

Maruyama, Masao

sex: m; b. March, 22, 1914, Osaka, Japan - d. August, 15, 1996, Tokyo, Japan; country/nation/culture: Japanese; field of study: history of political thought, history of philosophy, history of social institutions; ref.: EHHW, GEHW; contrib.: J. Joly.

Main works: *Nihon seiji shisôshi kenkyû* (1952; Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan, 1974); *Seiji no sekai* [The world of politics], 1952; *Gendai seiji no shisô to kôdô* (1956/1957; Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics, 1963; enlarged edition 1969); *Nihon no shisô* (1957; Thought in Japan 1964); *Chûsei to Hangyaku* (1960; Loyalty and Rebellion, 1996); *Rekishi ishiki no 'kosô'* [The old substrata of historical consciousness], 1972.

Biography: Masao Maruyama was the son of the journalist Kanji Maruyama. He took all his degrees from Tokyo Imperial University, where he studied from 1934. Upon receiving his doctorate 1937, Maruyama started teaching. In 1940, he was named professor at the Faculty of Law, then a prestigious school that trained the political and economic elite of Japan. Though first posted to northern Korea in 1944, he was then sent to Hiroshima, where he remained until the end of the war. In 1950 Maruyama became the first holder of the chair in history of political ideas. He resigned in 1971 for health reasons. He was a member of the Academy of Sciences of Japan, a foreign member of the Royal Society of Great Britain, and Doctor *honoris causa* of both Harvard and Princeton Universities.

Characterization: Before and during the Second World War, much intellectual discussion in Japan sought to find a basis for an irrational rejection of Western values, by promoting the notion of overcoming modernity. In that climate, Maruyama published three articles, brought together into *Nihon seiji shisôshi kenkyû*. With unrivaled erudition, Maruyama set out here the problematic that would constitute the principal direction of all his work: the question of modernity, or rather non-modernity, of Japan.

Maruyama found significant how the dominant neo-Confucianism of the School of Zhuxi (1130-1200) was questioned by the Confucian circles of the Tokugawa Period (1602-1868). The innovators preferred a new mode of thought, brilliantly set out by Ogyû Sorai (1666-1728), founded upon the absolutization of the Confucian saints (in parallel with European absolutism in politics). Maruyama saw in Sorai's thought a progressive dissolution of a continuist, naturalist mode of thought, which set out a mode of social relations analogous to that of *Gemeinschaft*, moving toward the birth of a new type of reflection which promoted historical consciousness, itself the precursor of modern consciousness. Maruyama also showed that the thought of the Tokugawa Period could be seen as a part of a continuous evolution toward modernity. However, Maruyama saw that despite the sometimes brilliant application of Sorai's methodology in his school, especially in the work of Moto'ori Norinaga (1730-1801), the evolution toward modernity and the values that it carries (universalism, democracy and nationalism) was aborted, and made Japanese modernity a very particular combination of ultra-modernity and pre-modernity, hence precipitating the catastrophe that is all too well known.

In an article "Chôkokkashugi no ronri to shinri" [Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism] (reprinted in: *Gendai seiji no shisô to kôdô*) Maruyama showed in 1946 that Japanese fascism, far from representing an accidental deviation, constituted the logical endpoint of an evolution that had begun in the Meiji Period, when imperial power had arrogated to itself all power to create values, leaving the society in a psychological paralysis that produced a generalized irresponsibility.

Nihon no shisô, a concise and penetrating essay, has become one of Maruyama's most famous. He understands the state of thought in Japan as a space in which many disparate ways of thought exist together without orderly relation, a result of an unstructured tradition. In the various essays published as *Gendai seiji no shisô to kôdô*, the author, in setting out the methodological foundations of research on Japanese fascism, sets out to attribute an intellectual autonomy to the history of political ideas. Maruyama engages in his own revision of his initial theory on the history of modernization, especially in *Chusei to Hangyaku*, where he carries out a critique of his own work: the notion of loyalty at the outset of the Tokugawa Period referred to a loyalty toward the system, but the regime of the late nineteenth century would reinterpret it in terms of loyalty to origins, which is to say to the imperial

house, allowing the imperial party to be the key element in overcoming the rule of the shoguns. Maruyama would later admit to a 180-degree turn in his understanding of the history of ideas of the Tokugawa Period.

Method: Maruyama never ceased to assert the importance of method, including this term (*hōhō*) in the very title of some essays. Like the great majority of Japanese intellectuals of his time, Maruyama was greatly influenced by Marxist thought, but, as Maruyama himself points out, the influence of Marxism as an intellectual movement is not at all limited to the ideology of the left. When Marxism identifies a base or infrastructure that underlies many substructures, it also proposes an exhaustive explanation of changes that affect social systems. If the Japanese threw themselves into great leaps of thought, it was through the influence of Marxism that they had been able to meet the universalism of the Renaissance and the critical spirit of the Enlightenment.

Maruyama, who was deeply imbued with German thought, read Marxist philosophy in a way that was profoundly tributary to the neo-Kantian philosophers of Heidelberg like Wilhelm Windelband (whom he cites often) and Heinrich Rickert, who both attempted to reconcile history and science, and to find an adequate place for consciousness, ethics and values inside the process of scientific knowledge. Hence, considered in a humanist perspective, alienation represents the sacrifice of personal autonomy. Maruyama also feels indebted to Karl Mannheim for discussing the autonomous existence of history as a discipline, thanks to the positive status he gives to the facts of consciousness.

Maruyama even claimed an idealist vision of things: idealism, by his account, does not in itself imply a lack of realism. It is, on the contrary, the failure to adhere to values that transcend reality that makes us become the plaything of circumstances, and which permitted the triumph of fascism and state repression. Reality is not objective but derives from a ceaseless creation of values: it is no more than a construction emanating from autonomous personalities, taking on the responsibility for attributing values: Confucian saints, a certain period, the promoters of pacifism in the aftermath of World War Two.

Impact: The influence of Maruyama's work was, and remains today, immense in Japan. Besides determining the direction of future studies on the Tokugawa Period, his writing renewed the question of modernity in Japan. In the aftermath of the war, Maruyama was not content with the sham democracy imposed by the occupying power. Often compared to Sartre in his influence over young people, he played an important role as an opinion leader in postwar democratic Japan. He participated actively in debating such questions as the responsibility of Emperor Hirohito or of the Communist Party during the war, and above all, the question of renewing the Treaty of Peace and Security with the USA. This last debate gave him much opportunity to plead for Japanese pacifism, of which he was one of the great theoreticians.