Maruyama Masao and Modern Japanese Political Thought
MARUYAMA MASAO AND MODERN JAPANESE POLITICAL THOUGHT

Khadga K.C.

Maruyama Masao is one of Japan’s influential political thinkers of the twentieth-century. This article attempts to briefly discuss Maruyama Masao’s thoughts on Japanese political engagement by focusing on the intellectual and psychological causes of Japan’s political ambitions over the years. Maruyama Masao commented on numerous issues like the intellectual history of Tokugawa Japan, theory and psychology of ultra-nationalism and reflections on Article IX of the Japanese Constitution. Maruyama’s modern thought helped the Japanese understand their role in nation building and the importance of preserving peace at all cost. The paper concludes that Maruyama’s political thoughts are still relevant in this day and age.

Keywords: Maruyama Masao, Japanese political thought, Conservatism, Ultra-nationalism

Introduction

Maruyama Masao (March 22, 1914-August 15, 1996) was a leading Japanese political scientist of post-war Japan. He became influenced by his father’s colleagues such as Hasegawa Nyozekan, who was part of a circle of people known for their liberal political thoughts during the Taisho Era (1912-1927). After graduating from the Department of Law at Tokyo Imperial University in 1937, Maruyama was appointed as an assistant researcher in the same department. He initially intended to specialize in European political thought, but later switched to Japanese political thought, a discipline that until then, chiefly centred on the concept of an imperial state. Maruyama brought to the discipline a theoretical perspective grounded in extensive conservatism. During the Pacific War, Maruyama was stationed in the Imperial Army headquarters at Hiroshima, but after experiencing the atomic bomb explosion, he resumed his academic responsibilities at the Tokyo Imperial University.

Subsequently, after the end of the Pacific War, Maruyama published The Logic and Psychology of Ultra-nationalism and other thought-provoking articles, criticising pre-war Japanese politics of militarism and fascism, which left a strong repercussion on post war critical academic discourse of Japan. Maruyama was a powerful liberal opinion-maker, going far beyond academia, wielding great influence in issues like the US-Japan Security Treaty and the student movement of 1960. Maruyama believed that the collective mentality, inherent in traditional Japanese thinking, was a key reason for Japan’s defeat in the Pacific War and was convinced that such values needed to be modernized. He was mainly concerned with Japanese intellectual history, and is perhaps best known for his studies on the influence of neo-Confucianism and on the development of nationalist thoughts in modern Japan.
Abstract

Maruyama Masao is one of Japan's influential political thinkers of the twentieth century. This article attempts to briefly discuss Maruyama Masao's thoughts on Japanese political engagement by focusing on the intellectual and psychological causes of Japan's political ambitions over the years. Maruyama Masao commented on numerous issues like the intellectual history of Tokugawa Japan, theory and psychology of ultra-nationalism and reflections on article IX of the Japanese Constitution. Maruyama's modern thought helped the Japanese understand their role in nation building and the importance of preserving peace at all cost. The paper concludes that Maruyama's political thoughts are still relevant in this day and age.
Maruyama, Masao, 1914-1996. Publication date. 1963. The author analyzes the Japanese political scene in terms of the general cultural context and the pattern of inter-personal relationships with particular attention to the impact of non-political behaviour and activities on politics. He describes the underlying value-systems of the Japanese, especially those of the ruling elites, and their effect on the political leaders and their discussions. He also sets out to show how contemporary ideological tensions have been aggravated by the refusal of both sides to recognize that there are political features common to all societies which, in a given si by Masao Maruyama (Author). 4.0 out of 5 stars 1 rating. See all formats and editions Hide other formats and editions. A collection of nine essays, most from Japanese authors, it provides a variety of explanations of pre-war Japanese political dynamics, wartime leadership, military behavior and so on. The book has a very useful glossary of events and political groups not widely known. Some of the writing is from a Marxist point of view which lessens its value somewhat but otherwise worth having in a collection on this subject. Read more. 15, 1996, Tokyo, Japan), as one of Japan's leading political thinkers, helped shape Japanese politics and thought following World War II. Maruyama, the son of a political journalist, g. Masao Maruyama. Quick Facts. born. March 22, 1914 Osaka, Japan. died. August 15, 1996 (aged 82) Tokyo, Japan. Masao Maruyama. Additional Information. Article History. Maruyama Masao (1914-1996) was a Japanese intellectual historian, perhaps best known for the quote mentioned above. It is from the afterword of the revised edition of his seminal Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics from 1964 (the English edition was published in 1969). Within its opening essay, first published in 1946, he unearthed the psychological sanctions in modern Japan's
Masao Maruyama (丸山 眞男, Maruyama Masao, 1914 - 15 August 1996) was a leading Japanese political scientist and political theorist. His expertise lay in the history of Japanese political thought, to which he made major contributions. Maruyama Masao was born in Osaka in 1914. He was the second son of journalist Maruyama Kanji. He was influenced by friends of his father such as Hasegawa Nyozekan, a circle of people identified with the liberal current of political thought during the period of Taishō.