

Abstract

The Machiya Boom: Remodeling Identity Through Space

by

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This study traces the transformation of the *kyo-machiya*, traditional wooden townhouses in Kyoto, Japan from an everyday home, to heritage, and to a capital asset through social processes and spatial practices occurring within the “machiya boom.” Based on nine months of ethnographic fieldwork in Kyoto, this study look at the various ways that the kyo-machiya as a social object is always shifting in representations of identity in relation to various points in history, modernity, and generational perspectives. Furthermore, I argue that the kyo-machiya has recently taken on the identity as *a place to experience*; this identity acts as a force reshaping its value both in socio-cultural and economic spheres. Using ethnographic evidence collected periodically between 2016-2017, the data is analyzed within an interdisciplinary framework of knowledge to inquire into the co-constitutive relationship between the built environment and human experience.

Chapter 4

Kyoto *Funiki*: Atmospheres of Living

“立派な木だね〜キットずっとずっと昔からここに行ったんだね。
What a beautiful tree. This tree must have stood here for years and years.
昔むかし木と人仲良しだったよ。
A long time ago, trees and humans used to be good friends.
お父さんはこの木を見てあの家きにした...おねがいます。
I saw this tree and fell in love with that house...please take care of us.”

— Father, *Totoro*

Introduction

During my fieldwork in the summer of 2017, I often followed an office worker at my host university named Kozue-san to machiya cafes in which she killed time after she clocked off work, and before picking up her daughter from school. Kozue-san, 43 years old, grew up in Shiga-ken which is a prefecture in the Kansai region, but now she resides in Kyoto with her family. Kozue-san decided to take me to a machiya cafe in the Nishijin neighborhood that she frequented. We sat at the machiya cafe sipping on coffee and conversing with Sumi-san, the cafe owner who had grown up in Osaka and Tokyo. My conversation with Kozue-san turned to the topic of her “dream home” and I asked her to describe what her ideal home would look like. She told me:

A one story house that is *hiroi* [spacious] and has a *niwa* [garden]. Even a machiya is nice. I don't like too European of a style. I don't like things with many patterns in it, rather things with a simple design and that are *ochizuku* [calming]. Something that doesn't have many decorations and is not overly *wafu* [Japanese] and not really European. I think that is what makes me feel *ochizuku* and *ki* [wood]. *yapari ki ga suki* [You know what I really like is wood]. I live in a *manshon* [high-rise] and so when I come to places like this machiya cafe with this type of *funiki* [atmosphere] I like it. I find it *ochizuku* [calming, peaceful].

Interlocutors such as Kozue-san and other “outsiders” of Kyoto regularly described and used the term *funiki*, which translates to atmosphere, ambiance, or aura about machiya and Kyoto which they find to be attractive. Here, I define *funiki* 雰囲気 as *atmosphere* -- its *kanji* (Sino-Japanese) characters include *fun* 雰 (atmosphere), *i* 囲 (surrounding), and *ki* 気 (spirit, air). In studies on aesthetics, atmosphere is approached as a sensory experience “concerning the in-between” (Bohme 2017, Bohme 2014, Bohme 1993). Anthropologist Tim Ingold also contributes to the discourse on atmosphere by including his analysis of the role of weather in how people experience atmospheres (Ingold 2015, Ingold 2007). Similarly, my interlocutors used terms that related to both aesthetics and weather when describing their atmospheric experience of machiya

and Kyoto in a way that I found surprising because it shows that the experience of the city is not just about a person's subjectivity, but one's relationship with the environment.

However, native Kyotoites who have only experienced living in machiya did not use the term *funiki* and were unable to come up with words to conceptualize the amorphous aesthetic quality outsiders associated with machiya. Interlocutors such as Chieko-san, a native Kyotoite who has only ever lived in a machiya struggled with finding the words to describe the house. Unlike Kozue-san who was able to detect a *funiki* which she describes as *ochizuku* (calming, peaceful) by juxtaposing the machiya with the *manshon*, a type of modern high-rise building for residential living, Chieko-san did not have an outside perspective to do so. I found that the term *funiki* was a way for interlocutors to make sense of the beauty of machiya and Kyoto by drawing on lived experiences that juxtaposed Kyoto and machiya with other places and spaces of dwelling.

In this chapter, I argue that juxtaposition between places, dwellings, and materials allows people to understand atmosphere as a multi-sensorial experience. I will demonstrate that it is through the lived experience of such juxtapositions that make the recognition of machiya and Kyoto as “ideal” perceptible to people. To do so, I analyze the following three major juxtaposition types that frequently came up during my fieldwork: Kyoto versus elsewhere in terms of place, manshon versus machiya, and natural materials versus artificial materials. Also, these key juxtapositions that emerged in discussions with my informants allows for an understanding of the co-constitutive relationship between Kyoto and machiya which mediates a harmonious atmospheric experience linked to conceptions of nature, seasons, history, and a “Kyoto” lifestyle.

There was a common perception among my interlocutors that most of the buyers of machiya in Kyoto are non-Kyotoites. Such outsiders include Japanese people who lived in areas outside of Kyoto, but also foreigners from Europe, the United States, and China. Interlocutors especially report that buyers from Tokyo are one of the main stakeholders in the purchasing of machiya in Kyoto. While sitting with Judith, an American expatriate living in a small machiya nestled in a narrow alleyway in the Nishijin neighborhood she explained to me, “So recreating these old houses people are flooding Kyoto from Tokyo. Their dream is to live in a machiya. Most Tokyo people say the same thing, that they feel calm and soothed when they see these type of homes. There is a window there with a cat seat and Isabella is often sitting there looking out. The neighbors come over and talk to her. The feel of humanity is so lovely in these houses.” Judith's account of people from Tokyo being drawn to the purchasing and repurposing of machiya is a theme that emerged across many conversations with my interlocutors including city officials involved in machiya affairs, a machiya renovation company, native Kyotoites, and non-Kyotoites who are long term residents of Kyoto. Furthermore, her own description of the machiya as providing a peaceful atmosphere is similar to the Japanese word *ochizuku* (calming, peaceful) which was often used by Japanese interlocutors who have lived outside of Kyoto or in manshon when describing the *funiki* of machiya.

In architectural literature on Tokyo it is a city often described as “chaotic” (Daniell 2008, Perez 2014, Pernice 2006) and a “concrete jungle” (Jinnai 2001, Jinnai 1995, Kashef 2008) due to its mix match of modern architectural styles and high rise buildings. Anthropologist and scholar on Japan, Theodore Bestor, also notes that apart from cities such as Kyoto, Tokyo and many other cities in Japan can be described as “gray and dingy” due to their complete urbanization and lack of historical preservation (Bestor 1989: 21). Tokyo is also known for its density and is one of the largest cities in the world with approximately 35 million people, while Kyoto is a city of 1.5 million people. Unlike other cities in Japan, Kyoto was largely spared from American bombing during World War II. Initially Kyoto was targeted as the site to drop the atomic bomb, however, Secretary of War Henry Stimson advocated for Kyoto to be removed from the target list due to its recognition as a place of cultural significance (Oi 2015). This status as a city of cultural heritage and significance contributes to the branding of Kyoto as a city of cultural value, thus making it more so a place of real estate speculation driven by outsider interests.

And although Kyoto retains old houses made of paper, wood, and clay in the form of machiya, the townscape has become a mix of modern and old buildings. Even the term “machiya” was conceived in relation modernity as modern houses and manshon began to dominate Kyoto’s townscape. Scholar and architect Thomas Daniell notes a sentiment of loss as Kyoto aesthetically transforms into a modern city and writes, “Traditional Kyoto has dissolved from the inside out, like a photographic negative of the European city, and downtown looks much like any place else in contemporary urban Japan. The surviving fragments of history must be searched out” (Daniell 2008: 176). As of 2016, approximately 40,000 machiya were surveyed in Kyoto; however, despite the newfound appreciation of machiya and the townscape of Kyoto as ideals, they are constantly threatened by demolition to make way for new development projects which push the historic low-rise townscape to one that is vertical in aesthetics. High-rise projects in the form of hotels, commercial buildings, and manshon also threaten the sensed harmonious atmosphere for residents by disrupting the symbiotic relationship between Kyoto and machiya. The disruption of the sensed atmosphere in machiya and Kyoto is a topic I examine in the section on atmospheres of absence. By atmospheres of absence, I am referring to the ways in which the harmonious sensed atmosphere at the level of both the machiya and city described by Kyoto residents may go unnoticed or disrupted in relation to manshon and the construction of high rise buildings.

During my conversations with Kyoto residents they often referred to large cities such as Tokyo and Osaka as *tokai* (city) and Kyoto as a *machi* (town). Scholars of geography such as Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 1974), Edward Relph (1981), John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1980, 1984, 1994) investigate landscapes as sites to examine how places are interpreted and experienced by exploring the role of the mind, body, and nature. Similarly, I draw upon them to understand landscapes and sensory experience to examine changing attitudes towards Kyoto, as a place to experience a mix of both nature and urban. The relationalities of place were of particular

importance during my discussions with residents because they often came to see Kyoto as their ideal place by comparing Kyoto against the tokai, but also *inaka* (countryside).

In my conversations with residents over the course of nine months, there was a stark difference in the ways “outsiders” would describe the reasons for buying the machiya which had to do with nature, history, aesthetics, and funiki of both machiya and the city of Kyoto. To illustrate the ways in which insider and outsider connections mediated by the city and home shapes perception of atmospheres I draw on conversations from the following groups of people: residents who lived in places outside of Kyoto, the Machizukuri Fund Center, Kyoto residents who have lived in manshon, Kyotoites who have only grown up in machiya, and residents who have renovated machiya to be repurposed as spaces such as cafes and guesthouses. The conversations between these different interlocutors reveals the important ways in which tensions between the ways that people understand both place and dwelling give meaning to the machiya as a beautiful home and ideal way of living which residents describe through their atmospheric experiences.

Furthermore, the role of juxtapositions of place and dwelling in understanding atmosphere explored in this chapter supports the overall argument of my thesis, which examines how the machiya has become representative as a *place to experience*. And it is this recognition as a place to experience nature, history, and a “Kyoto” lifestyle which elevates the machiya as a valuable home, thus partially explaining the increasing popularity and reuse of machiya, which residents refer to as the “machiya boom.”

4.1 Kyo-machiya: atmospheres of *shizen*

The kyo-machiya has taken on an identity of being *shizen* (natural) and is experienced as space that allows people to form a more intimate relationship with nature. The conversations I draw from are of interlocutors who have experienced living in a manshon or modern house at some point in their lives. Interlocutors describe the machiya as a home that is connected to nature and seasons by using terms such as *shizen* (nature) and *kisetsu* (seasons). Elements of weather are also important because residents also described to me their experience of atmospheres through the registers of air, light, and temperature. The strong connection between nature and machiya is also often juxtaposed against the manshon, which is viewed as a controlled space that keeps nature out. The machiya have become ideal because they are imagined and experienced as providing a more natural and healthy way of living for both the mind and body.

Interlocutors connect kyo-machiya with ideas of health and wellbeing, viewing it similar to the restorative health benefits of natural landscapes discussed by Yi-fu Tuan in his book *Topophilia*. The attitude towards natural landscapes as having restorative health benefits is a theme Tuan explores in the idea that “light mountain air was good for health” which he traces back to the 1700s with Swiss scientists embarking on journeys across the Alps (Tuan 1974: 73). In Japan the forest has taken on this therapeutic role, which is found in the concept of *shinrin-yoku*, known as forest therapy. The *kanji* (Sino-Japanese) characters *shinrin* 森林 means

“forest” and *yoku* 浴 means “bath,” thus the literal translation is “forest bathing.” The word *shinrin-yoku*, introduced in 1982 by Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery, is a therapy practice that encourages people to spend time in the atmosphere of the forest as a way to restore their health both mentally and physically (Park et al. 2010). In particular, it is associated as a practice that relieves stress for people living in urban environments. Experiencing nature’s atmosphere is not only experienced at the scale of landscapes, but also at the scale of the *kyo-machiya*.

When interlocutors describe *machiya*, even air and temperature embody qualities of wellness. The narrative of the *machiya* as a “healthy” house is also further solidified when contrasted to modern housing, which interlocutors describe as controlled and artificial, thus taking on unhealthy qualities. Kyoto resident and *machiya* owner, Jeff, explained “The air is good in a *machiya*. Good oxygen it’s not like that controlled space like a modern American house. People catch colds a lot because of the air. The germs can go further in an American house.” Also Mr. Mertz, an expat from France who lives in a *machiya*, described his Japanese neighbor who wanted his family to live in a *machiya* because of the healthy lifestyle. In my interview with Mr. Merz he told me:

There is a beautiful *machiya* in our neighborhood owned by a doctor. They bought that beautiful *machiya* for the children to show them this lifestyle. He wanted them to grow up in a house that was healthy. Your body is trying more because it is confronted to different weather conditions and seasons, so you never catch a cold in the *machiya*. But in the manshon you do catch a cold. You go outside and it is suddenly hot or cold.

The *machiya* is depicted as “raising” people and in the context of his neighbor’s decision to move the family into a *machiya*, it is a way to raise them to be “healthy” (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mertz family residence. *Machiya* in Nishijin the weaver’s district in Kyoto. Source: Sarah Mahoney

Michiyo-san, who was previously living in a manshon in Osaka, also discusses her machiya as healthy in comparison to the manshon, but focuses on the natural materials of the machiya. She describes her friend becoming severely allergic to the artificial materials in the manshon and calls it a *sick house* (taken from English term). On the several occasions I met with Emily, who is a young American woman apprenticing under one of the top *sankanya* (craftsperson who specializes in claywall building) groups in Kyoto, she described *tsuchi-kabe* (claywalls) as having calming qualities that brings good health through relaxation. She is also conducting a joint research study with Japanese researchers to investigate the relationship between bacteria in claywalls and the effects it has on human health. It is not the atmosphere she is interested, but instead she is in search for a biological cause and a bacterial agent in the actual material of clay that triggers people to feel relaxed.

The “healthy” machiya atmospheric identity is not merely a projected imaginary, but is also rooted in kinesthetic experience. In my conversation with Nishijima-san, who is originally from Osaka and currently lives in a manshon, she recalls back to living in a machiya share house with friends and describes the machiya as a home that engaged her body in physical movement; however, now that she lives in a manshon she is no longer physically active. She recalled having to always climb a narrow and steep staircase to reach the second floor in the machiya and stepping up a large step at her entrance. However, the manshon has no stairs, instead it includes an elevator and all rooms are accessible on the same floor. Nishijima-san recalled, “When I lived in the machiya I really *ugokukara* [moved] my body. So I think that *seikatsu* [lifestyle] rhythm matched with me. Ever since I moved into the manshon *amari ugokanakunate* [I don’t move very much]. I think I have become a *namakemono* [lazy person]. I’ve realized that to not be moving my body is not a good thing.”

The kyo-machiya engages the body and senses, where as the manshon is described as a controlled environment that keep nature out, thus dulling sensory experience for residents. Interlocutors discuss the *soto* (outside) environment as coming into the machiya, blurring boundaries between the inside and outside environment within the house. Nishijima-san also describes feeling close to the *soto* environment when she use to live in the machiya and stated “*Soto no kyori wa chikaikara* [the distance to the outside environment was close]. When morning came the *hikari* [natural light] would come in, so I would *shizen ni megasamete toka* [I would naturally wake up by this] and by the *oto* [sounds].” In contrast, now that she resides in a manshon she describes an increasing *kyori* (distance) from the *soto* (outside) environment. As a result, her relationship with the outside environment has changed and it is a relationship that is disconnected to atmospheric weather conditions. However, in the machiya she was able to feel the weather conditions of the changing seasons and stated, “*Kisetsu o sugoku kanji reru* [I really felt the seasons]. The reason is that *soto no kuki* [outside air] and *ie no kuki* [air of the house] are *issho* [the same, together]. The windows are thin, they are made of *ki* [wood] so the all the *kuki* [air] enters, so when it is a *samui hi* [cold day] it was really cold and on *atsui hi* [hot days] it was hot.”

The weather plays an important role in the sensed atmosphere of machiya because elements such as a breeze, sunlight, humidity, and outside temperature are felt inside the home, thus allowing residents to experience the local seasonal conditions of Kyoto. Kyoto residents who dwell in the city also dwell in what Tim Ingold (2007) calls the “weather-world.” By this he means that people dwell in the atmospheric medium that is in-between earth and sky, where we experience the movements of weather. Therefore, people inhabit an open world which he presents as the weather-world, the zone between earth and the boundless sky where we move through the medium of weather. As Ingold argues atmosphere is “at once *both* affective *and* meteorological” (Ingold 2015:80). For example, during my interview with Ayuko-san, who originally grew up in a mansion in Tokyo and now lives in Kyoto, she describes the machiya atmosphere as a sensory experience that is connected to nature and states, “I think that I feel the breeze. The breeze and in the summer when the light is coming in, it is like light and shade combined in a very nice way with the breeze, and the people coming in there is a very kind of laid back atmosphere with the warmth of the people. I like that.” For Ayuko-san, the weather conditions of summer that are felt in the machiya contributes to creating a laid back atmosphere and in combination with people moving through the space she senses an atmosphere of warmth, however, in a mansion weather is not part of the sensory experience.

The ability to sense the changing seasons of Kyoto also reinforces the image of the machiya lifestyle as a form of *shizen* (natural) living. For example, Tome-san and her husband are a young couple who have recently moved to Kyoto and into a kyo-machiya. They restored and renovated a dilapidated machiya into a guesthouse which functions as both their business, but also as their residential living space where they reside in the *kura* (detached storage house). Tome-san talked about the machiya as providing a lifestyle that is connected to nature. She stated:

We really liked traveling and thought doing a guesthouse would be fun. It is not that we wanted to preserve machiya. But we thought the *shizen no seikatsu* [natural lifestyle] can be achieved in a machiya. There is the *tsubo-niwa* [garden] and you can *taiken shizen* [experience nature]. Instead, of watching TV you can look at the *koke* [moss] and see if it is doing well. The *hikari* [natural light] comes in here, but changes with the *kisetsu* [seasons]. When the *kaze* [breeze] blows in, it changes when we enter autumn. So to *kisetsu ganjireru* [feel the seasons] I thought that was the *miriyoku* [charm] of the machiya. When we entered here we saw some *midori* [greenery] in the back and that really attracted us to this machiya.

Tome-san has not chosen to live and work out of her machiya to preserve it, rather it is to achieve a natural lifestyle, which she refers to as *shizen no seikatsu*. For Tome-san, the machiya allows her to directly experience an atmosphere of Kyoto’s changing seasons, from viewing the changing moss growing in the garden to the way light and a breeze is experienced (Figure 2).



Figure 2. The *tsubo-niwa* (garden) is located in the middle of Tome-san's machiya guest house. This picture was taken in the summer in the morning. Source: Sarah Mahoney

The role of nature and seasonality is an important aspect of her lifestyle and identity. Tome-san has created her own way of living that is closely attuned to nature and the changing seasons in Kyoto. During my visits to her machiya she served me *warabi-mochi* (a sticky rice dessert covered in soybean powder), which she buys from an elderly man who makes Japanese sweets in her neighborhood and serves desserts that change according to the different seasons. Also, meals prepared by her husband use ingredients that are local to Kyoto and in season.

However, Tome-san did not always have a positive relationship with nature, instead it was originally something to be feared because she used to work as a farmer. She recollected, “When I was working the farms it was work and I couldn't enjoy nature. *Shizen* [nature] was *kowai* [scary] and shizen was *kibishi* [strict]. Before I wanted to control nature. After living here in the machiya, my relationship with nature changed. Shizen is now *utsukushii* [beautiful, inspiring] and *kawaii* [cute]. The way I look at nature is very different now.” Instead of fear, Tome-san has discovered new aesthetic characteristics in nature such as beauty. She portrays nature, in the context of Kyoto and machiya, as gentle and providing a peaceful atmosphere in her life because her vocation is no longer in farming. As a result, she does not view nature and its unpredictability as a force to be controlled.

Those who are attracted to machiya and hold a positive view of the home, do so because they experience the machiya a home that allows them live closer to nature by contrasting it to

experiences of the lack of nature associated with manshon. Also, in the case of Tome-san the machiya changed her relationship with nature because she was no longer working as a farmer, which resulted in no longer harboring feelings of fear towards nature. Interlocutors describe being able to feel the changing seasons, which they lacked when living in the manshon because it is an environment that is controlled. However, although Kyotoites who have lived their entire lives in machiya describe experiencing the hot summer and cold winters in the machiya, they do not consciously recognize it as a space that allows them to live closely with nature. They have not experienced the clear distinction between a completely enclosed space that is created in modern housing. We see a shift in which residents who are attracted to living in Kyoto and machiya socially construct nature as peaceful because they have experienced a separation from nature in urban living or a fearful relationship with nature. Urban environments such as Kyoto manipulates and tames nature much like a garden. Therefore, Kyoto residents form a particular relationship with nature that evokes notions of peace and relaxation, instead of fear and danger.

4.2 Material Atmospheres

During my fieldwork, it was evident that the natural materials of the machiya provided a unique atmosphere experience for non-Kyotoites and Kyotoites who had lived at some point in a manshon. My interlocutors who had the experience of living in a manshon used lyrical terms such as *ochizuku* (feel at ease, calmness), *atakakasa* (warmth, hominess), *anshin* (safety), *rekishi* (history), and *seikatsu* (everyday living, lifestyle) to describe the sensed atmosphere they experienced in the machiya, which was associated with the natural materials. For example, wood and tatami were especially noted as materials that produce an *ochizuku* atmosphere. In my interview with Michiyo-san at her machiya cafe she stated, “There is a lot of *ki* [wood] used in the layout of the structure. It is all *natural* [taken from English]. The manshon is *atarashi* [new], but there is an *ochizu-kanai kankaku* [uneasy feeling]. What do you call it... a *kanjiru mono* [feeling, experience] that is absent. I like to have some tatami and wood.” Interlocutors such as Michiyo-san, who had previously been living in a one room manshon in Osaka, sense an atmosphere produced by the natural materials because they contrast it with the artificial materials that make up the manshon. The artificial materials are described as lacking in feeling and a calming atmosphere.

Anthropologist, Inge Daniels, has written extensively on the topic of material culture, Japanese homes, and everyday living to challenge the stereotypical notion of Japanese homes as minimalist and uncluttered (see Daniels 2015, Daniels 2010, Daniels 2009, Daniels 2008). On the topic of domestic atmospheres in the home she argues that bodily activities in the home and with materials, for example tatami, creates “social heat” or an intimacy between bodies that results in atmospheres of ease and hominess (Daniels 2015, Daniels 2010). However, my conversations with interlocutors also add to this discussion of their ideal home and atmospheres by primarily relying on a sensory experience that engages sensing the in-between.

On the topic of aesthetics of materials, Gernot Bohme (2017) states that there are expressions used to identify the character of material objects; for example, a material's character may be described as hard or soft (Bohme 2017: 61). This neglects the fact that materials do not merely engage in a single sensory experience, rather it is a multisensory experience when we talk about material atmospheres. Therefore, Bohme emphasizes that materials engage in multiple sensory fields which he calls "synaesthetic characteristics" (Bohme 2017). It is the synaesthetic characteristic of materials which allows for engaging in an experience of sensing an atmosphere that is radiated from the properties of materials. He argues, "A material's character is named after the atmosphere that emanates from it, and the same character can derive from qualities belonging to quite different sensory fields. Thus, the term synaesthetic character" (Bohme 2017: 2016).

In the context of the aesthetics of machiya materials, it is often the synaesthetic character that residents refer to because it is in fact the material's atmosphere they are experiencing. For example, interlocutors are often attracted to wooden materials of the machiya because the wood produces an atmosphere of warmth. It is not the temperature of the wood, rather residents are referring to the atmosphere of warmth that is created by the properties of the wood, such as it being natural, muted in color, or having a textured surface. However, the mansion which has properties such as being concrete, smooth, and glass produces an atmosphere of that is cold and lacking in feeling. While dining out at a machiya cafe with Kazumi-san, a Kyoto resident who is originally from Shiga prefecture, she finds herself attracted to the wood because of the *atakaksa* (warm) atmosphere experienced. On the topic of wood she explained:

I live in a mansion on the 10th floor not far from here. I have kids and if I think which environment I would like to raise them in either *ki* [wood] or concrete... I would pick wood. Even things like toys if I were to choose wood, plastic, or electric things I would pick wood. There is an *atakakasa* [warmth] with wood in which I would like to raise them in. I think wood is better for the mind and it allows you to feel *ochizuku* [calm, relaxed].

She recognizes the wood's synaesthetic character as having warmth, which creates an *ochizuku* atmosphere. In her statement, she also contrasts wood to concrete and plastic materials because for her they do not emit *atakakasa* (warmth). Also, we see the atmosphere of warmth radiated by wood as providing psychological well being by providing a sense of relaxation and it is in this atmosphere that Kazumi-san would like to raise her children.

Also, interlocutors describe the machiya as having a past history embodied in its materials, thus producing an atmosphere of hominess. Since the machiya is an old house there are marks left behind of past inhabitants. While sitting at Sumi-san's machiya cafe, I discussed with Sumi-san the topic of why she was attracted to living in old houses, such as the machiya. She pointed to a large vertical standing wooden beam in the machiya to illustrate her point and stated:

Hito ga sundeta ato ga nokoru [To be able to have that feeling of who lived before by the marks that they left behind]. That makes me very happy. For example, the *hashira* [wood beams] they have *mai no hito ga tsuketa kizu ga ippai ate* [marks left from the people who used to live here in the past]. And parts like these it is not a *masugu ki* [straight tree]. I once lived in the mountains and the people there they had jobs where they would cut the trees. They would cut it themselves and try to make it *masugu* [straight] to use. Someone tried their best to cut this tree and make it into this, so I find that to have a *kawaii kanji* [cute feeling]. Things and houses made at a factory don't have the marks of who carved it. I don't want to live in a place like that. *Story dokoni demo mienai* [You can't see a story]. Like where did this tree come from? Who used to live here before me? Who polished this wood? That is what I find to be *tanoshi* [fun].

During my time at Sumi-san's machiya cafe, which was originally an *oriya* (weaver's house), she imagines a *seikatsu* (lifestyle) of *mukashi no kyoto* (old Kyoto) in relation to the materials. From doors, marks on the wood, and even a string hanging on window she connected each part and material to a story of the old Kyoto lifestyle. The machiya becomes a house that is personal and intimate through the imperfections and marks on the materials because it reflects the history of its creator and dweller. On Tim Ingold's (2007) taxonomy of lines, he categorizes marks on materials that remove part of the material surface as a type of line which he refers to as the "trace." He goes on to state that traces are lines that are formed from movement and suggests they are also paths and tracks. The *kizu* (marks) left behind in the wooden material, as Sumi-san described, contributes to the intimate atmosphere of the machiya because they are lines of movement acting as traces of human histories and stories. And as Ingold suggests, lines act as a map of knowledge and human journeys (Ingold 2007:84).

On the topic of intimacy and privacy of homes, Witold Rybczynski argues that "hominess is not neatness" (Rybczynski 1986:17). He attributes the atmosphere of hominess with the "evidence of human occupation" and states that neatness gives off an impersonal and sterile atmosphere similar to a home in a magazine (Rybczynski 1986). He asks, "Can people really live without clutter? How do they stop the Sunday papers from spreading over the living room? How do they manage without toothpaste tubes and half used soap bars in their bathrooms? Where do they hide the detritus of their everyday lives?" (Rybczynski 1986: 17). Sumi-san echoes a similar sentiment about restored and repurposed machiya. She explains that there is a laid back atmosphere that is produced by the traces left behind of a person's everyday lifestyle in the machiya. Drawing on comparisons between kimono, she illustrated:

Machiya you see pictured in magazines may appear very nice, but I think *mukashi no machiya* [machiya of the past] were more *yurui* [loose, laid back]. People wear kimono very neatly, but back then if you watch old movies it was more *yurui* in the way they

wore the kimono. The *obi* [kimono sash] was worn looser and that was normal. But today they wear the kimono tightly, so I think that is why the kimono are decreasing. I think there are some similarities between kimono and machiya.

The machiya can be transformed into a space that does not have an atmosphere of hominess if it is too neat, thus, losing a sense of comfort. Sumi-san's machiya is filled with paper flyers, nicknacks, books, and an art piece painted by her nephew (Figure 3). She has created a space that has an atmosphere of hominess by leaving traces of her own lifestyle in the machiya. Ingold (2007) defines lines as the "paths of growth and movement" and argues, "Life is lived...along paths, not just places, and paths are lines of a sort. It is along paths too that people grow into a knowledge of the world around them." Lines of movement both in the context of the materials and in Sumi-san's lifestyle are found in the machiya, which contributes to a laid back atmosphere.



Figure 3. Sumi-san hangs this drawing on cardboard created by her nephew. It is one of several hand made art pieces that is hung on the walls in her machiya. Personal items such as this artwork reflect the personal atmosphere she wishes to live in and create, but also share with her customers. Source: Sarah Mahoney

Customers that visit her machiya describe the atmosphere as *ochizuku* and stay for long periods because there is sense of comfort, which feels like entering a home. She explained to me:

There are machiya cafes and restaurants that have been renovated and those that have been *kinchinto* [neatly] renovated and have had a lot of money spent and everything is *kirei* (pretty, clean). It is a *kirei* machiya, but *gentoteki* [modern]...but when I go to places like that *ochizukanai* [I cannot feel calm, settled]. Maybe it is nice to go if you are wearing a kimono, but if it is a cafe like this where it is a *seikatsu to iku basyo* [place that is

part of your everyday lifestyle routine] it becomes too much of a *tokubetsu na basyou* [place for a special occasion] it is a *kenchiku butsu* [architectural monument] and *shindoi* [tiresome]. This is something I here a lot from my customers they like the *yurui kanji* [laid back feeling here] because at other places it feels like you cannot touch things. It is too sophisticated. So that is a machiya, but probably a real *machiya kurashiteta tokoro data kara* [is a place of everyday living] so it is has a *seikatsu no niyoi* [smell of a person's lifestyle] and *yurui* [relaxed].

Furthermore, the natural materials of machiya create conditions for aging, which gives the machiya the aesthetic of *aji* (taste, flavor). Yuka-san, a native Kyotoite who now lives in a mansion and in Osaka, uses the Japanese phrase *aji ga aru* “to have flavor” to describe the character of old homes that is acquired over time. The machiya is not a static object, instead, it is animated and machiya scholars such as anthropologist Christoph Brumann describe it as the “living” house (Brumman 2009, Brumann 2012). The machiya is similar to a tree and is described as an object that is alive. Yuka-san compares the machiya to an old tree and in our interview shared with me, “You know I feel like I am protected not by the building, but the history. You know one pillar has a lot of memories...the old house has seen a lot of things, just like an old tree. The old tree knows everything even when people die and a new person is born, so it is like that space or something that I feel *anshin* [secure].” Also Ari-san, who grew up in Tokyo and lived in a mansion, describes the history contained in marks in old wooden houses as bringing the house to life in which it creates an atmosphere that is communicating to her. She explained, “Machiya and *furui ie* [old houses] have a *rekishi miriyokuteki* [historical charm]. *Atarashi* [new] houses are *kirei* [clean and pretty], but have no *rekishi* [history]. Old houses have *kizu* [marks] on them, there is a *rekishi* [history] held in the house and that history *katarikaketekureru* [speaks to me].”

The wooden machiya is compared to a tree with a history because it contains an atmosphere of the presence of people, memories, and a temporality that parallels human dwelling. On the temporality of landscapes, Ingold (1993) asks readers to imagine themselves dwelling in the landscape of Walter Gibson's painting *The Harvesters*, which depicts field workers gathered around and tending to a pear tree in August. He states that the pear tree “constitutes a particular place” and that “The place was not there before the tree, but came into being with it. And for those who are gathered there, the prospect it affords, which is to be had nowhere else, is what gives it its particular character and identity (Ingold 1993: 167). The wooden machiya like a tree embodies a history, but one that is relational to the people who have taken care of the house or tree and gathered there. Therefore, Ingold argues that the temporality of a tree is similar to human dwelling because “The people...are as much bound up in the life of the tree as is the tree in the lives of the people...the tree has manifestly grown within living memory (Ingold 1993:168).

Returning back to Yuka-san, as a native Kyotoite who used to live in a machiya she does not want to live in one; however, due to her experience of living in a mansion in Osaka she does recognize the machiya for its atmosphere and would like to run her English school business out of a machiya. While I sat with Yuka-san in a old wooden building that was once vinegar factory which she rents a room out of to teach English, she stated, “Many people are inspired by being here. They start saying oh I could do this and that, making lot of events to gather people. So actually the building can inspire people and give energy to the people. The idea is that the building can raise people, educate people, so it’s not a thing to use, but it’s like how can I say... a nest.” Bohme (2017) draws from Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Von Schiller to suggest that an atmosphere creates a “floating aesthetic condition” in which the human mind is engaged in imagination because the aesthetic of beauty inspires the “instinct of play” (Schiller 2002:19). In the imaginative state of play we achieve a “Freedom both from the demands of Nature and the laws of Reason...Life loses its seriousness in play” (Bohme 2017: 114). Similarly, for my interlocutors who find beauty in the machiya, its atmosphere gives energy or inspiration to play with and create new ideas because it engages the imaginative state of mind.

4.3 Atmospheres of Absence

Kyotoites who have only grown up in machiya find difficulty in describing the atmosphere of machiya because their bodily interactions and perception is based in a single experience, which is the machiya environment. And as Yi-Fu Tuan states, “Beauty or ugliness -- each tends to sink into his subconscious mind as he learns to live in his world” (Tuan 1974: 65). As result, when I asked native Kyotoites who have only grown up in machiya to describe living in a machiya they did not know how to respond and did not recognize a funiki (atmosphere) with the house. For example, Chieko-san, a native Kyotoite who has lived her entire life in the family machiya found it difficult to describe the atmosphere and lifestyle the machiya provides. She had to imagine the machiya from an outside perspective and attempted to position herself from the point of view of a person living in a mansion. However, even though she tried to imagine an outsider's perspective she could not find words to articulate a funiki. Chieko-san stated:

To talk about what living in a machiya is like asking of me to *sotogawa kara mitekudasai* [look from an outside perspective]. I lived here since I was born, so to take on an *soto* [outside] *minaoshite* [perspective] is *sugoku muzukashii* [very difficult]. *Kotoba ni suru no wa totemo muzukashikedo tabun, karadaga so iu no ni nare terunode, chigai ga wakaranai* [To put it into words is very difficult, probably my body is used to this, so I don’t know the difference].

In contrast to Chieko-san, Tsuzure-san who is from Shiga prefecture but now resides in a restored machiya in Kyoto is attracted to machiya and Kyoto because of the unique atmosphere which she consciously recognizes. Tsuzure-san told me:

Since we are not *Kyoto no ningen* [Kyoto people] I feel that is why the machiya is *mezurashi* [rare, unusual]. *Soto kara miru to* [For people looking from the outside of Kyoto] there is a *miryoku* [charm] with the machiya. For people on the outside it is not just about the temples and shrines, but it is the *fuinki* [atmosphere] of Kyoto that is special. The *furui mono* [old things] still remain and like these houses they provide a *funiki* for people outside of Kyoto. It becomes *miryoku*.

Kyotoites who have only lived in machiya, such as Chieko-san, have not accumulated outside perceptions that form an experience to contrast the aesthetic experience of machiya against. However, Kyoto residents who have lived in modern housing or outside of Kyoto have gained sensory knowledge from living in various environments and it gives them the ability to feel a particular atmosphere in machiya. It is the accumulation of various contrasting sensory experience that conditions an aesthetic situation and as John Dewey argues, “For we never experience nor form judgements about object and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole” (cited in Feldman 2002:3). The production of atmospheric knowledge is rooted in sensory perception that one has accumulated throughout life by living in multiple environments, which then allows one to recognize particular environmental atmospheres. Therefore, Chieko-san and Tsuzure-san both draw from aesthetic experiences from the context of their overall lives, thus creating experiences of atmospheric meaning or absence in the machiya.

However, increasing high rise development projects throughout Kyoto city are altering and disrupting the symbiotic atmospheric relationship between the city and machiya, resulting in an atmosphere of absence that constructs narratives of the loss of sensory experience and Kyoto identity. In particular, long term machiya residents and native Kyotoites who have grown up in machiya report that the increasing high rise structures in their neighborhoods are affecting the sensed atmosphere of the machiya in terms of sunlight and air flow. For example, during my interview with Kojima-san at her downtown machiya she worried:

The *kankyo* [surrounding environment] has *kawata* [changed]. It's becoming *sumi nikui* [uncomfortable, difficult to live]. Behind my house a *biru* [building] was put up and it blocks the *ohisan* [sunlight] and *kaze* [wind] from reaching this house. Buildings have been put up on the *minami gawa* [south side] and the *hi* [sunlight] comes in from the *minami gawa*. Before there was no building like that. My house is surrounded by buildings and only one side has a pre-school, which makes it a little better. But it is becoming *zenbu biru* [all buildings]. It will just be this house remaining and I don't know if that is a good thing or bad thing so I think that will be a big problem. I feel it is *muzukashii* [difficult] being surrounded by buildings and only this machiya left. The people who lived here are leaving the neighborhood. Shinmachi is still okay, but Muromachi has changed a lot and now there are many manshon there. So the *sumu*

kankyo [living environment] has changed drastically around that area and if it become like that to just be living here in a machiya *nakaka muzukashikoto* [it is a very difficult thing].

Kojima-san feels that it is becoming difficult to live in her machiya with the high rise buildings enclosing in on her. She notes an atmosphere of absence in terms of sunlight and wind, which she is no longer able to feel coming into her house like before. She worries about being the only machiya left standing and does not know if it is a good thing.

Other informants also note that as high rise buildings are put up and the demolition of machiya continues it changes the *machinami* [townscape] of Kyoto and it is the machinami of low rise wooden machiya that contributes to creating the distinct Kyoto atmosphere. In an interview, Hiromi-san, a Kyotoite who has grown up in a machiya in the Nishijin district, echoes a similar concern in regards to the changing atmosphere at the scale of the city and its impact on how she experiences the atmosphere of the machiya. She makes connections to the city becoming a place that violates principles of *fusui* (feng shui), therefore, she states Kyoto is becoming a place of bad fusui and losing its harmonious atmospheric experience with nature. While sitting at her machiya which she has repurposed into a cooking school she explained:

Kyoto was built according to *fusui* [feng shui] principles and today apparently the fusui is very bad. Many buildings were built around Nijo castle. The *kaze* [wind] no longer comes through around Kyoto Station so it has very bad fusui. Kyoto was built according to fusui so I think today's architects and planners should take the fusui into account. They used to think about the fusui and things like how the *kaze* [wind] would flow through. In the past I remember that the *kaze* [breeze] would flow right into the house so it was very *suzushi* [cool] if you open the door. And that does not happen anymore as much compared to the *mukashi* [past]. The *kaze no nagare tomata* [the flow of air has stopped] and that is one reason for the *ondankan* [increase in temperature]. Kyoto as a whole has become hotter and so I think they should consider the fusui of the city and how things flow.

Hiromi-san recognizes changes in the atmosphere of her home, such as the absence of the breeze which she onced sensed coming inside. Both Kojima-san and Hiromi-san show that the high rise development happening at the scale of the city allows them to recognize changes in the atmosphere of their machiya in terms of air, temperature, and lighting, but it is a narrative of loss.

Building construction is altering Kyoto's machinami to one that is vertical in aesthetics and thus also affecting the way resident experience long standing traditions that occur in the city such as the *matsuri* (local festivals). Residents such as Ari-san, who is originally from Tokyo and now lives in a machiya, believes that preserving a single machiya is not important rather what matters is to preserve rows of machiya because together the houses create a unique machinami atmosphere which allows residents to have a harmonious relationship with the city and the

cultural traditions that occur. For example, interlocutors report that the high rise buildings are making it difficult to view and experience the Daimonji matsuri, which is the last summer festival in Kyoto where the surrounding mountains are lit on fire to display *kanji* (Sino-Japanese) characters such as 大 (*dai*) as a way to send off the spirits of their ancestors.

During my group interview with Ari-san and Hiromi-san they both share a sense of loss in Kyoto lifestyle because of the tall buildings being put up in their neighborhood. Ari-san highlights the role the *machinami* (townscape) of Kyoto plays in the ways in which residents experience Kyoto during Daimonji and stated:

Where I live is where we the Daimonji matsuri starts and you can see the Daimonji symbol from the road. So on August 16th everyone in the *chonai* [neighborhood] gathers around in front of the road and can see Daimonji. But when there is a mansion built down the street even if further down you cannot see it anymore. Last year there was an eight story mansion built and it blocked part of the Daimonji view. I don't think that type of building will be caught by the law but if the *machinami* is not protected down the entire road then the residents here can no longer have a view of Daimonji. We need to think about the *zentai* [whole area] or else I think we cannot leave behind the *machinami* [townscape].

Furthermore, Hiromi-san adds that to be able to experience the view of Daimonji with her neighbors is a way to also feel the changing seasons, thus providing a sense of time. However, with the buildings being put up in her area it disrupts the tradition of viewing Daimonji because residents no longer gather to view the matsuri together and this brings on a sense of loss and sadness. Hiromi-san expressed:

Hiromi-san I really felt that during Obon this year. *Mukashi* [in the past] the next door area you could see Daimonji and during my mother's time she was living in the Shimogamo area and from Shimogamo shrine everyone in the neighborhood would gather to watch Daimonji together. Now there are buildings and you cannot see Daimonji. Kyoto people they are accustomed to seeing Daimonji and *kisetsu o kanjiteru* [feeling the seasons] so when buildings are built and that disappears, then the traditions and *bunka* [culture] disappears with it. *Kanashi na* [It is sad].

Although, there is renewed interest and recognition of *machiya* the continued development of building and mansion in Kyoto threatens the symbiotic atmosphere between *machiya* and Kyoto which residents experience. Highrise development projects not only affects the sensed atmosphere within the *machiya* for residents, but also at the scale of the city by disrupting the ability to fully experience Kyoto living at multiple registers including nature, weather, and local matsuri events.

4.4 Kyoto: the ideal town

Although during the twentieth century *machiya* would have been primarily described as *furukusai* (smell of the past, old fashioned), *samui* (cold), and *kurai* (dark), attitudes toward the *machiya* have evolved, not in isolation, but alongside changing perceptions of Kyoto as an important site of Japanese culture, urbanism, and crucially, nature. During my conversations with interlocutors, including both non-Kyotoites and Kyotoites, conceptualized Kyoto as a *machi* (town) by contrasting it to both the *tokai* (city) and *inaka* (countryside). Kyotoites used such comparisons between Kyoto and elsewhere in Japan to understand Kyoto as a place that they want to remain living in, while non-Kyotoites used the same comparisons as reasons for why they wanted to move to Kyoto and live in a *machiya*. Although, Kyotoites and outsiders described and related to the *machiya* in very different ways, I found that regardless of background all of my interlocutors described Kyoto in very similar ways. In particular the juxtapositions between Kyoto and the *tokai*, including Osaka and Tokyo, frequently emerged out of my conversations with outsiders and native Kyotoites. And it was this particular contrast between the *tokai* and Kyoto that conjured up an peaceful and gentle image of Kyoto. However, for outsiders they consciously recognize *funiki* as being in a co-constitutive relationship between the *machiya* and Kyoto in which both forms, the home and city, enhance the sensed atmospheres of dwelling. In my interview with Ayumi-san of the Machizukuri Fund Center, which is a division under Kyoto city that provides information and assistance to those wanting to restore *kyo-machiya* for living, she explained that on top of having cheaper property in Kyoto, Tokyoites are interested in *machiya* because of the *funiki* of Kyoto. Ayumi-san stated, “Kyoto has *bunka* [culture, in the sense that historical buildings and traditions remain] and there is a *fuinki* [atmosphere]. It is *shizuka* [peaceful, quiet]. So Tokyo people are buying the *machiya* as a second house or there are those who retire and then move over to Kyoto. There are many buyers like that.” Native Kyotoites use similar terms and comparisons to describe their topophilia for Kyoto, however, this did not extend to the level of the home. For Kyotoites their topophilia for Kyoto is not only understood through the relationalities of place, but formed through generational family ties and keeping the identity of being a “native Kyotoite.” I argue that Kyoto has become recognized as an “ideal” place to live through the juxtaposition of Kyoto versus elsewhere.

Interlocutors report being able to experience a mix of nature, tradition, and modernity in an urban environment as elements that make Kyoto attractive. Residents often use terms such as harmony, balance, and mix to describe their topophilia for Kyoto. For outsiders such as Michiyo-san, who previously lived in Osaka and now resides in Kyoto, her lifestyle feels slower in pace because of the atmosphere created by natural landscape features and old buildings in Kyoto. While I sat with Michiyo-san at her *machiya* cafe she illustrated, “*Jikan* [time] goes by slower here. The lifestyle matched me. Kyoto has the Kamogawa river and is surrounded by *yama* [mountains]. The *machi* [city] and *shizen* [nature] are mixed. Kyoto has *furui* [old] buildings and *atarashi* [new] buildings. I think it is *omoshiroi* [interesting].” In contrast, she

described Osaka as fast pace and crowded. On the topic of tokai living she explained to me, “I don’t like big city situations. There are a lot of people and living quickly.” During an interview with Machi-san, who lived in various areas in Japan before coming to Kyoto, described Kyoto as an ideal place for her family because it is a “mix” of both Kyoto culture and nature. She resides in a machiya in Kyoto with her kids and husband. For Machi-san the polite and gentle atmosphere of Kyoto is seen as influencing the way in which children are raised and act, such as children in Kyoto bowing and clapping their hands together when they see a Jizo-san (bodhisattva that protects children) statues in the city to pay their respect to Jizo-san. Machi-san’s son, who is four years old, attends a kindergarten in Kyoto where the school takes him to temples and shrines, such as Kitano Tenmangu shrine, where he is able to experience both Kyoto culture and nature (Figure 4). Machi-san stated:

The kindergarten they take the kids to many places like Kitano Tenmangu to go walk around. So it is like their garden or playground. They clap and touch the cows. Sometimes they bring the kids to the Shimogamo shrine because there is a little stream to play in and they go there in the summer and *Gosho* [the imperial palace]. So I think it is really special to feel that nature and culture at the same time.

Her husband, Peter who is a New Zealander, is pleased that his children have taken on such polite manners and told me, “There is a certain kind of humility about Japanese culture. They have a respect for other things it is not just themselves, they are part of this bigger picture. So it is nice to see the kids with no direction from us take on some of that.”



Figure 4. Kitano Tenmangu shrine. On the left is one of the many ox statues on the shrine grounds where people rub the head of the ox and make a prayer. Many students make visits to Kitano Tenmangu because it is the shrine where the scholar and poet deities reside. Neighborhood children also play on the shrine grounds. Source: Sarah Mahoney

Similar to the statements made by outsiders, I found native Kyotoites drawing on comparisons between different places which allowed them to conceptualize Kyoto as a town that is balanced between nature and urban living. Their conversations revealed that the *inaka* (countryside) is not perceived as an ideal place because it is not convenient and urban. However, the *tokai* (city), such as Tokyo and Osaka, conjured up an image of fast pace lifestyles and crowds. When describing the atmosphere of the tokai, interlocutors use words such as *conderu* (crowded), *hayai* (fast), and *tsukareru* (tiring). During my interview with Hinodeya-san, who is a native Kyotoite and owns a kimono shop, she explained to me missing Kyoto when visiting other cities even if it is a close city. Her understanding of Kyoto as offering a slower lifestyle and a mix of nature and urban living was seen among many native Kyotoites. While reflecting on why she likes Kyoto she explained (Figure 5):

Kyoto is *nombiri* [slow] and there are not too many people. When riding the subway in Tokyo the door won't shut. It is crowded and *kowai* [scary]. I just want to live *shizuka* [peacefully, quietly]. It is a *compact* city and everything you need is here. There is the *yama* [mountain] and *kawa* [river]. You can go anywhere just by bike since it is so small. If you really wanted to go to Kyoto Station you could go there by bike and return. That compactness and it is not *inaka poi* [rural, country like], but has what you need. So that is why I like Kyoto.



Figure 5. The Kamogawa river runs through the city. In the summer, families and students gather in the evenings down by the river. On the weekends, kids also swim and try to catch fish in the river. Many residents report that having the river in the city is a feature that makes Kyoto attractive and provides an atmosphere of living with nature. Source: Sarah Mahoney

Unlike outsiders, for native Kyotoites they also described their love for Kyoto in terms of sentimental ties and social status. During my conversation with Maeda-san, who is 67 years old and a native Kyoto living, he proudly stated, “To live in *goban-me* [within the imperial grid of the city] of Kyoto is to be a Kyoto resident. Outside of that like Uji and Fushimi that is not

the city] of Kyoto is to be a Kyoto resident. Outside of that like Uji and Fushimi that is not Kyoto.” In a separate interview with Hirai-san, who is 68 years old and a Native Kyotoite, I asked if he would like to live elsewhere besides Kyoto. Hirai-san stated, “That would be *miyakochi* [leaving the capital, dropping status]. To leave the area you drop in your status as a Kyotoite and you will be called *miyakochi*.” Hirai-san who is now retired, explained to me there are also many places in Kyoto for him to explore, such as the temples so he still feels excited to live in Kyoto. And for Maeda-san he highlighted long term social bonds formed from being a native Kyotoite, which is also a reason why he wants to continue living in Kyoto. He stated, “If I were to leave this place I would feel *sabishii* [lonely, sad]. The people around here know me and say my name with *chan* [an honorific suffix used among people you feel close with]. It makes me feel *anshin* [secure, safe]. *zuto sundero tokoro wa ichiban ii ya na* [The place where you have been living the longest is the best].” Both Hirai-san and Maeda-san told me that they did not want to live in a machiya, however, they want to continue living in Kyoto and can’t imagine living anywhere else. For native Kyotoites it is not only juxtaposition of place, but also other reasons such as social ties and status as a “native Kyotoite” that makes Kyoto a place they feel attached to.

Despite differing attitudes at the level of the machiya between native Kyotoites and outsiders, all interlocutors view Kyoto as an ideal place to live. In particular, both outsiders and native Kyotoites construct a peaceful image of Kyoto by conceptualizing it as a place that offers a slower lifestyle and a town that is balanced with urban city life and nature.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined juxtapositions of places, dwellings, and materials to show the ways *funiki* and atmospheric qualities of the machiya become recognized by people. My research shows that residents use a binary way of thinking to understand the machiya as providing a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere. The juxtapositions of place and dwelling take on a significant role in explaining why “outsiders” of Kyoto have taken a strong interest in purchasing machiya. Such interlocutors specifically used the term *funiki* because they recognize Kyoto and machiya as forms that provide something they feel is missing in other places in Japan, especially cities such as Tokyo.

On the other hand, native Kyotoites who have only grown up in machiya were unable to recognize the same type of atmosphere as “outsiders” and did not use the word *funiki* because they have not lived in a mansion to allow for comparison. Although, native Kyotoites who have grown up in machiya may not recognize the home for its atmosphere this does not mean the machiya holds no meaning for them. Instead, native Kyotoites see the machiya as a home connected to family histories, memories, and social status which creates different attitudes and perceptions of the machiya home.

Furthermore, residents who recognize a *funiki* are able to use terms such as *ochizuku* (calming), *atatakai* (warm), *anshin* (secure) to describe the atmospheric qualities of the machiya

because they draw on their sensory experiences and memories of living in manshon, which evoked a sense of control and containment. Residents felt disconnected from the atmosphere of Kyoto because of the design and materials of manshon, which creates a binary between the outside and inside environment. In contrast, the atmosphere between the inside and outside environment within a machiya is permeable, thus allowing residents to feel connected to nature and Kyoto. The juxtaposition between machiya and manshon also creates an image of the machiya as the “healthy” home because residents associate the machiya with living closely with nature and a natural lifestyle.

On the discussion of materials, I examined how the machiya is recognized as providing atmospheres such as a sense of hominess, warmth, and ease by examining the juxtaposition between natural materials and artificial materials. In particular, materials such as wood radiate a sense of warmth which residents felt not only due to the natural character of wood, but also the traces left behind in the wood. It is the traces in the wood, which act as markers of past inhabitants in the machiya that constructs a sense of hominess. Residents talked about the machiya as having animated qualities because the wood has a natural decay and marks left in the wood.

I have demonstrated that the appeal of machiya is also linked to Kyoto city becoming recognized as an “ideal” as well. For both non-Kyotoites and Kyotoites, the city of Kyoto is viewed as an ideal place to live and own property because it is perceived as a *machi* (town) that strikes a balance for residents as a place to experience a mix of nature, urban living, and Kyoto culture. Kyoto becomes ideal through the juxtapositions between Kyoto and elsewhere and in particular in relation to Tokyo. It is through juxtapositions both real and imagined by residents that allows Kyoto and machiya to become perceived as ideals. However, despite both Kyoto and machiya becoming acknowledged as ideals, they are also constantly threatened by high-rise development, such as manshon and hotel construction, which disrupts the co-constructed sensed atmospheres produced by machiya and Kyoto city. Narratives of loss in conversations with residents suggest a fear that Kyoto will someday become like any other city.

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