**Maekawa, Kunio** (1905-86)

Maekawa was pivotal in the consolidation of a Japanese architectural modernism. He was born into a noble family in Niigata prefecture and studied at Tokyo Imperial University (1925-28). Having apprenticed under LE CORBUSIER in Paris for nearly two years, he went on to translate his teacher’s *L’Art décoratif d’aujourd’hui* (1925) in 1930. On his return to Japan, he worked under Antonin Raymond for five years, before establishing his own firm. He was a champion of international modernism and AUGUSTE PERRET’s innovations with concrete, but also developed an individual aesthetic more attentive to tradition and context, with his signature cast-in-place ceramic tiling. Public projects of the later 1930s, including designs for town halls and cultural centers, pitted modernism against the imperialist ostentation and nationalism of the age. Wartime demand took him to colonial outposts in Asia. The younger KENZO TANGE worked under him in his Shanghai office. After the War, Maekawa addressed the urgency of housing in his PREMOS project, and later absorbed the lessons of Le Corbusier’s *Unité d’Habitation*. In the 1960s and 70s, he built a number of quasi-monumental public works – including libraries, museums and concert halls – which registered Japan’s new democratic aspirations; these often had one foot in the past (taking their cue from Japan’s rural farm houses) while pointing ahead to the megastructural visions of Tange’s Metabolist disciples.

**List of Works**

Kako Commercial Bank, Shanghai, 1939

Maekawa House, Shinagawa (relocated to the Edo-Tokyo Open Air Museum), Tokyo, 1942

PREMOS Workers’ Housing Units, 1946-1951

International House of Japan (with Junzo Sakakura and Junzo Yoshimura), Roppongi, Tokyo, 1955

Japan Pavilion, Brussels World Fair, 1958

Harumi Flats, Tokyo Bay, 1958-59

National Museum of Western Art (with Junzo Sakakura, Takamasa Yoshizaka and Le Corbusier as chief architect), Tokyo, 1959

Kyoto Hall, Kyoto, 1960

Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall, Ueno Park, Tokyo, 1961

Gakushuin University Library, Mejiro, Tokyo, 1960-64

Museum of East Asian Art, Cologne, 1977

**References and Further Reading**

(1984) *Kunio Maekawa: Sources of Modern Japanese Architecture*, Tokyo, Process Architecture.

Reynolds, Jonathan M. (2001) *Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

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