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Shifting Patterns

Christopher Alexander and the Eishin Campus

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- First examination of Christopher Alexander's 'systems generating systems' theory and its application to a concrete building design
- The Eishin Campus near Tokyo is Alexander's largest and most significant project based on the Pattern Language he developed in the 1970s together with Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein
- Christopher Alexander is among the most highly renowned contemporary architectural theorists

Christopher Alexander is a Vienna-born, British-American architect and theorist and the father of the pattern language movement, popularised in his pivotal 1968 book, *A Pattern Language*, with Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein, as well as the 1979 follow-up, *The Timeless Way of Building*. Lesser known but as essential to understanding Alexander's work is his theory of 'systems generating systems' which explains that systems as a whole are created by 'generating systems', and, if we wish to make things which function as 'wholes', we shall have to invent generating systems to create them. Taking the Eishin Campus outside Tokyo, built between 1983 and 1989, as its example, *Shifting Patterns* is the first book to examine Alexander's theory of 'systems generating systems' and its application to a building design. It brings together essays from an interdisciplinary, international cast of experts, including Eva Guttmann, Gabriele Kaiser, Ernst Beneder, Walter Ruprechter, Hisae Hosoi, Christian Kuhn, Ida Pristinger, and Norihito Nakatani, as well as conversations with Hajo Neis and Takaharu Tezuka to investigate the application of this theory to the school and university complex, the largest project Alexander has realised based on pattern language. Among the issues discussed are topicality, interdisciplinary and internationality, and culture transfer. The essays also look at the design-build movement as an antithesis to today's standardised and commerce-driven architectural production.

Eva Guttmann is a freelance architecture publicist based in Graz and Vienna, and an editor with Park Books. **Gabriele Kaiser** lives and works in Vienna as a freelance architecture publicist, writer, and curator. **Claudia Mazanek** is a Vienna-based freelance editor with a special expertise in twentieth-century art and architecture.

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