A Method of Self-Made Private Housing Construction, and the Study and Practice of Its Auxiliary Functions
With a Focus on architectural works "Setagaya-Mura Plan" and "Construction Plan for Watanabe House"

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SYNOPSIS

"Open Technology" (Open-ended Skill) discussed in this study is a form of 'bricolage' -- a strategy advocated by Claude Levi-Strauss of using whatever is at hand – that utilizes, as tools, information and technology accessible to individuals. The use of the Internet on personal computers is a good example.

The widespread proliferation of computers among individuals has altered the conventional, one-way flow of information, giving us more options in information and leading to the development of a two-way flow. As a result, it enabled the masses, previously thought of as consumers on the receiving end of supply, or as mere targets to which goods are sold, to take part from the consuming end as creators of goods themselves.

The selection of information, or direct contact, has now moved beyond its conventional consumerist character into the realm of creating its own information space. Already, we are witnessing the germination of space around the physical body (consciousness) through a very individual process called freedom. These conditions indicate the possibility of disintegrating, and at the same time, reconstructing the world sought after by William Morris. Computers can phenomenally enhance Levi-Strauss's bricolage, or tools and objects (materials) of people who make something with their own hands, and bring about an inner revolution in the creator's ability.

Modernism (modern architecture), which aimed at conceptual universality, has now become obsolete form. Open Technology is geared toward architecture that responds individually to different conditions by sharing a wide range of information and technology, with a focus on the widespread use of computers. Its starting point is architecture for minorities whose domain has existed outside the framework of modernism. This new form of architecture, in turn, is able to enrich the productive activities of each individual and offer a place where each person takes the initiative in building his/her own lifestyle.

We designed a series of houses called Open-Tech Houses that translate the above idea of Open Technology into practice, and devised related tools called Open-Tech products that facilitate such a lifestyle. To illustrate the ideas shown above, we will refer to two architectural case studies that materialized prior to FY2002, "Setagaya-Mura Plan" and "Construction Plan for Watanabe House." In doing so, we introduced various techniques in different elements of architecture: specifically, our aim is to create a system in which architects are in control of all phases including information gathering, manufacture and distribution of products, construction site, cost and design.