In Italo Calvino’s enchanting novel *The Baron in the Trees*, Baron Cosimo climbs into the trees that connect his family’s garden with those of his neighbors and the forests beyond. He never sets foot on earth again.

The baron is known throughout Europe for his arboreal existence and for his wisdom: “I too have lived many years for ideals, which I would never be able to explain to myself; but I do something entirely good. I live on trees.”

Japanese-born Stomu Miyazaki, an architectural designer whose work includes residential, commercial, and civic projects in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, has a lot in common with the idealistic Cosimo: He has designed a home for living in the trees.

“This is my dream, to build the Web-House,” he says. The Web-House is designed so that the web can be infinitely spread out over many acres, or built near a house with fewer web sections, or attached to a main house, as an addition. What matters are the trees.

The Japanese aesthetic is informed by nature, Stomu explains. Traditional building materials—wood, mud, paper—were perfectly suited to the weather. Mud controlled humidity; wood was easy to work with; paper provided soft light.

“But in Asia we have typhoons; we learned we couldn’t beat nature. The way to survive was to respect and work with nature,” he says. “In the West, there are few typhoons; houses were constructed with strong materials: stone, brick. Inside the stone house we felt safe and we thought nature was controllable. We Japanese are reexamining our traditional building materials. Our ancestors were smarter than we are. We can get some good ideas from them.”

To learn more, visit www.stomu.com or call (914) 769-0741.

—Michele McCarthy