

This paper chronicles the first half of Kunio Mayekawa's life until the end of the Second World War, from his apprentice days with Le Corbusier (1928–1930) to his return to Japan where he worked at the Raymond Architectural Design Office and subsequently went on to establish his own architectural office (1935).

It is a definitive account that examines the architect's involvement and stand against the architectural norms prevalent during the war. It brings to the surface undercurrents surrounding important design competitions and projects that have shaped the history of modern Japanese architecture.

This includes the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum Competition (1931) which placed Kunio Mayekawa at the forefront of the rising modernist movement – with his proposal opposing the competition's entry guidelines of Japonesque styling; and the plan for the cancelled 1940 Tokyo Summer Olympics conceived under his former teacher Hideto Kishida.

Finally, there is the design for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere Memorial Hall (1942) for which Kenzo Tange was awarded first prize with Kunio Mayekawa on the panel of judges; and the Japan-Thailand Cultural Center in Bangkok (1943), the last competition during the war.