

Chapter 10: Modern Architecture in Asia & South America

Since 1950s Modern Architecture flourished mainly in North America while we can see many profound examples in India, Hong Kong, Japan and South America as well. In this chapter we will discuss about the works of legendary Modernist Architects such as:

Works of Le Corbusier, Ar. B.V Doshi and Ar. Charles Correa in India

Works of Ar. Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil

Works of Ar. Louis I Kahn in Bangladesh

Works of Ar. Tadao Ando in Japan

10.1 Works of Le Corbusier, Ar. B.V Doshi and Ar. Charles Correa in India

After Independence from British Rule in 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru's government initiated the construction of Chandigarh, new state capital of Punjab. The Master Plan (1950) designed by Le Corbusier, envisaged a grid iron city plan and designed major administrative buildings as well. He designed Capital Complex buildings, the Assembly, the Secretariat and the High Court. (Cruickshank D ed,1999, p 1625)



Palace of Assembly (Chandigarh) (1952–1961)¹

Le Corbusier's design called for the use of raw concrete, whose surface was not smoothed or polished and which showed the marks of the forms in which it dried. It showcases his purist architecture.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Corbusier#/media/File:Palace_of_Assembly_Chandigarh_2006.jpg

10.1.1 BalKrishna Doshi

He is an Architect, Urban Planner and an Educator for 70 years. Born on 27 August, 1927 Pune India, he is the first Indian architect to award with Pritzker prize. He became the senior designer on Le Corbusier's project in Ahmedabad and Chandigarh.

After working with Le Corbusier and Louis I Kahn, defined his architectural understanding, which is characterized by an intuitive search that is less focused on the rational than on pure creativity

His Principles

“My works are an extension of my life, philosophy and dreams trying to create a treasury of the architectural spirit”

“I believe Life celebrates when lifestyle and architecture fuse.”

He explored the relationships between the fundamental needs of human life, connectivity to self and culture, and respect for social traditions, with a response that is grounded in context and exhibiting a localized Modernist approach.

He designed his own residence and studio **Sangath Architect's Studio** (1980), Ahmedabad, India. It features a series of sunken vaults clad in china mosaic and a terraced amphitheater with flowing water details. As Sangath means moving together through participation, it includes reception areas, offices spaces, workshops, library, conference room, and other ancillary spaces. It is a simple concrete structure on square ground plan. Roof lights and wall slots provide incident sunlight.



Sangath Architect's Studio (1980)²

The **Hussain Doshi Gufa**, (1992-1995) in Ahmedabad planned as an art gallery and residence for Artist Maqbool Fida Hussain. With domes covered in white mosaic tiles the underground suite of rooms is characterized by slanting columns. With this expressionist style, Doshi turned back to clear ordered structures and made a spiritual return to older regional models. Steel mats and concrete replace the traditional loamwork. (Gossel P. ed, 2007, p 250)



Hussain Doshi Gufa, (1992-1995)³

² <https://www.archdaily.com/158300/ad-classics-sangath-balkrishna-doshi>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._V._Doshi#/media/File:Amdavad_ni_gufa.jpg

10.1.2 CHARLES CORREA

Born in 1930, his architecture bears the stamp of Indian Culture and tradition, with an expression of climatic conditions and local materials, but with modern style elements.

His most known work is **Kanchanjunga Apartments** (1970-83) in Mumbai has 32-part duplex apartments having a generously laid out terrace, onto which the four rooms lead. Correa filled here an expressive concept of color, with yellow tiles on the outer walls and white & red stepped, geometric surfaces in the terraced areas, which are cut into the elevations. (Gossel P. ed,2007, p 220)



Kanchanjunga Apartments⁴

Correa's other project, a city museum, the **Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur** (1990) set up as a multi-disciplinary arts facility is based on Navagraha, the 9 square mandalas described in Hindu religious texts. The external elevations of windowless sandstone walls rise two storeys to protect an internal world of cavities and voids, of doomed halls and flat roofed galleries, offices and restaurants. (Cruickshank D ed,1997, p1635)



Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur(1990)⁵

10.2 Works of Ar. Louis I Kahn

With designs that combined timeless forms and modern techniques, Louis Kahn became one of the leading American architects of the 20th century. Born in Pärnu, Estonia, on February 20, 1901, he was an educator and philosopher.

His Philosophy

- Form, Spaces and Light
- Form is conceived as a formless and unmeasurable spiritual power common to all mankind
- Transcends individual thoughts, feelings and conventions
- Characterizes the conceptual essence of one project from another
- Defined space by means of masonry masses and a lucid structure laid out in the geometric, formal structures
- Natural light brought architecture to life

⁴ Gossel P. ed,2007, The A-Z of Architecture, Correa Charles Mark, TASCHEN, p 220

⁵ <http://hiddenarchitecture.net/jawahar-kala-kendra/>

Architecture as a national symbol expresses idea that come to represent a time and so suggest the nationalist intent of the Government in power. Louis Kahn's **Capital complex (Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka) the Citadel of Assembly** (1967-1982) is a vast symmetrical congregation of concrete structures outside the city. The citadel comprises of main Legislative Assembly Building and the Mosque in exposed concrete in marble string courses and a secondary grouping across an artificial lake of the Supreme Court and Hostels. (Cruickshank D ed,1997, p1639)



National Parliament of Bangladesh⁶

Louis Kahn designed the entire Jatiya Sangsad complex, which includes lawns, lake and residences for the Members of the Parliament (MPs). The architect's key design philosophy was to represent Bengali culture and heritage, while at the same time optimizing the use of space.

The exterior of the building is striking in its simplicity, with huge walls deeply recessed by porticoes and large openings of regular geometric shapes.

The main building, which is at the center of the complex, is divided into three parts – the Main Plaza, South Plaza and Presidential Plaza. An artificial lake surrounds three sides of the main building of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, extending to the Members of Parliament hostel complex. This skillful use of water to portray the riverine beauty of Bengal adds to the aesthetic value of the site.⁷



Play of light inside⁸

10.3 Works of Ar. Tadao Ando in Japan

Tadao Ando (born in 1941) is a self-taught Architect. Characteristics of his architecture are simplest forms in exposed concrete, both inside and out. Generously glazed inner courtyards allow the occupants to observe wind and weather. (Gossel P. ed,2007, p 48)

⁶ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7c/National_Assembly_of_Bangladesh_%2806%29.jpg

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jatiya_Sangsad_Bhaban#cite_note-5, Architecture and Design

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jatiya_Sangsad_Bhaban#/media/File:Sangshad_inside.jpg

His Philosophies

- Balancing aspects of modernism with Japanese principal of design
- He believes “to change the dwelling is to change the city and to reform society”
- Association between nature and architecture
- Light is an important controlling factor
- A series of brave proposal for small houses
- Religion and life style strongly influenced his architecture
- Ando's work frequently combines large expanses of unadorned concrete walls with wooden or stone floors and large windows.
- Create a “haiku” effect emphasizing nothingness and empty space signifying beauty of simplicity
- Use of exposed concrete –concrete blocks called Tadao concrete



Church of the Light, Ibaraki⁹

In **Row House, Sumiyoshi, Osaka (1975-76)**, three squares of identical dimensions form front building, courtyard and rear building. The street façade is broken only by a narrow entrance. The spaces nearest the doorway is the living room at ground floor and bedroom at first floor. The central courtyard is open to sky and is crossed by a stairway to another bedroom

s. Its geometric composition makes shows the modernity. (Jodidio P.2020, p67)

With the floor area just 113 m², **Church of the Light, Ibaraki, Osaka, (1987-89)** has an expression of power that contemporary architecture conveys. Essentially a rectangular concrete box intersected at a 15-degree angle by a freestanding wall, the chapel’s most remarkable feature is the cruciform opening behind the altar, which floods the interior with light. It has floors and pews made of blackened cedar scaffolding planks. (Jodidio P.2020, p141)

10.4 Works of Ar. Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil

Oscar Niemeyer, born in December 15, 1907 was a Brazilian architect who did explorations on the aesthetic possibilities of reinforced concrete. His architecture was strongly influenced by Le Corbusier and is famous for his use of abstract forms and curves. He was awarded the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1988.

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tadao_Ando#/media/File:Church_of_Light.JPG

With the expansive use of Reinforced cement concrete, he was able to acquire his own style of the lightness of the curved forms. Niemeyer was most famous for his use of abstract forms and curves and wrote in his memoirs:

“I am not attracted to straight angles or to the straight line, hard and inflexible, created by man. I am attracted to free-flowing, sensual curves. The curves that I find in the mountains of my country, in the sinuousness of its rivers, in the waves of the ocean, and on the body of the beloved woman. Curves make up the entire Universe, the curved Universe of Einstein”¹⁰

One of his best examples **President’s Palace of the Dawn, Brasilia, Brazil, 1958**, is sited three miles east of the Capital of Brasilia, on a promontory near the golf course and lakes. It is huge rectangular building of two storeys plus a basement, shielded from a continuous verandah. The building is raised 4 feet above ground level and approached by a ramp. The surrounding verandah is connected to the main building by a diamond shaped cantilevered structure. This chain of diamond shaped supports is structurally important, also developed to higher degree of aesthetic element in the design. It is part of a form of bold concept with symbolic exaggeration. (Sharp D.1991.p224)



President’s Palace of the Dawn¹¹

Reference Books:

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2. Gossel P, 2007, The A-Z of Modern Architecture, Ando Tadao, TASCHEN, p 48
3. Gossel P. ed. 2007. The A-Z of Modern Architecture, Correa Charles, TASCHEN, p220
4. Gossel P. ed. 2007. The A-Z of Modern Architecture, Doshi BalKrishna, TASCHEN, p250
5. Jodidio P.2020, ANDO Complete Works 1975-Today, Row House Sumiyoshi, TASCHEN, p67
6. Jodidio P.2020, ANDO Complete Works 1975-Today, Church of The Light, TASCHEN, p141
7. Sharp D. 1991. Twentieth Century Architecture A Visual History, Decade 1950, The Bath Press, p 224

¹⁰ Niemeyer 2000, pp. 62, 169, 170 cited in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Niemeyer

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Niemeyer#/media/File:Palacio_do_Planalto.jpeg