“Space” is now at a crucial turning point. Properly speaking, it has reached a biggest turning point since the beginning of the 20th century. Needless to say, space in a building, space in a means of transport or space in a train cannot be free from the major innovations taking place in “Space”. Involving all types of space and all the countries of the world, space innovation is proceeding with great strides as a result of the force exerted by circumstances. Then what is actually taking place? What is the significance in the history of mankind?

First, it should be noted that space innovation currently taking place forms a pair with that which occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. The architects and interior designers at the beginning of the 20th century were suffering from inferiority complex; they considered that a means of transport or vehicle was more advanced than a building. It was a favorite child of the age, and must have been viewed as a leader of the fashion. When compared with a building that was motionless, the vehicle represented the speed and quick movement of the new age. These people praised excellent designing of trains, cars, ships and airplanes in their writings, and made an attempt to incorporate the design and vocabulary into the building space that they were to create. Steamship-like round windows and white steel pipes were built into the building structures one after another.

The 20th century space was entirely dominated by the “vehicle complex”. A vehicle is more advanced than the building! It is new! The faster types of vehicles (e.g. airplanes) are even more advanced! Such a “vehicle complex” also dominated the designing of the vehicle itself. The modern lively and agile design similar to that of a vehicle was preferred. Above all, the design of an airplane as the most advanced vehicle was considered to be the model for all other types of vehicles.
The currently emerging space innovation is a movement toward emancipation from this complex. This is because the technologies of the vehicle are no longer the most advanced technologies. Not even the airplane symbolizes state-of-the-art technology. The current state-of-the-art technology is found in computer technologies and biotechnologies. These are intangible, unlike the vehicle technologies. There is no way of imitating the form. This has terminated the 20-century concept of the space design going after the configurational image of the state-of-the-art technologies.

Then what will be the norm of the new design to replace the state-of-the-art technologies? I think that it is the human himself who utilizes the space. If so, the human body itself must be comfortable. Above all, when designing vehicles, including trains, it is important to pay attention to the human body. How can the human body be protected and comforted in the moving environment? This must be the origin of designing in moving space.

When the train design is reviewed from the above-mentioned viewpoint, it becomes clear that a great number of important things have been ignored and forgotten in the 20-century train design. For example, let us take up materials. People have been seeking only plastics, aluminum and others that are "modern" and "light in weight", and have failed to pay sufficient attention to the materials required by human bodies. For example, is there any possibility of restoring the use of a rich and delicate materials such wooden floors impregnated with oil?

Another factor having been forgetting is the importance or significance of light. We have been seeking only homogenized white light devoid of shade or variation. Is it not possible to get back the warm light that penetrates into the heart of a passenger, for example, like a lamp placed on a table? One of the greatest joys found in my train journey in Europe is that I could come into contact with such heart-warming rays of light on the train table and enjoy a glass of wine exposed to such light.

Further, a cozy, compact and self-composed space such as a compartment is extremely comfortable for the human body. We Japanese had cultivated a technique by which the human body could exchange a rich "conversation" with space in a small tea ceremony room or the like. The rooms of old Japanese houses were filled with wisdom for making us feel comfortable. Amid the difficulties of the 20th century "vehicle complex", Japan led the world in abandoning such human wisdom.

However, the tide has now turned the other way around. The time has come when all space designs are to be reexamined and innovated. Our Japanese wisdom on space must be revitalized now. Train designing will provide an unparalleled field for our effort in this direction. We need to be equipped with the delicate feeling and wisdom that permit Japanese trains to be called the world’s best.