

Review Article

PERSPECTIVES ON THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN JAPAN

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Many people share Herman Kahn's view that the 1970s and the 1980s will have seen a transition in the role of Japan in world affairs not unlike the change brought about in European and world affairs in the 1870s by the rise of Prussia. It therefore seems reasonable, given the growing importance Japan has in world affairs, to study Japan in much the same way as scholars have studied the United States, the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, China.

Japanese economic development naturally has been a source of fascination for foreigners and Japanese alike, not only in its purely economic context, but also in its broader social, political and cultural context as well as for purposes of international comparison. Another important question for the future of Japan is whether Japan will proceed to full armament, i.e., to saigumbi (remilitarization), including the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Intellectuals with a liberal or socialist inclination in Japan and abroad, like Masao Maruyama, Jon Halliday, Gavan McCormack, etc. fear that the thriving Japanese capitalist economy will reinforce the remarkable concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the highly integrated elite of the bureaucracy, the business world and the Liberal Democratic Party officials and thus give rise to imperialist expansion abroad.

The three books being reviewed here⁺ have not produced direct, straight-forward answers to the above questions. Nonetheless their different perspectives on the evolution of modern Japan, together with their analyses of the contem-

+) Masao Maruyama: *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*. Expanded Edition. English translation edited by Ivan Morris. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Hugh Patrick, ed.: *Japanese Industrialization and Its Social Consequences*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

Edwin O. Reischauer: *The Japanese*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977.

porary political, economic, social and philosophical trends in Japan, will help the readers to understand Japan better and be in a better position to judge for themselves with regard to these questions.

Professor Edwin O. REISCHAUER's *The Japanese* is certainly a book on Japan that the general public in the West - especially the American readers - can read with delight. It is an elegantly simple and direct portrait of the background, culture, and values of a country that may well play a unique role in solving the problems of the next century. Professor Reischauer, however, presents Japan almost as a wonderland so that his book reads somewhat like a portrait of the United States prepared by the United States International Communication Agency. Professor Reischauer is certainly aware of such criticisms from reviewers regarding why he "did not put more emphasis on some of the less attractive aspects of Japan and its modern history"; he explains in the preface to the paperback edition that he "felt that our own (the Americans') historical memories of the war with Japan and the often sensationalistic reporting from Japan both tend to overemphasize in our (the Americans') minds these unfavourable aspects of Japan and its recent past."

The important issues and phenomena that have not been discussed are certainly not "skid rows, gangsters, and shady wire-pullers of great reputed influence on politics", as admitted by Professor Reischauer. The most serious neglect is perhaps the weight allotted, for example, to the opposition parties in Japan, which together have received more than 50 % of the vote in the general elections held in the past decade or more. In the Parties chapter (chapter 28), there is a good analysis of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, but not much more than half a page is devoted to all of the opposition parties. One cannot find a satisfactory explanation in the Society and Politics sections why between a quarter to a third of Japan's electorate supports a socialist party (the Japan Socialist Party or the Japan Communist Party). This same type of neglect regarding the "unorthodox" stream of thinking can be detected throughout the book. In the Religion chapter (chapter 21), Professor Reischauer observes that with 'state shinto' gone, "Shintoism has reverted to a more peripheral role in Japanese life. ... even top government leaders will on occasion visit some great shrine, ..." (p. 219) Surely Professor Reischauer is aware of the opposition parties' sensitivity concerning the government's attitude towards Shintoism: an official visit by top government leaders to the Yasukuni Shrine is a matter to be questioned at the Diet, and is regarded by the opposition, parties as a symptom of the revival of Japanese militarism. Incidentally, in the Historical Background section, there is very little on the rise of Japanese militarism in the 1920s and 1930s too.

In the Business chapter (chapter 18), one finds superb observations on the Japanese employment system and the special decision-making process, but the account of the close relationship between government and business tends

to be superficial. One would have expected that Professor Reischauer's close contacts with the Japanese government and the *zaikai* (financial world) during his ambassadorship to Japan (1961-1966) and after should have enabled him to throw more light on this extremely important subject, yet one cannot help suspecting that it is exactly these former and existing ties that have made the author so reserved in such discussions. It is exactly this reservation and the above-mentioned omissions and neglect that have somehow conveyed the impression that the book reads like a portrait of the United States prepared by the United States International Communication Agency.

There are omissions and neglect of another type which are largely due to the rapid evolution of contemporary Japan so much so that a book on it may become somewhat outdated in a few years' time. This is particularly true with the 'Japan and the World' section. New issues and problems have emerged. Support for strengthening the Self-Defense Forces has been increasing, a new development which any meaningful discussion on neutrality or alignment must take into consideration. Regarding international trade, protectionism remains an important issue, but pressure now comes from Europe as well. Japan's evolving relationship with ASEAN will assume greater significance in the 1980s, and this will become the core in Japan's conception of the emerging Pacific Community. In domestic politics, within the Liberal Democratic Party the younger generation of leaders have formed a new type of factional groupings known as study groups, and new rules governing the election of the party president have prompted the party to expand its membership dramatically. The result of the general election in the summer of 1980 requires careful consideration about the prospects of the Liberal Democratic government being replaced by a middle-of-the-road coalition or a broad united front of all opposition parties. The important question is not when but why it does not seem likely.

In terms of technology, instead of relying on borrowed technology, Japan may well be leading the world in a number of key areas of technological development. The above trends surely could not have been touched upon by Professor Reischauer, but it appears that the changing values of the Japanese society including the rise of consumerism, the demand for improvement in the quality of life, the dissatisfaction with party politics and the consequent spread of local citizen groups (*shimin undō* or *jūmin undō*), etc. deserve greater attention for one writing in the second half of the 1970s. Further, an additional chapter in the Society section on the Japanese attitude towards love, sex and marriage may be a good idea. Comparisons should be made not only with the Americans, but with perhaps the British, the Germans and the Chinese whenever possible. The Japanese political system, for example, needs a better comparison and contrast with the British system.

Professor Reischauer's book, on the other hand, has many redeeming features. As the *New York Times Book Review* observed, Professor Reischauer

has largely succeeded in combining "great academic learning with a clear, attractive and often witty writing style"; he has also shown a considerable talent in the choice of examples and inserting important details in the proper place. As such, the book is valuable both to the general public and scholars. While the Setting section requires more statistical data, the Historical Background section fully demonstrates the true colours of the author as a distinguished historian. If not for the limitations of the wide scope of the book, Professor Reischauer might have the opportunity to enlighten the reader with his insights derived from Chinese sources on Japanese history as well as his understanding of the trends and evolution of Oriental history and culture. The author is probably at his best when he chooses to write as a sympathetic and experienced observer and when his close contacts with the Japanese establishment become neither an asset nor a liability; chapters on the group, relativism, mass culture and language (chapters 13, 14, 19 and 37) are excellent work. On the other hand, Professor Reischauer's lack of sensitivity and sympathy for the non-establishment views has sometimes tarnished his penetrating observations of Japan, as shown in his discussions on the control of public education (p. 173).

Professor Masao MARUYAMA's *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* is in many ways different from Professor Reischauer's book. In the first place, this is a study by a Japanese scholar about his own country translated into English; as noted by the editor Professor Ivan Morris, this type of work is still very rare, and the excellent translation makes it even more valuable. In this collection of eleven essays, nine of them were written between 1946 and 1957, with the last two written in 1964 and 1961 respectively.

In these eleven essays an eminent Japanese scholar and political scientist - one whose views are hardly in accord with those of the establishment - analyzes the Japanese political scene in the immediate pre-war and post-war period in terms of the society's general cultural context and pattern of inter-personal relationships. He emphasizes especially the impact of non-political behaviour and activities on the politics of Japan, which has adopted many Western political institutions while retaining many traditionally Japanese attitudes. Professor Maruyama has made an effort to define the underlying values of the Japanese (especially of the members of the ruling elites) that were not formalized into any doctrinal or theoretical pattern, and to show how such systems conditioned the leadership and decision-making process of Japanese politics.

In examining contemporary politics on an international scale, Professor Maruyama has observed that contemporary ideological tensions, in particular those associated with the Cold War, have been aggravated by the tendency of the "isms" on both sides to refuse to recognize that there are features of political dynamics common to all societies. For example, his last essay in the collection, "Politics and Man in the Contemporary World", illuminates

some aspects of conformism and social inversion in Germany, Japan and the United States had concluded that "any system that lacks feedback of counter communication from the periphery will corrupt" (p. 347). Professor Maruyama further observes that "it is ironical that with intensification of the Cold War both the United States and the Soviet Union have come more and more to resemble each other as they turn their internal organizations into 'garrison-states'" (p. 179). It is perhaps such observations that make Professor Maruyama a master of real political theory, though in areas of political science already well covered by Western political scientists, his contributions are very limited, as revealed in his essay "Some Problems of Political Power". Even then the essay is still valuable in demonstrating how a Japanese scholar has absorbed Western political science and interpreted it to the Japanese audience.

Professor Maruyama's analysis of Japanese society leans towards the pathological rather than the physiological approach, as was the case with many Japanese scholars in the immediate post-war period. Professor Maruyama is greatly absorbed in the inquires into what were the internal factors that drove Japan into its disastrous war as well as in the almost endemic sense of crisis in post-war Japan, both of which have prompted an urgent sense of personal involvement among Japanese intellectuals, exacerbated in some cases by a feeling of guilt at not having been sufficiently committed to do anything effective to prevent the success of militarism in the 1930s. It is probably because of this that Professor Maruyama is so ready to express emotions, value judgements, concerns and worries of a type and to an extent that Western scholars today tend to eschew.

Professor Maruyama never hides his admiration for the democratic traditions in Western Europe, and he is very worried about the impact of McCarthyism in the United States. In his past script to "A Critique of De-Stalinization" written in 1957, he appeared to be more optimistic about China, though his quotation of Ch'en Po-ta's statement that "there is no development in learning when conclusions exist from the very beginning" (p. 220) is an irony for Ch'en who later became a ringleader in the Lin Piao clique and was responsible for the persecution of the intellectuals in the Cultural Revolution. A more valuable irony is that many of Professor Maruyama's observations concerning de-Stalinization are also relevant regarding the de-Maoization in China today (see, for example, pp. 187, 189, 190, 201, 203 and 204).

Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics is not written for foreign consumption nor is it intended to be an introduction to politics in Japan. The depth of the analyses and observations is striking, but the appreciation requires a certain understanding of Japanese history, culture and philosophical trends in this period. This is particularly so because among Maruyama's most important contributions in this book he has called into

question certain conventional theories about Japanese politics, for instance, the idea that a slow but steady progress towards democracy was rudely, and more or less fortuitously, interrupted in the 1930s by the "militarists" and that since the war Japan has returned to its normal course. To help these who are less well-equipped the editor has prepared an excellent glossary and biographies which is also of considerable convenience to the more knowledgeable reader. To a lesser extent, this is also true of the brief chronology, though the list of suggested reading is grossly outdated and far too short.

In so many ways, Professor Maruyama's book is a contrast to that of Professor Reischauer. Yet both have failed to give clear-cut answers to what caused the magic transformation of Japan after 1945. It has been two decades or more since Professor Maruyama wrote his essays - "Some Reflections on Article IX of the Constitution" written in 1964 being the sole exception, yet the book still remains helpful, especially for those who do not read Japanese, in understanding Japan. From the cool, rational analysis of Article IX of the Constitution to a relative minor observation regarding power relations in a business organisation (p.288), this collection of essays, filled with wisdom and foresight, has had a tremendous influence on the young in Japan; and for this reason alone, it remains an important reading material for students in modern Japanese politics.

Japanese Industrialization and Its Social Consequences, edited by Professor Hugh PATRICK, a collection of twelve papers by Western and Japanese scholars on contemporary socio-economic development in Japan, is the product of the Conference on Japanese Industrialization and Its Social Consequences held in August 1973 at the University of Washington. The Conference was one of a series of five international conferences planned under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Japanese Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. The high quality of the papers reflects the benefits derived from considerable lead time, extensive planning, collaborative research and substantial revisions after thorough analysis of the papers at the conference, of particular value is the inclusion in each paper of an extensive bibliography of related theoretical and empirical works.

As the intellectual Professor Maruyama leans towards the pathological approach, the social scientists at this conference adopt the physiological approach. As claimed, this is the first book in Western languages treating Japanese industrialization with an extensive emphasis on the social dimensions, and one of its major purpose is to break new ground in exploration of the social consequences of Japanese industrialization. Through the efforts of many Japanese scholars, historical statistics for many economic and social variables required in the study of the Japanese economy and society have become available, and such data bases are probably superior to those of other countries except the

United States and the United Kingdom. Making good use of the available data and adopting vigorous methodology, a number of significant possible causal interrelationships and effects of industrialization on social change has been studied in those papers. Yasuba's paper, for example, may also serve as a model in methodology for similar studies. The conference was not planned with any preconceived framework of comprehensive hypotheses, nor did it succeed in fully integrating social and economic theory and data, but the papers certainly shed light on building a good comprehensive framework for understanding the causes of social and economic change in Japan.

To understand Japan requires one to place the Japanese experience in perspective, something which Professors Reischauer and Maruyama have neglected. This demands not only the usual historical approach but also a comparative analysis of the experiences of other industrial societies. On the whole, the approach of most papers in this volume is comparative, and a number of them explicitly incorporate comparative data.

Through careful compilation of data and making international comparisons, the significance of certain statistical findings becomes more clearly demonstrated. For example, Cole and Tominaga discovered that during the first phase of industrialization in Japan, there were more female than male workers, and most were found in silk yarn, weaving, spinning and other textile activities. In 1909, women comprised about 62% of all factory workers. This statistical finding leads to their observation that the decline in the proportion of female workers in the pre-World War II period reflects the reduction of importance of the textile industry in the entire Japanese economy, with the post-war rise being accounted for by other factors. The discovery, through an examination of comparative data of other countries, that this is not a universal phenomenon further leads Cole and Tominaga to challenge the conventional wisdom of rapid Japanese industrialization, and they conclude that many of the characteristics associated with a modern occupational structure were not achieved until well into the twentieth century. This meticulous collection and compilation of statistical data, together with the citing of the sources and the comparisons made against comparative data of other countries, will certainly serve as a catalyst for further research.

Several authors spend considerable efforts defining key concepts, and very often this work represents contributions to the social sciences and has universal significance, e.g., Hazama's definition of "life style" and the discussions of Chūbachi and Taira on poverty in the Japanese world view. On the other hand, Professor Hugh Patrick happily noted that participants in the conference steered away from discussions on vague and complex concepts, though they did consider the concepts of "economic dualism" and "paternalism". This may seem to be unfortunate, for the conference might have been an ideal forum to discuss the operational definition of such concepts in terms of

quantifiable variables, and in fact some of the authors have already demonstrated their expertise in this.

The conference planning committee was indeed over-ambitious in attempting to cover the entire time period from early Meiji to 1973 when the conference was held. As it was planned, an introductory paper was needed to discuss the economic development in the pre-Meiji centuries in which many Japanese economic historians believe that a substantial foundation for an industrial revolution had been laid. It is believed that given the limitations of a conference paper, it might have been more fruitful if some of the papers had concentrated on a shorter period of time.

In their attempt to explore the interrelations between social and economic variables, the authors have avoided discussions on the political context. Blumenthal's paper on the Japanese shipbuilding industry is the major exception in which the role of governmental support is discussed in details. This avoidance may not be wise, for many of the findings may have significant policy implications. For example, Rapp observes that the data in Tables 8 and 9 of his paper (pp. 232-235) raise serious doubts about the reliability of government figures published on the export production share of small-and-medium-sized firms, and he believes that they appear to be overestimates. Information of this kind may well affect the bargaining strength of such firms vis-à-vis the Ministry of International Trade and Industry as well as the ministry's policy regarding such firms. Rapp's conclusion that "the outlook for Japan would thus seem to be for greater export concentration in the future as the economy continues to grow and develop" (p. 247) is also full of implications for Japan's economic relations with foreign countries.

As a pioneering effort, this collection of papers is outstanding in making good use of previous works - the paper of Cole and Tominaga and that of Ohbuchi being good examples - and showing the directions of further research. Many of the issues discussed in this collection of papers relate to the most important strategies for economic development in the less developed and densely populated countries. Many Asian countries, Taiwan and South Korea in particular, have expected the experience in Japan to be the most instructive model for them. The practical value of this collection of papers exactly lies in shedding light on the mechanisms of this model both at the macro and at the micro level.

These three books reviewed here provide very different perspectives on the evolution of modern Japan, and each in its own way illuminates our understanding of Japan. In this respect, they are complementary to each other. A review article of this length can hardly do justice to these substantial works; and their omissions and limitations, as discussed in this article, only serve

to stimulate further research and by no means dwarf their intrinsic value. Though the Japanese have an extraordinarily stable society and government, changes are taking place rapidly so that there is ample scope for further work to be done. This is certainly one of the reasons that make the study of Japan so difficult and yet so fascinating.