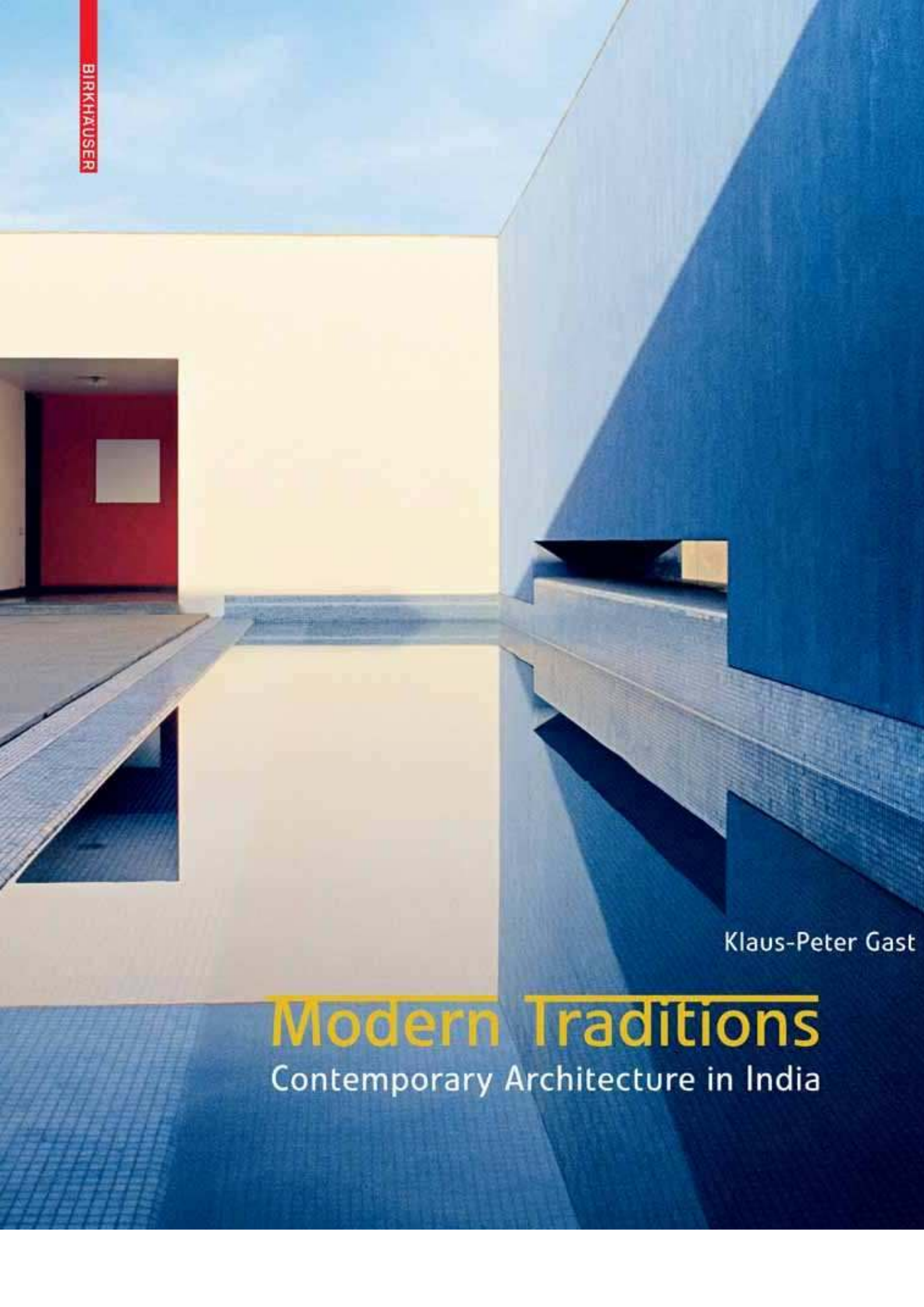

BIRKHÄUSER

Klaus-Peter Gast

Modern Traditions

Contemporary Architecture in India

Klaus-Peter Gast

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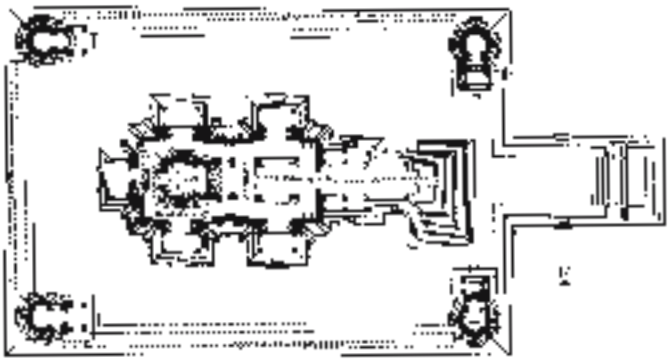
Much of contemporary Indian architecture, though modern in expression, is rooted in its millennia-old past. Unlike modern architecture of the West, which started in a "clean slate" environment after the widespread destruction of the world wars, the architecture of India, over the thousands of years of its existence, is a temporal progression with many interventions that served as modifiers. The process of inquiry has been long and tedious with deep self-examination of established conventions in an attempt to accommodate the interventions. Hence, architecture of every era in the history of Indian architecture is an expression of its time, and yet, is rooted in its past. To understand contemporary Indian architecture, therefore, it is necessary to understand the determinants and causes of architectural methods and expression in India today.

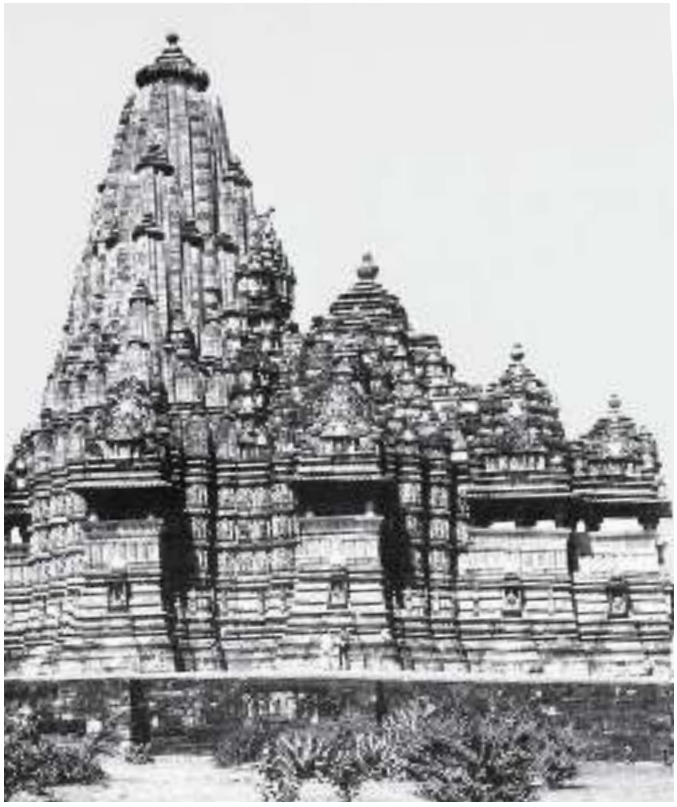
In the West today, technology is an integral part of its worldview. In fact, technology determines process and production, and process and production determine technology. The "clean slate" environment and its causes enabled the West to look to the future with vigour. Technology enabled the West to go into the unknown, creating a new form of architecture. Today, technology determines much of architectural production and explorations. Romi Khosla calls these explorations "abstract futures[1]" where "dynamism and movement" are the primary impulses of the Western world. The pre-modern past plays a lesser role, if any.

The East, on the other hand, is characterised
nections with the past and its imperatives of ap
the dynamic of modernism into its temporal p
Modernism cannot be ignored in the East and
accepted as the inevitable future direction, prima
of its colonial history, and also because of the in
ency and emerging homogenising tendencies o
The countries of the East are now inextricably
modern world. The challenge, therefore, is to rec
ancient past with the spirit, systems, methods ar
of the modern world. It is from this viewpoint th
to read the contents of this book.

Plurality in the Indian context The core of Ind
in spirituality and related ancient myths. It is
knowledged that the spirit of tolerance is roote
gins of Indian civilisation, particularly in its spiritua
Hence, it was possible for numerous schools of
originate and co-exist simultaneously. Hinduism
view[2] co-existed with Buddhism, Jainism and oth
systems that emerged as alternatives to Hindu th
architecture of each of these schools of thought
sive of their views and determined by cosmologic
tions, myth and discourse depicted as narrativ
tural form, and a general allusion to the holist
grative worldview of their time. Complex ancien



Plan of a northern Indian temple



Northern Indian temple — Fatehpur Sikri — Administration building, Mumbai — Art Deco cinema, Mumbai

theories formed the foundation of much of the production of architecture.

When Persian invaders arrived from the 7th century AD onward, their worldview was significantly different from the existing worldviews. Opulence, narratives in the form of Quranic verses inscribed on edifices, ostentation, Persian form and aesthetics marked this new intervention. Depiction of humans and animals was forbidden – an axiom exactly opposite to the sculptural narratives of the pre-Islamic cultures. A number of other differences emerged. For almost a thousand years up to the 18th century, the Islamic and pre-Islamic architectures co-existed. The people learned to live with their differences or tried to harmonise them. Despite these differences, there were attempts at reconciliation between the Islamic and the pre-Islamic expressions. Moghul emperor Akbar's city of Fatehpur Sikri, built in the 16th century, is a representative example of such an attempted reconciliation.

European colonialists arrived gradually from around the 17th century bringing with them a third disparate worldview of Cartesian rationality, the Christian religion and European Classicism with its descendent styles. Architecture became a statement of imperial power with its grandeur and stylistic elements. Local craftsmen skilled in millennia-old traditions of craft were re-trained in the European arts. Colonial architecture became another addition to the plurality of architecture in India. The Modern thought was brought to India by the British Raj, bringing with it new materials, technology, methods and processes. The demise of the millennia-old traditions of craft became inevitable. Architecture was no longer produced by srenis (guilds) of mistris (craftsmen), but by architects and engineers who designed on drawing boards and never handled the material used for construction.

The Art Deco style is an important expression of modern architecture of the early to mid-20th century. A large number of buildings were built in this style well into the 1960s. After 1947 in independent India, Jawarharlal Nehru, educated in England, turned to Le Corbusier to initiate an architectural model that was reflective of Nehru's vision of an industrialised India. Le Corbusier's design for the city of C became the symbol of modern Indian architect time, India followed the socialist model of gove embarked upon huge infrastructure projects, whi the construction of government office building dential schemes. Corbusian modernism was unqu adopt-ed for more than two decades.

It was only in the 1980s that modernism in its avatar was recognised as being inadequate to realities of Indian society. The ancient Indian pas be ignored in architecture because the ancient pa living present. Modernism needed to be appropr temporal progression of the ancient past. Hence like Raj Rewal, Charles Correa, Balkrishna Doshi attempted to reconcile modern architecture with identifications of Indianness bringing about a " dian" architecture – another idea in the field of a expressions over the millennia of Indian civilisatio

Meanwhile, architectural exploration within the realm continued in different parts of the country mandir in Auroville designed by Roger Anger disp itual ideology, as do a number of other buildings t Baker's work in Kerala is low cost, self-help, cu climatically responsive as can be seen in his Cente opmental Studies. Satish Gujral's Belgian embassy New Delhi is sculptural with connotations of H These are just a few examples of the diversity of chitecture in India built in the last couple of deca

A major event in Indian history took place in the government abandoned the socialist project a liberalised economy, integrating the Indian eco global realities. This "liberalisation" had a huge in urban Indian architecture. Corporate architecture with global finance became a significant chunk tural activity with its glass and aluminum façades salised expressions. Architecture of the retail in became a significant part of construction activi ture in India was now being governed by economi tion. The era of socialism with its state-controlled

Jawahar Kala Kendra arts center, Jaipur, Charles Correa — Hiranandani Gardens

mechanisms was gone. Demand, supply, and profitability became the determinants of architecture.

Alongside the architecture of corporate and retail buildings there is another huge industry of housing. Migration to urban centres increases the demand for residential accommodation, raising prices of property significantly. Residential property developers are growing in number and packaging their buildings to attract buyers. Ornamentation derived from classical European architecture adorns huge residential buildings. In cities like Mumbai such buildings are fairly commonplace. Hiranandani Gardens by architect Hafeez Contractor is one such project.

Simultaneously, the ideas of modern Indian architecture continue to exist as do traditional architectural expressions (in religious buildings and rural dwellings). A number of other expressions contribute to the creation of a rich plurality in the built environment of India. In my opinion, if not for the spiritual concept of tolerance of ancient India such rich plurality would not exist. This ancient spiritual concept of tolerance will continue to be open to interventions in the future while adapting them to suit the Indian user. Furthermore, with the Indian government's acceptance of World Trade Organisation's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the country is now open to foreign architects to practice. This will add to the plurality, making Indian architecture more diverse and exciting.

The socio-cultural determinant In his book *House Form and Culture*[3], Amos Rapoport argues that house form is principally determined by socio-cultural factors of the parent society, and then by pragmatic considerations of economics, climate, materials, technology and so on. It appears that a large part of architecture in India follows this theory. The ancient Indian architectural text of Vastu Shastra is widely used in modern Indian architecture for planning houses, residential complexes, office, commercial, industrial and other building types.

The principles of Vastu Shastra regulate planning and design specifics from town planning to the furniture layout of a room. The stipulations are said to be governed by ancient empirical knowledge of the human body and its the earth and the cosmos. Following these stipu said, ensures overall human well-being. Hence, a a belief in Vastu Shastra will choose a plot of land the functions and elements of a building using the of this text. Architects and clients consult speciali Shastra and then agree upon a design. The belie cient body of knowledge is experiencing a rapid

Raj Rewal offers another approach to socio-cu tectural design in his work. Rewal has identified s of traditional architecture that are multi-functi pose, i.e. they are social and cultural spaces, cli sponsive and traditionally icons of community id urban fabric, building clusters, courtyards, stree (the gateway as an element that defines the inside outside) and roof terraces comprise the six eleme ample, Rewal uses the courtyard as a place whe counters and cultural activities may take place. A the courtyard is a light well and an effective vent egy for hot and dry climates. In the Central Instit cational Technology at New Delhi, Rewal abstra tional *chhatri* (an architectural kiosk on the terra ramic views) into a modern aesthetic exemplifyin tional icon of local identity.

Rewal alludes to the ancient Indian art theory Sanskrit word that approximates the English wo but in a more heightened sense. It should not b with "character." The idea of rasa in architecture terpreted as an insertion of a singular and uniqu experiential aesthetics, which is in conformity wit to the function and purpose of the building. The to make architecture not only functional but also to the visual and tactile senses in a way that conf function of the building. The incorporation of this also makes a connenction to the culture of the architects, like Charles Correa, prefer to use cult raphy in their buildings. For the Jawahar Kala Kend for example, he used a mandala (a geometrical rep of the world[4]) of nine squares abstracted as a plan imagery of ancient Hindu myth.

Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), New Delhi

Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Center, Hyderabad

Socio-cultural design is widely prevalent in the folk architecture[5] of rural India. For example, the role of women in society determines women's areas in a house. The decorative patterns and colours used to adorn a house have deep cultural significance. Some of these adornments are used in urban Indian houses, too. Socio-cultural elements and spaces continue to play an important role in determining architecture in India. This strong Indian identification forms an integral part of traditional and modern architecture in India.

Sustainable architecture – an ancient Indian tradition
Ancient Indian spiritual thought integrates humans with the cosmos presenting an understanding that the processes of the cosmos are directly related to human existence. With this understanding, ancient Indian civilisation has always respected its environment. Typical principles include climate-responsive design, use of local materials, use of sustainable materials, water harvesting and others. Climate-responsive architec-tural design is especially sophisticated with thousands of years of refinement. Unfortunately, this knowledge seems to have lost its significance in the last 50 years or so.

Today, however, a number of architects are combining traditional methods and principles of sustainable design with modern methods and principles. One example of such a combination is Karan Grover's CII Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Center (CII-Godrej GBC) at Hyderabad. The building combines traditional Indian design principles of sustainable architecture with the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED version 2) framework. A number of traditional Indian principles of sustainable design already are included in the LEED framework like the use of local and sustainable materials and water harvesting. Other traditional principles used by Grover include the use of wind towers for catching wind, tunneling it through its shaft, thus cooling and treating it (artificially, in the case of the CII-Godrej GBC) before circulating it in habitable spaces.

The design around a courtyard is another tra
mate-responsive feature. The courtyard helps in r
use of artificial lighting, creates shade due to t
mass and facilitates stack ventilation.[6] It is CII-G
objective to collaborate with the USGBC to modi
framework with Indian knowledge input so tha
applied to Indian conditions. Also, it is CII-Godre
jective to propagate the revised LEED framework
and Asia in an effort to make the CII-Godrej GB
the centre of Asian green building activity[7]. With
tions, sustainable building design is being institut
modern architecture of India today. Obviously, th
modern Indian architecture is likely to be green i

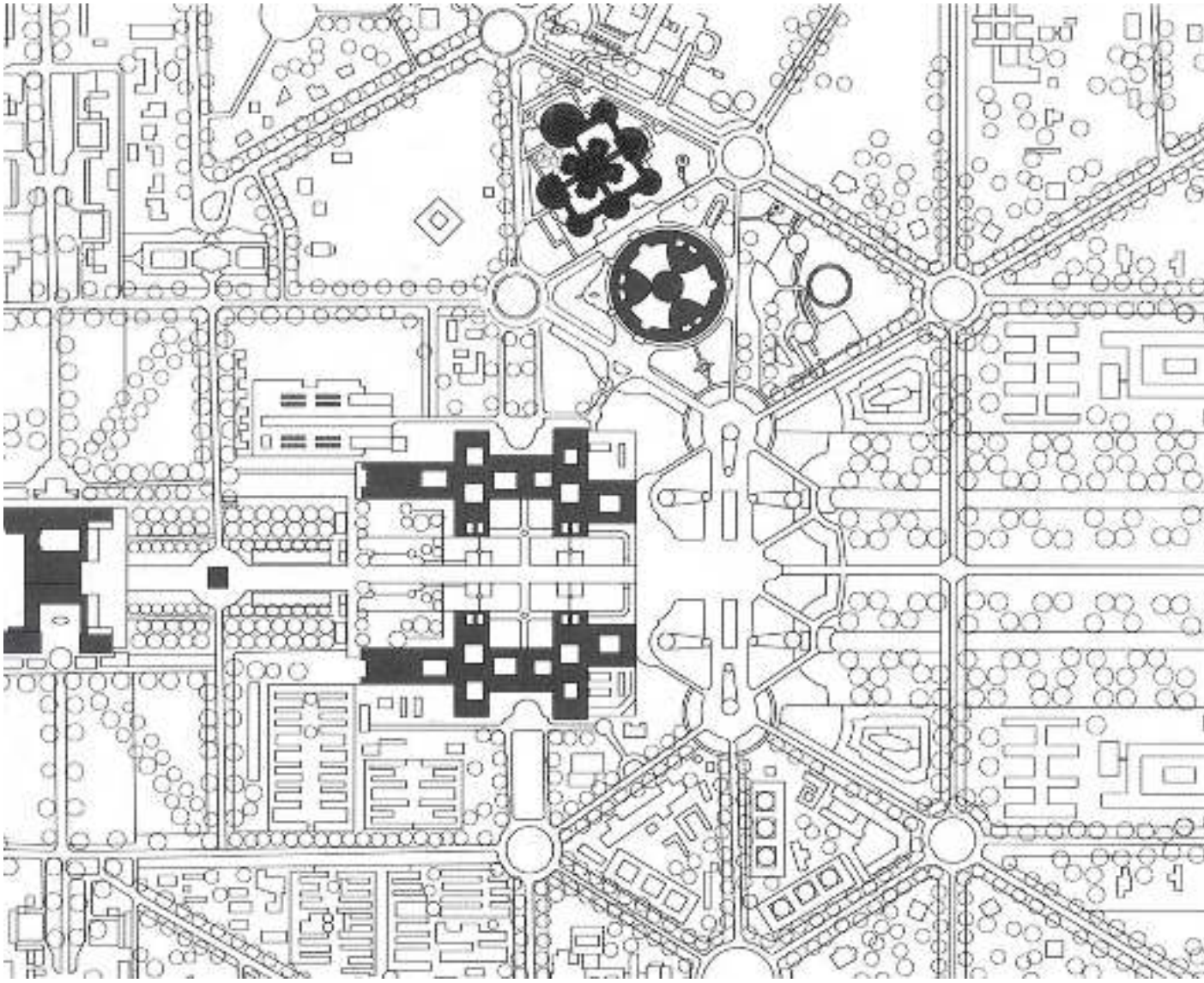
Conclusion Due to their spiritual and cultural
millennia-old architectural principles continue to
continue well into the future. I have identified
architectural design, socio-cultural determinants
able design as significant features of the past,
and the future of Indian architecture. The plura
of contemporary Indian architecture makes it
field for future explorations and innovations. So
determinants are "Indianising" modern and u
architecture, thus helping a modern Indian a
identity evolve. India is bound to become the cen
ern sustainable architecture in Asia.

I find all three features very encouraging for t
Indian architecture. Klaus-Peter Gast's book mu
with this background in mind, as it aims to captur
other features of contemporary Indian architec
collection of projects is representative of today's
row's Indian architectural directions, which are un
India's past is a living reality that, most likely, wil
the future of India's architecture. Klaus-Peter Gas
benefit anybody interested in the contemporary a
of India.

1 Khosla, Romi. *The loneliness of a Long Distant Future: Dilemmas o*
Contemporary Architecture. New Delhi: Tulika, 2002.
2 Hinduism came to be identified as a religion only after the faith o
came into India in the 8th century AD. See Singh, Jaswant. *A Call*
In Service of Emergent India. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2006, p. 82.
3 Rapoport, Amos. *House Form and Culture*. NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,
4 Lang, Jon, Desai, Madhavi, Desai, Miki. *Architecture and Indepen*
The Search for Identity – India 1880 to 1980. Delhi: Oxford Univer
1997.
5 I use Amos Rapoport's understanding of the term "folk architectu
which alludes to architecture of the common people. See Rapopo
House Form and Culture. NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969. p.2.
6 Jadhav, Rajratna. www.architectureweek.com/2004/0922/environ
7 www.greenbusinesscentre.org/grn/events/

At midnight on 14 August 1947, India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru proclaimed "the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity."[1] India had gained her independence after over 200 years of British rule. Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi's compassionately non-violent struggle against repression and occupation of a once free nation had been a triumphant success. Since the 16th century, at the time of the Muslim conqueror Akbar, the people of the sub-continent had been tolerant and ready to communicate, able to live together, vigorously active and ready to exchange ideas. From time immemorial, pluralism and the acceptance of many different ways of thinking had been part of a country that called itself Bharat and later Hindustan, derived from the river Indus. This part of the world had had to tolerate conquest not just since the time of Akbar, but even since the days of Alexander the Great, but it usually responded with astonishing calm and lack of violence. India always absorbed new things that came upon her unbidden, and used them for her own ends. Things alien became Indian and part of the national heritage. This is where Indian globalisation began, earlier than in any other country, without Indians ever having passed beyond their own borders: India was anti-imperial and never waged expansionist wars. And so it remains to be asked whether these extraordinary qualities have survived over 200 years of occupation and whether Nehru's emphatic proclamation has become reality 60 years later. The "largest democracy in the world" that is now establishing itself adopted a socialist system modelled upon the Soviet Union, an ideal of justice according to Nehru, with a central command econ
on five year plans. As Gandhi had been assassina
months after independence, he was no longer a
duce his idea of an India of villages, largely se
and with small industries. Nehru implemented h
compromisingly, and relations with the Soviet Un
their high point. His policies were followed in prin
daughter Indira Gandhi and later by her son Ra
The Nehru doctrine was not abandoned until 19
new economic policy was introduced by the then
ister and former finance minister Manmohan Si
prime minister Narasimha Rao. The gateway to
was opened, the end for self-sufficient economi
this mysterious land beyond the Himalayas, then
unknown to the rest of the world. When India
self up to the global market, this was the sec
turning-point for the country in the 20th century
regained their old freedom in private and com
and a gigantic, hitherto untapped pool of intel
since been able to develop freely and use its crea
This laid the foundations for an explosive econo
in the last 15 years. Ultra-rapid technological pr
ed in co-operation with international firms, with
cerns suddenly setting new standards. But cri
were raised as well: could and should India, a
been anchored culturally for millennia, expose h
fluences of this kind? Should the materialisti
Western world of thought and action becom
standard for an India based on spiritual values? H

Jawaharlal Nehru



New Delhi, government buildings

degree of calm set in, as each individual's standard of living was and is growing. India will always be in a position in her history to use the new for her own ends, without abandoning her values.

But the desire for global markets led, as in many other countries, to protests against globalisation and the multinationals' expansion of power. This represents an opportunity for a novice to make a very conscious move against this danger of uncontrollable power, offering a personal contribution to a more balanced approach. However, a not inconsiderable social asymmetry has to be set against the large growth rates of 8% at the time of writing and 7% predicted until the year 2025.[2] The caste system, the degenerated hierarchical social structure according to birth, is only one aspect of this, generally there is a lack of willingness to accept anyone in a different social position. A democratic balance operates in politics, but India's social and economic life is rife with imbalance. So a demand must be made for more practical and less theoretical democracy, like for example the realisation of the right to education and employment for all. Women are still the key here: over 60% of them have never attended school. Also, the political response has produced a contrary reaction: the controversial quota regulation for the "scheduled castes", which is intended to help the so-called untouchable caste to a greater legal share of places in education, has led to new social injustices. Rural areas contrast starkly with the big cities in educational matters, and contradict the realities of economic power. Furthermore, the legal system inherited from the British, like the whole bureaucratic system, is an extremely cumbersome piece of machinery, making law and justice unjust and time-consuming: a criminal offence can take about ten years to be dealt with.

The caste system in particular is a spiritual paradox regardless of religion, as everyone is equal before God. This has always been proclaimed in tolerant Hinduism, which is not a religion, but a way of life, as demonstrated for example around 1900 by the monk Swami Vivekananda, who was particularly open to Western countries. About 80% of the Indian population are followers of Hinduism, but they are by no means a homogeneous, strictly disciplined re
munity, like for example Islam. In fact it is a m
world faith community, of a complexity that is no
grasp, ranging from atheism via the majority of
the orthodox-nationalistic Hindutva. While the op
probably the majority of Hindus, are favourably
wards the innovation of contemporary Indian
orthodox believers, who live according to the st
and traditions, range from sceptical to disappro
they all have in common is their reliance on t
knowledge" of the Veda, a philosophical moral co
explaining the cosmos and the world. It has been
in countless ways and was developed many ages

A whole range of religious or even ethnic sub
cluding Muslims and Christians, live in this land
guages, whose population has just passed the b
With a growth rate of 13 million people per year
standable that diseases which have been erad
where like polio, typhoid or malaria are here no
get under control. With a population of this size a
different groups of people, disintegration could b
But when what was officially the first Indian at
exploded in the north-western desert area in 199
to be interpreted as part of a national, all-unifyi
fidence. One of the men involved in developing
the high-ranking scientist Dr. Abdul Kalam, was t
president of the country. National awareness unite
different Indians, so the disintegration that was
dicted after independence, the "balkanisation
never started to come about. The nation stand
today, and Nehru would certainly have acknow
with particular pride.

The following part is devoted to the achieveme
ernist architecture in India, as part of the country'
ice to culture, performed especially by the
Vivekananda (d. 1902), the poet and Nobel laure
ranath Tagore (d. 1941) and the director Satyajit Ra
among others, with all the impact they made o
century. Then selected examples will introduce

New Delhi, view of the government buildings

Calcutta, Victoria Memorial — Mumbai, Victoria Station

recent trends in contemporary architecture as part of the cultural progress that is also feature of India.

The development of Modernist architecture in India The concept of "Modernism" in 20th century Indian architectural development remains difficult to grasp, as it was used within numerous stylistic developments, following the spirit of the day. Starting with the efforts made by Europeans in the 1920s, the idea of "modern architecture" as a revolutionary and innovative force started to make cautious headway in India in the early 1930s. But at that time any Western thought and practice introduced as a British import was seen as "modern", as India had no uniform independent architectural movement in the early 20th century. Ideas influenced by the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier and then brought to India were modern, and the subsequent Art Deco movement, influenced by both regional and exotic motifs, also counted as modern. Even neoclassical architecture was still pronounced modern into the 1950s and even the 1960s. But Modernism in India was more like an overall approach to life. It meant designing the world positively, improving it, doing better than the required standard, being progressive and inventive, and this certainly included great visionary minds like Tagore and Nehru. British architects in India felt themselves to be modern, because they could work within an experimental field, almost without constraints and regulations, with an unusual degree of freedom. These various trends will now be discussed in a little more detail.

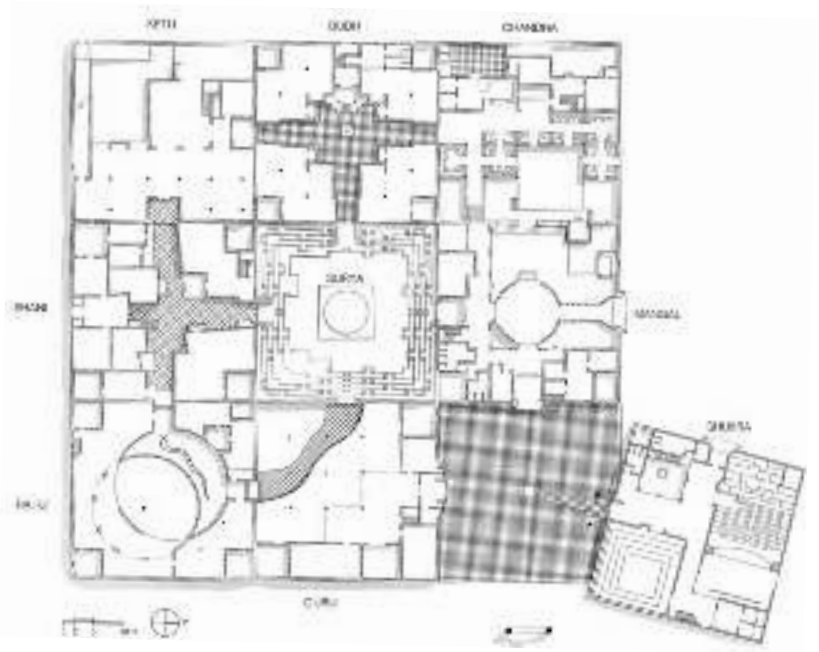
One consequence of the consolidation of British colonial power in the 19th century was that public buildings in particular became the centre of interest. Great educational institutions like Bombay University in 1870 or stations as gateways to the world, like Victoria Station in the former Bombay in 1887, or also important monuments like the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta in 1906, were prestigious stru
self-confident class of British architects who wan
onstrate the superiority of European culture. Th
ticularly evident when the seat of government m
Calcutta to Delhi and in 1912 Edwin Lutyens a
Baker were commissioned to realise the govern
ings in "New Delhi." The architects designed a m
urban street complex that was essentially alien t
ies, with a grandiose geometry of axes and av
above all two symmetrical administrative buildin
the view of the viceroy's palace. Lavish colonn
verandas, tall, slender windows, *chhajjas* (wide
hangs) and cornices *jaalis* (circular stone ape
chhatris (free-standing pavilions) were used at the
as decorative elements from typical historic Indi
ture. The viceroy's palace has a dome reminiscent
dhist stupa in Sanchi. Even though Lutyens and
classical European and Indian elements, the com
modern for its day, with its two-dimensional wa
décor and austere geometry in the case of the pa
ticular. The seat of government was not opened
after a building period of almost 20 years. The m
sical period lasted well beyond the 1930s, above
of the influence of the Indian Institute of Archi
existed since the 1920s, a British institution first
a Briton, Claude Batley. His theories were based
of Graeco-Roman, but also of Indian, classicism
mous influence led to the foundation of the c
school, whose major exponents included Sudlo
Thompson, for example, and Ganesh Deolalikar, w
up until the 1950s. His Supreme Court in New De
the Lutyens-Baker buildings down to the last deta
servative, so-called revivalists also included B.R.
with his monumental historical Vidhana Soudha g

Bangalore, Vidhana Soudha — New Delhi, Garrison Church — Indian Art Deco house

building in Bangalore built in 1952, reminiscent of Indian palace complexes. Colossal columns, Mogul domes, symmetry and monumental mass were evidence that historical European-Indian forms were being retained. But a new thinking had long since taken hold, based on the reduced formal language of the "international style," but also attached to European abstract Expressionism, as can be seen in Arthur G. Shoesmith's St. Martin's Garrison Church in New Delhi of 1931, whose volumes loom like pure prisms of solid mass thrusting into one another. De Stijl, the important Dutch movement that ran parallel with the Bauhaus, had very little influence on India, however, even though Willem Marinus Dudok did realise some buildings there. In the early 1940s the austerity of what was later called classical Modernism started to be mixed with Expressionism and with decorative motifs, and above all fluent lines, often curved, markedly horizontal and vertical: the highly influential Art Deco movement, which spread over the whole of India, made a triumphant entry into the world of Indian architecture. France, but particularly America, stood model for this movement, whose architects raised Art Deco to an art form of great virtuosity. "Streamlined architecture," as Art Deco was also known, developed its distinctive form partly from the technical achievements of its day, the rounded shapes of aircraft and cars. Then Frank Lloyd Wright discovered the decorative world of the Mexicans and of the Aztecs and Mayans. Their essentially geometrical motifs, along with associated devices like palms, aircraft and sunbeams, finally made their international début on the Art Deco stage. Indian Art Deco was also increasingly mixed with regional applications, leading to some lavishly decorated façades. In an age without television, architects were particularly fond of the generally popular cinema buildings, where they could create Art Deco designs with a monumental gesture. Many of these picture palaces have survived to the present day, providing evi great architectural phase.

At the time of independence in 1947, Indi about 300 trained architects in a population o then 330 million, and only one training institution Institute of Architects in Bombay. Those who cou studied abroad, preferably in the USA, as some heroes, especially from the Bauhaus, like Mies va Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer had emigrated from Fascist Germany. The first generation of I tects came back from America with a new optim the British influence at the Bombay school, eu able to offer their urgently needed services to a f One of them was Habib Rahman, who studied un at the MIT in Boston, another Achyut Kanvinde fr and Gautam Sarabhai, who worked with Wrigh Thus the influence of the Bauhaus masters came a second time, this time directly via their pupils, w what over-functionalistic interpretations were Kanvinde in particular. But at the same time a ne Expressionism was developing in South America, of for example Felix Candela or Oskar Niemeye the technical possibility of being able to bridge These impressive constructions stimulated youn chitects to endow the rigid rationalism of the Ge ers in America with fluent form. One of the mos pupils returning from the MIT in Cambridge/Bo 1950s was Charles Correa. He had worked un Yamasaki in Detroit, who later designed the W Center in New York. Correa came back to India a time when the most important architect of the the 20th century, Le Corbusier, had already realis greatest project in India. Le Corbusier was invite in person in the early 1950s and built Chandiga

New Delhi, supreme court — Indian Art Deco house



Jaipur, Jawahar Kala Kendra art center

Chandigarh, parliament chamber — Chandigarh, administrative offices

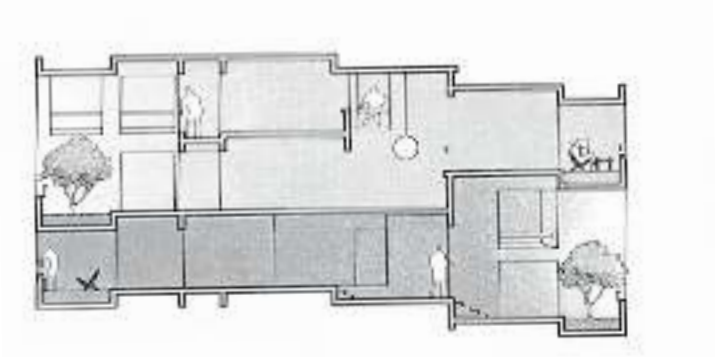
IIM courtyard complex with library — Kanchanjunga apartment building

capital of the state of Punjab. Le Corbusier's visionary powers, which he proved in urban developments from the 1920s onwards, seemed to be precisely the right person to Nehru, who said that India needed "a slap in the face." Working with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret and the architects Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry, Le Corbusier realised the entire urban structure, designing himself the government building, the Capitol. His béton brut, the unrendered surfaces of the buildings, still showing the marks of the rough shuttering, and the expressive and sculptural effect made by solitaire monuments spread over a large area, came as something of a shock to the Indian architects, who had found a new hero for themselves from now on.

Le Corbusier's messages became the new gospel for the next generation, who recognised a new intellectual dimension in them. Le Corbusier was commissioned to build more villas and a museum in Ahmedabad. Here he had an Indian at his side who had already worked for him in Paris, Balkrishna Vitaldhas Doshi. It was Doshi who in the early 1960s got in touch with Louis I. Kahn in order to develop the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. Kahn was impressed by the offer and realised the project during a period of over 13 years. Kahn was the next significant architect for India: his structures built on pure geometry to illustrate inherent order, his turn to a pictorial language for architecture that went beyond functionalism and the use of rough brick for the façade in order to express the nature of the material, added yet another dimension to Indian architects' experience.

Charles Correa developed his work when these two towering 20th century masters were both building in India. His 1963 memorial for Mahatma Gandhi in Ahmedabad, which is reminiscent of Kahn's design for the Trenton Bath House, marks the beginning of his mature work. The most important buildings after that were his Kanchanjunga high ments in Mumbai, built from 1970–1983, then ment building in Bhopal, 1980–1996 (see p. 2 the art centre in Jaipur, 1986–1992 where he dis spiritual dimension of Indian thought and integr his work. Correa is the most important represent generation and still India's most significant co architect. Alongside Doshi and Correa, Anant Raj major architect of this generation. Raje realised Institute buildings as Kahn's right hand and adde the spirit of Kahn. His work is clearly shaped by K tures, but he interpreted them independently. Raj belongs in this group. Educated in Delhi and Lond influenced at an early stage by the Japanese Meta later found his own identity in India's history, p concept of a Modernism based on tradition. His library (see p. 42–49) is one of the outstanding I ing projects of the last ten years.

The selection of architects from the younger introduced here does not claim to be complete hensive within the limited scope of a publication Architects who are not mentioned in any more but have certainly made a significant contribut Laurie Baker in Kerala whose life's work follows ecological and sustainable criteria in building and above all to people in lower income groups. proaches come from architects like Anil Laul, S.K "barefoot architects" in Rajasthan who work tog many people employing their craft skills in the c process and who use only locally available ma book presents a varied spectrum of building type tects with different approaches to illustrate curre Indian architecture, with aspects of ecology and ity playing an increasingly important part.

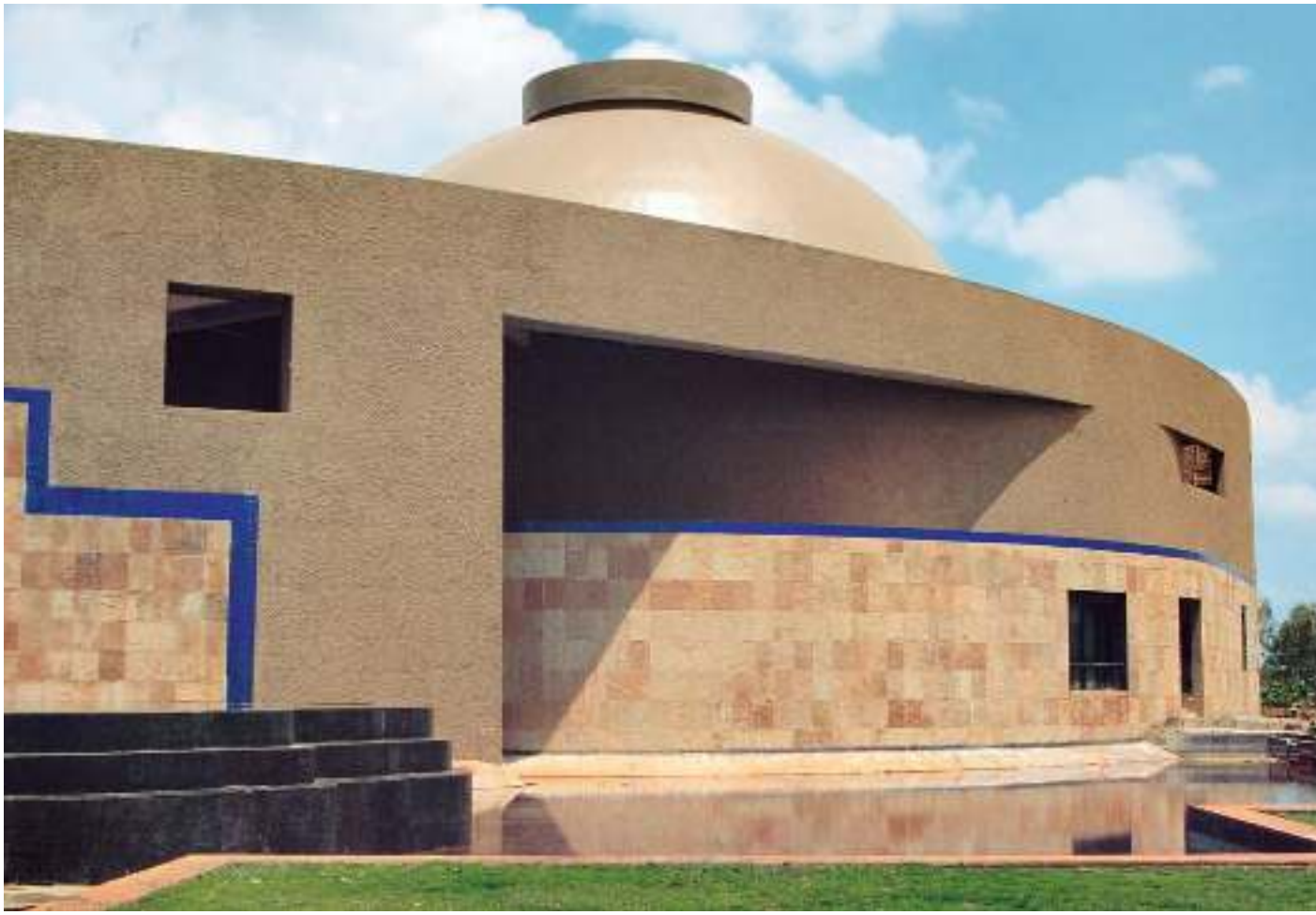


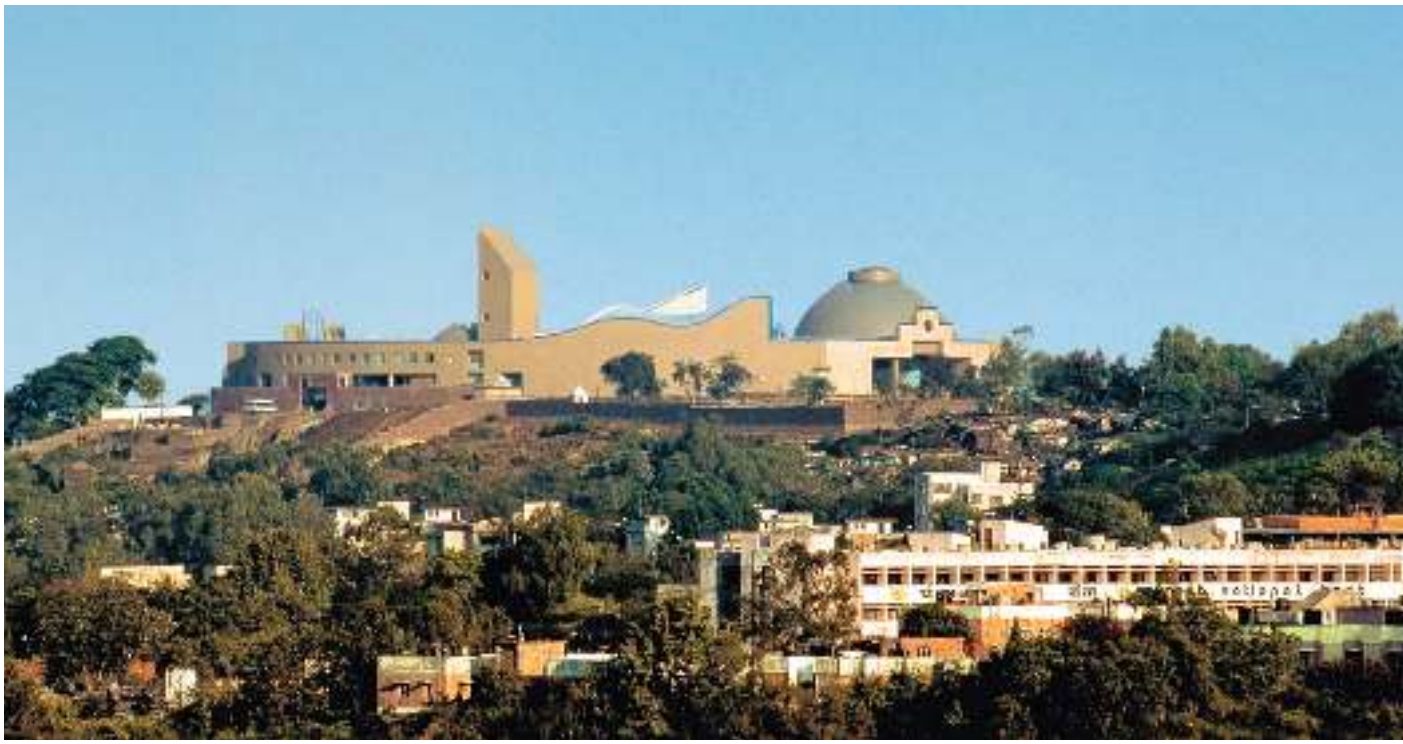
Kanchanjunga apartments, section

1 Amartya Sen, The Argumentative Indian, p. 193: "…the ending of poverty and ign disease and inequality of opportunity".

2 Shashi Tharoor, India From Midnight to New Delhi 1997, p. 360.

Buildings (1993 – 2006)



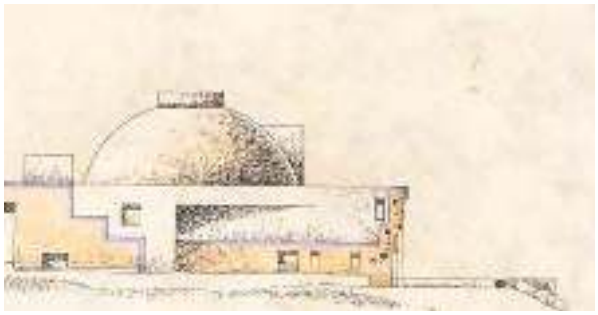


Lower house chamber and exterior wall — Position of the building in town

A building as prominent as the one for the new Vidhan Bhavan in Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh had to take a form imbued with an especially timeless symbolic force transcending functional considerations. Charles Correa and his colleagues actually won the competition in 1980, but building did not start until 1983. After political turmoil, completion of this major building project was delayed until 1997. Realising this extraordinarily remarkable design demonstrated a new self-confidence not just for the individual state and its local government, but for the whole of India, even though Correa had completed his intellectual work on the project long before the phase of economic upswing, India's economic miracle. The new sense of self-awareness was quite obviously present in a design that pulls the whole complex history of the country into focus and conveys it most impressively, in the spirit of the times and yet timelessly, in its realised form.

This can also be measured against the fact that it is very difficult to make a precise estimate of the date the design came into being, as it completely eschews fashionable categories and has lost none of its expressive force, indeed its magic, in 2006, 26 years after it was developed. Correa's synthesis of elements that are deeply rooted in tradition and abstract-modern creative force does, in this intensity, indeed remain a typically Indian or even Asian phenomenony. But it could easily become a model for other cultures: here cultural history is perceived and used in the present as a process of future continuity. Correa's design shows the very presence of history as a respected heritage in India. His design process is still intelligible: not primarily as an analysis optimisation generating a form almost of its own as a prefigurative approach in which the domin worked out first. So following Western linguist so-called Postmodern concept was being used h ingly the starting point for the design was the Mandala, a square as a symbol of the cosmos, nine additional squares to symbolise seven rea mythological planets.

This ancient motif, much cited in the pages o is one of the great primal signs of Indian archit has been constantly varied over the centuries spiritual frame of reference. This symbol develo preferred sign in Charles Correa's formal voca that he used directly and expressively in his des cultural centre in Jaipur. But here in Bhopal th mutated into a fragment: the architect throws circle around the square, making the outer corne incomplete. Thus the circle dominates, as ultimat the outer wall surrounding the building. Within t the functional areas are subordinated to the Ma ture: the great parliamentary chamber for the lo as another circular figure with foyer; the small c the upper house as a diagonal square; the cabine hall, courtyard and offices; the library; the ad area with ministerial offices and a large courtya purpose hall; the courtyard for the public and the at the heart of the project. The symmetrical axes ised by three main entrances for the various user



Sketch of the building with lower house chamber

Charles Correa and Associates
Vidhan Bhavan Government Building
Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), 1997