A self-taught architect, Ando wandered the streets and back alleys of the United States, Europe, Africa, and his native Japan, studying places and spaces for seven years prior to dedicating himself to his chosen profession. The result of such wandering is clearly the steady contemplation that pervades his designs. Ando’s three decades of architectural work have left an impression on the world of architecture. Tadao Ando’s constancy of form gives his work merit and timeless appeal. It is possible to extract an underlying essence in all of his work.

What is striking about Tadao Ando’s Designs is their clean line, and sheer simplicity. Simple geometric forms have characterized his work over the past three decades. Ando orchestrates masses and voids, choreographing their interaction with trademark Tadao Ando precision. The structure is firm, tranquil, and even a bit mysterious. There are no irrelevant ornaments or embellishments to distract the eye of the inhabitant. Stripped to the bare essentials of shape and volume, a building must be exceptionally well-conceived to be successful. The materiality of his works is of great importance. Working with smooth-as-silk concrete, Ando creates spaces using walls which he defines as the most basic elements of architecture, but also the most enriching. In spite of his consistent use of materials and the elements of pillar, wall and vault, his various combinations of these elements constantly prove exhilarating and dynamic. His design concepts and materials have a crucial role in the aesthetics of his work. The smooth tactility of the cast in place concrete combined with the thin, fragile transparency of glass and the ruggedness of steel complete his palette from which he paints. Honesty of materials
is what sets Ando apart from many architects. He does not veneer, rather he uses the brutal beauty of concrete formwork to texture his buildings, inside and out. Tadao Ando’s articulation of space is phenomenal. The circulation of his buildings is complementary to his design. As you enter one of Ando’s buildings, you discover spaces that are complex and rich. Ando has a great ability to trap light and hold light and make it a tangible substance in a space. Light is a dramatic, soothing element in Ando’s buildings. Most architects are not as interested in shape as Ando. He naturally, is always planning for the perfect widths, heights, etc. Proportion is an element he does not leave to convention. You can see it everywhere in his buildings. It is very pleasing to be in a building of Ando’s because of that quality.