

For reference

Imperial Hotel 2nd Generation Main Building (commonly known as the Wright Building)

The Imperial Hotel opened on November 3, 1890 in Hibiya, Tokyo, the same location as today. It boasted the best facilities of its time, but as the number of foreigners coming to Japan from Europe and the United States increased in the Taisho era (1912-1926), the building and facilities became outdated, and it became necessary to construct a new wing. Aisaku Hayashi, the manager at the time, asked architect Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he had met through his collection of ukiyo-e woodblock prints while working as an antique dealer in New York, to design the new building. Wright conceived of a hotel structure where people could gather and socialize. Construction of the hotel began in 1919 and was completed in 1923. It was a reinforced concrete and brick structure with five stories above ground and one below, with a total floor area of 34,826 square meters (374,868 square feet) and 270 guest rooms. It unexpectedly proved to be earthquake and fire resistant.

After its opening, the new building spread new culture and services such as dance parties and hotel weddings, welcomed distinguished guests from Japan and abroad, and served as the setting for many historically significant events. It has also been called "The Jewel of the Orient" because of its architectural beauty, and has been well received by many people. In 1967, after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the building was closed for reconstruction due to earthquake resistance and other problems, bringing an end to its 44-year history. Today, the main entrance to the building has been preserved and restored at Meiji-Mura, an open-air museum, in Inuyama City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)

An American architect who developed his own style known for its prairie-style designs with low, horizontal lines, Wright came to Japan in 1916 at the request of Aisaku Hayashi, manager of the Imperial Hotel, to build a new hotel wing. In a career spanning 70 years, he is said to have created over 1,100 designs, nearly half of which were actually built. In the Wright Building, chairs, tables, carpets, textiles, lighting fixtures, and even dinnerware designed by Wright created a total work of art; sense of the world in combination with the building.