolybate Contest”.

Ishibashi and Tokugawa’s work is a harmonious blend of the traditional Japanese style and modern, western-style architecture. Among other projects, the team built a Tendaishu temple in Nagoya, Japan, which is representative of a school of Buddhist thought. Called Jigenzan Jyoganji, this structure honors the traditional style of Buddhist temples (and most traditional Japanese structures) with curved tiled roofs that flare at the corners. However, the heavy solid wood beams that customarily anchor the building to large stones have been replaced with more nimble-looking supports. The team used iron, steel, and glass to create a light and airy structure.

They also re-considered the temple’s function, updating interior amenities to reflect modern needs. Since visitors typically sit for long periods of time in the Japanese formal style (seiza), Ishibashi and his team made the space more comfortable by incorporating an air-conditioning system and chairs. They made the overall design versatile, so that the temple can accommodate concerts and meetings, as well as host religious ceremonies.

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Ishibashi, Tokugawa & Associates, Architects won the AACA (Association of Artists, Craftsmen, and Architects) Award for the Jigenzan Jyoganji temple’s design. This award is one of the most coveted awards in Japan, and the recipients are given much acclaim. Using the Vectorworks® Architect software, the firm created a uniquely sloped roof with a design inspired by historical flared roofs. “We designed the tiled roofs using conoid curves, so we not only tried to keep Japanese elements, but also tried to create new styles,” Ishibashi elaborates. One of the judges marveled at the overall effect: “The appearance of curved roof tiles enveloped the entire temple. The curve is surprisingly fresh and unprecedented. I gasped at the beauty of the evening scene—as the glass floated, it created a temple of light in the water line.” Ishibashi attributes their win to “our efforts to inspire new Japanese design.”

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Top: A rendering of the Jigenzan Jyoganji temple in Nagoya, Japan highlights the ethereal nature of its design. Surrounded by water, it seems to rise above the land.

Bottom Left: This high-angle view of the rear of the temple showcases the various roofs and their interplay.

Bottom Right: This photograph shows the Jigenzan Jyoganji temple's unique sloped roof, an angle that caught the attention of judges at the AACA Awards.



A STRONG FOUNDATION

Ishibashi graduated from The Tokyo University of Science with both architecture and engineering degrees in 1970, then earned a graduate engineering degree from the same school two years later. He worked for Taisei Corporation from 1972 until he founded his own firm in 1985. Ishibashi started using Vectorworks software in 1991 while designing the head office for the German company Kärcher, a manufacturer of cleaning systems and equipment. He immediately felt the benefits of the program since he did not have to repeatedly draw details; instead he could focus on the larger picture. "The functionality in the program helps my design by allowing me to work on the

concept and the details at the same time." Ishibashi continues, "With Vectorworks Architect, we move our imagination into the digital realm. It's simple to create a sketch on the computer and turn it into an accurate model, and we are able to easily share this information with other colleagues."

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"I always have confidence at work
that the next project will be the best."

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Additionally, the team likes to work with multiple scales in a single layer. "It provides more context, and it makes our process more simple and efficient." This is important in Ishibashi's work. For an architect who has managed to combine the best of the old and new worlds, keeping everything in context keeps his designs fresh.

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