



Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture

Jonathan M. Reynolds

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Japanese architecture's commanding presence on the world stage can be traced to the struggles of earlier generations of Japan's modernist architects. This first book-length study of Maekawa Kunio (1905-1986) focuses on one of the most distinctive leaders in Japan's modernist architectural community. In a career spanning the 1930s to the 1980s, Maekawa's work and critical writing put him in the vanguard of the Japanese architectural profession. Jonathan Reynolds illuminates Maekawa's role as a bridge between prewar and postwar architecture in Japan, focusing particularly on how he influenced modernism's ambivalence regarding "tradition" and contemporary practice and the importance of technology in modernist design and ideology.

Maekawa studied architecture at the prestigious Tokyo Imperial University before moving to Paris in 1928 to work with Le Corbusier. The latter experience had a powerful impact on Maekawa; he became an advocate for Le Corbusier and modernism when he returned to Japan two years later. Throughout his career Maekawa designed residential, commercial, and government buildings in Japan and abroad. He became particularly well known internationally for his approach to public architecture, especially museums and public spaces such as the Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall. These projects illustrated the principles that earned Maekawa the respect and admiration of architects the world over.

Carefully researched, with numerous illustrations that complement discussions of Maekawa's principal projects, Reynolds's book will be welcomed in the fields of architecture and design. It will also attract readers interested in twentieth-century Japan, for in addition to highlighting Maekawa's architectural career, Reynolds portrays the broader cultural context within which Maekawa and other Japanese architects and artists sought to be heard and recognized.

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