**Politics and Theory in Postwar Japan**

**The Contributions of Masao Maruyama**



> "When the political scientist investigates contemporary political phenomena and living political ideologies . . . his interior guide must always be the truth, and that alone.

Masao Maruyama, *Politics as a Science in Japan* , 1947

Among the more important challenges facing scholars today is to establish and sustain meaningful dialogue across civilizational and cultural boundaries. Whether or not the emerging dynamics of global politics represent a clash, or potential clash of civilizations a careful, continuing study of the deeper assumptions, habits, conceptual languages and philosophical approaches characteristic of human experiences in different civilizational contexts is essential. Difficulties here are, of course, enormous. Scholars will continue to debate basic issues within civilizational contexts. There are, however, main currents. There are also scholars whose work has been recognized both within and outside their civilizational environments as worthy of particular esteem. One avenue of exploration that might warrant our attention, therefore, is a comparative study of the experiences and scholarly production of such scholars with an eye to finding parallels, or somewhat parallels, regarding primary concerns, assumptions, methods, observations, and thoughts on the role and scope of our work in political science. This essay is a first approach in this general direction and, specifically, regarding what are widely accepted as distinctively Western and distinctively Japanese civilizations.

After World War II, in the United States , the philosophical power and scholarly eloquence embodied in the work in political science produced by the European ⍰migr⍰ scholars came to be much appreciated across all of the disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Scholars such as Leo Strauss, Hans Morganthau, Carl Friedrich, Hannah Arendt, and Eric Voegelin, among many others,[1] brought new, challenging perspectives, based in large measure on their experiences with the ideological dynamics and traumas of prewar European politics, to the discipline and discourse of political science in particular. This was perhaps especially dramatized by the reception given to the Charles R.Walgreen Foundation Lectures at the University of Chicago where presentations by Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and Hannah Arendt were later published as the modern classics, respectively, of *Natural Right and History*, *The New Science of Politics*, and *The Human Condition.*[2] One effect of the work of these scholars was to reenergize dialogue and debate within political science, particularly within the United States, on the relationship between politics and theory and on the meaning of political theory within the discipline.

In Japan , following the war, one encounters a very different setting. Much dialogue and discourse centered on the struggle to give meaning to the wartime past and all of the complex particulars attaching to the wartime regime and its policies both internal and overseas. Here too, however, there was much effort to theorize regarding larger meanings in the recent, tragic events in Japan 's political development. Among the most respected voices in this context was that of a native scholar, Masao Maruyama (1914-1996), "often called the foremost intellectual leader of the postwar era in Japan ⍰ (Joos 2000, 23). This paper seeks to show parallels between Austrian ⍰migr⍰ Eric Voegelin's (1901-1985) efforts to reconceptualize political analysis in the wake of two catastrophic world wars along more philosophic lines, and the efforts of

Maruyama to make sense both of Japan's catastrophic twentieth century experience on the world stage in the first half of the century and its potential for contributing to future possibilities in the larger global drama.

**The Circumstances of the Times**

In his *Autobiographical Reflections*, Eric Voegelin speaks of his motivation as a scholar and philosopher as arising from "the political situation" (Voegelin 1989, 93). Similarly, in his first lecture on what is today published as *Hitler and the Germans*, Voegelin says that "what is important" is how "general principles should be applied to the concrete political events you're familiar with." Scholars must begin "with specific political experiences, then analyze these and extrapolate from them to such an extent that we arrive at the scientific problems" (Voegelin 1999, 51). In much the same way, in commenting on his famous studies of Tokugawa political thought, Masao Maruyama expressed his motivation as a "desperate stance" not only for himself but also "for those who did not accept fascistic historiography." To prove that "such a monolithic system would inevitably collapse from within" became for Maruyama "the salvation of my soul given the circumstances of the time" (Igarashi 2002, 199). According to Japanese scholar Yoshikuni Igarashi, for Maruyama the "principal object" of his work was always "the political situation of Japan in the first half of the 1940s, the seminal moment in his own history" (Igarashi 2002, 203). Both scholars grew up, were educated, and came to maturity in the first half of the twentieth century amidst the rise of ideological politics both in Europe and in East Asia . Voegelin felt "hemmed in" by a "flood of ideological language" (Voegelin1989, 93).

Among the "isms" surrounding Maruyama's early life were Marxism, neo-Kantianism, Protestantism, empiricist rationalism, and nationalism.

The corrupting influences of ideological politics, and ideology as it impacted philosophy and the social sciences, were a continuing, central concern for both scholars. Voegelin, in the *New Science of Politics*, famously traced the rise and spread of modern ideologies to various immanentizations of Christian eschatology. Maruyama, particularly cognizant of the widespread Marxist assumptions among both Japanese scholars and as political opposition to right wing nationalists, was particularly determined to understand and transcend the limiting perspectives of both. With respect to Marxism Maruyama wrote that if there is "something distinctive" in "my approach" it is "in my attempt to broaden the perspective of my Marxist contemporaries" (Maruyama1963, xii). With respect to the nationalists Maruyama famously examined their psychological and philosophical assumptions in his early postwar essay on the theory and psychology of ultranationalism. Both scholars shared the conviction, as Voegelin expressed it in his study of Plato and Aristotle, that "psyche is the substance of society." This parallel will be examined in more detail below.

As for the respective personal experiences in the circumstances of the times, each was at or near defining moments of the twentieth century, moments which clearly impacted their scholarly and philosophical viewpoints. Voegelin was educated at and in Vienna at the peak of that city's fame as an intellectual center of Europe . As a traveling student in America for two years in the 1920s he attended classes by John Dewey and Irwin Edman at Columbia , lectures by Alfred North Whitehead at Harvard, and also by John R. Commons at Wisconsin , among others. He was present during and was personally affected by the *anschluss* in 1938 referring to

it as a "profound emotional shock" (Voegelin 1989, 42). He landed in America at Harvard, taught in the American south during the segregated 1950s, and in Munich during the height of the Cold War in the 1960s where he lectured on Hitler and the Germans. Maruyama was privileged to study and teach at the Tokyo Imperial University . He was among the first professors of political theory in Japan beginning his duties in 1940. He served in the Japanese army and was stationed at Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 . He was only four kilometers from ground zero that morning and probably was saved by a protecting wall. He was reluctant to speak of his experiences at Hiroshima until many years after the war. He spent his mature years as a scholar and teacher at Tokyo Univerity in the postwar years of the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War, and was deeply involved in the crisis of 1960 over renewal of the Japan/U.S. Security Treaty.

From these personal experiences within and as enveloped by defining moments of the twentieth century both Maruyama and Voegelin developed an approach to the study of politics that begins with a deeply personal resistance to disorder and develops into a mature vision of political order that encompasses dimensions of order beyond what traditional scholars in traditional disciplines often conceptualize as "politics."[3] Politics and political order for both are aspects of wider circumstances of the times and deeper experiences of order and disorder. For Voegelin, for example, in concise, dramatic, and often quoted language from his opening remarks in lectures at the University of Chicago on "truth and representation," lectures later published as *The New Science of Politics*, all human societies are characterized by a "self-interpretation" that long precedes later scholarly analysis. Each society is a "cosmion, illuminated with meaning from within by the human beings who continuously create and bear it as the mode and condition of their self-realization" (Voegelin, 1987, 27). The illumination is

made possible through elaborate symbolisms which create and sustain order over time. Voegelin's monumental study of *Order and History* begins with the first premise that scholars should dedicate themselves to examining experiences of order, and disorder, and their symbolizations in concrete societies over time. Maruyama's experiences of disorder were rooted in a very different socio-cultural political environment. Curiously, Voegelin's insight in *The New Science of Politics* captures the difference. Japan in the twentieth century, like Rome in the period of the early empire, was an "archaic survival.” Just as Rome did not quite fit in with the Hellenistic civilization of the early centuries of the first millennium, so also Japan in the twentieth century did not quite fit in with "a civilizational environment that is dominated by Western ideas” (Voegelin 1987, 90). Somewhat similarly, referring to Karl Jaspers' famous conceptualization of an axial age, or axis time, when the major world religions each had their genesis, S. N. Eisenstadt has categorized Japan as a "nonaxial civilization.”[4] It was in this "archaic,” "nonaxial” civilizational context that Maruyama developed his distinctive approach to the study of politics. The overwhelming reality experienced by Voegelin might be concisely defined as the coming of the "modern” to full maturity, with ideological political movements at the cutting edge of change. For Maruyama, the overwhelming reality was an ideological movement at the center of Japanese politics dedicated to "overcoming” the modern. Voegelin's response to modernity was a return to more differentiated experiences and their symbolizations of order to be found in Western antiquity, particularly in Greek philosophy. Maruyama's response was to find indigenous sources of modernity in Japanese tradition, sources with potentially liberating influence on the future course of Japanese cultural and political development. For Voegelin, modernity was a problem. For Maruyama it was a prospect. For Voegelin, forces of modernity had the effect of narrowing human experience and restricting the

human spirit. For Maruyama, modern forces held the potential of releasing the creative potential of the human spirit. For both, the creation of a wider and deeper arena for the full development of human potentiality and a precise understanding of how current conditions in their respective experiences antithetical to that possibility had developed were the primary concerns. In his lectures on *Hitler and the Germans* Voegelin addressed the widespread clich&#65533; in the Germany of the 1960s that among the critical tasks of German scholarship was to confront an "unmastered past.&#65533; For Voegelin the problem was rather to grasp the full significance of an "unmastered present&#65533; (Voegelin 1999, 70). A similar concern permeates Maruyama's body of work. Among the more particular first tasks in mastering the circumstances of their times, for each, therefore, was to understand the erosion of language both in scholarly and in public discourse.

**The "Nonsensification&#65533; of Language**

Andrew Barshay, in his essay on "Imagining Democracy in Postwar Japan,&#65533; an essay focused on Maruyama's work, borrows the concept of "nonsensification&#65533; from Simone Weil to explain Maruyama's deep concerns about language and politics. For Weil, "nonsensification&#65533; captured the decay of public discourse characteristic of fascist regimes. According to Barshay, Maruyama was similarly concerned with the use of "slogans backed by force&#65533; in prewar and wartime Japan (Barshay 1992, 382). As a scholar, among Maruyama's primary reasons for admiring Ogyu Sorai and the Sorai school was their "study of old phrases and syntax.&#65533; For the Sorai school, "a knowledge of the ancient terms was the essential prerequisite for an understanding of the Way of the Sages&#65533; (Maruyama 1974, 76). For Voegelin the corruption of language by ideology is among the most important concerns for those interested in restoring or creating some sense of a healthy political culture. It was the great work of journalists like Stefan

George and Karl Krauss in the Germany and Austria of the 1930s which attempted to "penetrate" the "phony language" of ideologies and "restore reality through the restoration of language" (Voegelin 1989, 18).

Though Maruyama and Voegelin are equally concerned with the integrity of language both in scholarship and in the public realm there is also a fundamental difference. Voegelin is more concerned with restoring the conceptual clarity achieved by Greek philosophy. Maruyama is more concerned with creating the possibilities for developing a public discourse worthy of self-conscious, autonomous subjects in a modern, democratic society. The relative differences in the respective concerns of Maruyama and Voegelin in the decay and in the prospect of improving discourse in scholarship and in the public realm is a huge issue which goes to the heart of cultural, linguistic, historical, and experiential differences in the world views of each. This profound issue is related to their similarly divergent views on modernity, explored below.

For Maruyama there were two ideologies in particular regarding which he saw a polarity, the challenge as a philosopher and critical scholar being to navigate between the "vocabularies" of each. These two ideologies and their languages are Marxism and what might best be referred to by keeping the original Japanese of *tennosei*, or imperial system. Each was deficient as a language of social and political order. For one scholar, Maruyama "made history" for providing in postwar Japanese society a "language for the articulation of thoughts and feelings hitherto restricted to ideological or illicit expression" (Barshay 1992, 400). For Voegelin the polarity was more between an ancient language reflective of a leap in being, best expressed by the language of Greek philosophy, and the corrupt languages of all modern ideologies, including Marxism.

For Voegelin, the decay of language is closely associated with the construction of second realities, a concept that he took from literary artists Robert Musil and Heimito von Doderer.[5] The "principal characteristic of this type of experience is a "refusal to apperceive (*apperzeptionsverweigerung*). The prohibition of the asking of certain kinds of questions, in the works for example of August Comte and Karl Marx, is symptomatic of this kind of world view. In all such constructions of second realities there is a tendency to exclude from consciousness any experiences not of the external world as invalid. The experiences of objects in the external world become "absolutized and symbols, traditional or contemporary, evocative of anything suggesting the transcendent, or in Voegelin's terminology a "turning toward the divine ground, become opaque at best. Borrowing from the Stoics, Voegelin refers to the experience of turning "away from the ground as *apostrophe* or the "withdrawal of man from his own humanity (Voegelin, 1989, 99-101). In his lectures on *Hitler and the Germans,* Voegelin observes that problems of second reality "always emerge at times of social crises (Voegelin 1999, 251). He particularly notes the decline of the Greek polis, the end of the Middle Ages, and the modern period, all Western illustrations, as specific examples. And a particularly symptomatic aspect of the coming of various second reality constructions is that "the loss of reality expresses itself in the loss of contact of words. Words "acquire their own existence. Language "becomes an independent reality in itself (Voegelin 1999, 252).

Maruyama addressed the decay of language during the *kokutai* (national polity) ideology of the *tennosei* (emperor system). As he wrote in the author's introduction to the English translation of his *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* one had, in the pre-war years, always to be mindful of the watchful eye of the thought police (*tokkou*). He relates two particular incidents involving minor points of what amounts to a "typo, on the one hand, and a

historical allusion on the other. Maruyama had, with respect to the first incident, simply used the wrong Chinese character for *jin* in referring to the reigning Emperor of Japan at the time Confucianism came to Japan . Maruyama had used the character for "benevolence" instead of the one for "god." He was cautioned by a colleague at Tokyo Imperial University that another scholar had recently made the same error and was "fiercely attacked for it by right wing nationalists." In the second incident, Maruyama had suggested, indirectly, somewhat of an analogy between Norinaga Motoori's philosophical relation to Ogyu Sorai and that between Marx and Hegel in 19th century Germany ; that is, that Norinaga turned Sorai's thought "on its head." Again he was cautioned, this time by his former *sensei*, that such an analogy would "raise a provocative echo in the ears of the authorities and of conservative professors" (Maruyama 1974, xvii, xviii).

On a more serious level Maruyama addressed in his scholarly work how the authorities in the *tennosei* (emperor system) were coopting basic philosophical concepts in such a way as to rob thought of all meaning. He expressed this in the same author's introduction as follows: "It is no easy task to convey a convincing picture of the spiritual atmosphere that surrounded those who devoted themselves to the study of *Japanese* thought in those days of the so-called dark valley of Japanese history" (Maruyama 1974, xvi). The "spiritual atmosphere" had been somewhat corrupted by publications such as the *Kokutai no hongi* (*Essential Principles of the Nation)* issued by the Ministry of Education in 1937 for use in all schools. In one section, in "Harmony Between the People and Nature," the lives of the Japanese people, in both outward and inward dimensions, is joyously connected with nature (*shizen*). As one scholar has put it, "the coalescent devotion between the Japanese people and nature unites consciousness itself with physical experience to such an extent that one cannot be separated from the other." In the

document on *Essential Principles (hongi)*, nature (*shizen*) "unifies all aspects of Japanese existence" (Thomas 2001, 22). This use and abuse of "nature" became a primary object in Maruyama's studies of Japanese political thought. As Julia Adney Thomas points out, however, the use of *shizen* to refer to nature did not become "standard" in Japanese until the 1890s. Prior to that time, throughout intellectual discourse during the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868), for example, in neo-Confucian, Shinto, Ancient Learning, Buddhist and other traditions of discourse, many views of nature coexisted. Why then does Maruyama refer consistently to *shizen* in his studies of Tokugawa intellectual history? Perhaps Maruyama is attempting to "master the present," to undo the propagandistic use and abuse of the term during the *tennosei*. In his study of Tokugawa thought Maruyama referred to the "continuative mode" of the dominant neo-Confucianist, Chu Hsi, philosophy, as a "mode" in which "normative principles" and "nature" are "linked together" (Maruyama, 28, 29). For Andrew Barshay, Maruyama was deeply affected by the "powerful optimism" that resulted from this "mode" of thought and had doubts that "reality and value could ever be separated" (Barshay 1992, 374).

**The History of Order and the Order of History**

Voegelin's study of history was motivated by his experience with the profound disorder of his own times. To find order among chaos one must confront seriously the "best of tradition." As one Voegelin scholar has expressed it: "In opening oneself to the classics, to the most profound that has been thought and said, one encounters through their various articulations the experiences and insights that have founded philosophical and spiritual wisdom" (Hughes 2005, 81). The nature of the times into which Voegelin was born and especially through which he matured was such as to make such study of the best of tradition essential. In volume four of

*Order and History*, the *Ecumenic Age*, the conceptualization and understanding of "best" and "tradition" is expanded to include traditions beyond the West. A proper understanding of the crisis of modernity could only be reached by careful and exhaustive examination of the engendering experiences and symbolizations of societies throughout history. The "order" appropriate to human beings can only be ascertained through a study of the history of order. The extreme complexities involved in this task are illustrated by the seventeen year gap separating volumes three and four of *Order and History*. The scope of available sources and complexity in the patterns of symbolization forced Voegelin to rethink his original plan for the series and to focus more on a philosophy of consciousness. In his *Autobiographical Reflections*, Voegelin summarizes his observations regarding the primacy of an "ecumenic age" in the history of mankind as exhibiting three prominent features: spiritual outbursts characteristic of world religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, or philosophies such as expressed in the works of Plato, Aristotle and Confucius; imperial "concupiscential" outbursts, such as by the Romans, Persians, and Ch'in and Han dynasties in China; and "the beginnings of historiography" where various concepts of disorder and order are weighed against each other. In a letter to Robert Heilman, Voegelin once expressed the "grounding" of his work as a "double movement of empiricism," a combination of "meditations" and "historical studies" (Embry 2008, 38, 39).

For Maruyama also, the extreme disorder of the times is the beginning of his study of history. As he expressed it in the Author's Introduction to his collection of essays on *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, published in English in 1963, essays originally published between 1946 and 1953, his "conscious intention" was to "expose myself and the body politic

of my own society to a probing X-ray analysis and to wield a merciless scalpel on every sign of disease there discovered" (Maruyama 1963, xii). Unlike Voegelin, however, Maruyama was greatly influenced by Hegel and by the European Enlightenment idea of "human progress." Yet, there is caution in Maruyama's embrace: "We should be on our guard against any *a priori* attribution to any one political camp of the "progressive' role of promoter of . . . revolutionary trends." We should also "beware of trying to interpret history as the unfolding of mysterious substantive "forces'" (Maruyama 1963, xvi, xvii). In his essay on "Politics as a Science in Japan ," Maruyama laments that in Japan there is no tradition in political science "worth reviving." Rather, "everything depends on what happens in the future" (Maruyama 1963, 226). This is due primarily to the political structures established by Japanese leadership during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). There was no "undergirding of civil liberty" (Maruyama 1963, 228) The "founding fathers" of the subject are to be found in ancient Greece where "the tradition of political liberty in ancient Greece made possible the intellectual development of even a thinker like Plato who was invariably biased against democratic government." (Maruyama 1963, 228). But in the development of the modern Japanese state during late Meiji, scholars in the discipline "contented themselves with an abstract elucidation of what they had learnt about states and political phenomena from European political science textbooks and they avoided relating these to the realities of Japanese political life" (Maruyama 1963, 230). In the wake of August 15, 1945 , however, scholars in Japan can now "make every effort to use the vast amount of living research material spread before our eyes." And among the "living" materials is the continuing force of ideology both in politics and in scholarship. Maruyama issues this caution: "When the political scientist investigates contemporary political phenomena and living political

ideologies . . . his interior guide must always be the truth, and that alone" (Maruyama 1963, 235).

In his earliest essays, written between 1940 and 1944 and collected later as *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan,* Maruyama turned to the study of the historical development of what he conceptualized as the National Morality writers who prepared the intellectual groundwork for the "Theory of the Japanese Spirit" fashionable in the years leading up to the second World War. Only by such a historical approach could he arrive at the truth regarding how the intellectual, ideological premises of the *tennosei* came to develop.

**"To Acquire a New Normative Consciousness"**

In an article written during the American occupation, in 1947, Maruyama expressed the need for the "masses" to develop a "new normative consciousness." Maruyama's language, in translation, has Marxist, class-based overtones. This is partly due to the need for Maruyama, as an activist on the left, to express himself in class-based terms, Marxism being the dominant opposition worldview in postwar Japan . For Marxist scholars, however, Maruyama was "liberal" and "bourgeois" (Joos 200, 25). Workers and farmers must be at the core of change for both Maruyama and the Marxists. Maruyama's appeal is also a "modernist" one beyond Japanese traditionalism and contemporary traditionalists. It is somewhat ambiguous in relation to a "liberal democratic" tradition which is associated with the American occupation. For example, Maruyama writes that the "bearer of "freedom' is no longer the "citizen' as conceived by liberals since the time of Locke." The Japanese are being "pressed" to "confront the problem of human freedom itself" (Barshay 1992, 391).

Many students of Maruyama's thought emphasize the desire in Maruyama to see in Japan the development of a widespread "personal autonomy.&#65533; In one recent study the author identifies as "recurrent themes&#65533; in Maruyama's works the need for "permanent, continuous revolution,&#65533; for "more Japanese efforts to self understanding and self-consciousness,&#65533; for the "making of a Japanese tradition of individual dignity and liberty&#65533; and all of these within a "positive stance towards modernity&#65533; (Joos, 2000, 24). When it comes to specifics, however, it is difficult to find them. Another scholar points out that Maruyama had a "deep antipathy towards any ideological orthodoxy&#65533; (Kersten, 1996, 18). Ivan Morris, in his introduction to the English translation of Maruyama's *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics,* writes "his approach to contemporary politics cannot be classed in any ready-made category.&#65533; Morris suggests that perhaps the closest approximation to Maruyama's ultimate goal, somewhat as it was for his father, is a society in which the "acting individual&#65533; is the "ultimate reality&#65533; (Maruyama, 1963, vii). Another view holds that for Maruyama developing "subjectivity&#65533; (*shutaisei)* was all important. It was the very core of what it means to be "modern.&#65533; Specifically, to be "modern was, in short, to exercise a transcendent, universal critical faculty in a particular social/national totality&#65533; (Barshay 1992, 382). Virtually all commentaries on Maruyama's thought stress his antipathy to all "grand theories.&#65533; But what is an "acting individual&#65533; or an "autonomous&#65533; person not captive to ideology or grand theory? What is "subjectivity?&#65533; According to Barshay, Maruyama was ultimately a "utopian pessimist:&#65533; "utopian in spirit, but pessimistic about the capacity for self transformation in the &#65533;deep things' of Japanese social structure&#65533; (Barshay 1992, 406). Late in his life, Maruyama was particularly interested in the "deep things&#65533; or "ancient substrata&#65533; of "Japanese political, historical, and ethical consciousness&#65533; (Barshay 1992, 401).

One hint in Maruyama's work which emerges both from his understanding of modern democracy with roots in ancient Greece in the West, and his study of the ancient substrata of Japanese experience is to be found in his comments in support of efforts to resist renewal of the U.S./Japan Security Treaty in 1960, perhaps the most important political event in postwar Japanese experience. Writing in the jounrnal *Sekai* (*The World*) Maruyama reflects on the very meaning of politics in modern democracy: "Here in Japan we may have lacked the tradition of direct democracy practiced in the Greek city-states. But instead we have as our intellectual heritage the splendid concept of ﷺhomespun (lay) Buddhismﷺ (*zaike-bukkyou*). Put in contemporary terms, this means the political activity of non-professional politiciansﷺ (Barshay 1992, 393).

One must be very careful here, of course, not to read too much into this passage. Still, a few observations are appropriate. First, a translation of *zaike* as "homespunﷺ seems to carry a somewhat bourgeois suggestion with it that the type of consciousness to which Maruyama is referring is "made/spunﷺ in the home, that like textile products emerging from cottage industries Buddhism is a product of what Hannah Arendt calls *homo faber*. A literal reading of the *kanji* or Chinese characters in the phrase *zaike bukkyou*, however, would be something like "exists in the home teachings of the Buddha.ﷺ Even this brief digression into the world of linguistics and language as symbolization opens a world of complex problems related to translation and cultural differences. For example, Robert Bellah, recently, in his introductory essay on a volume of essays on Japan , an essay entitled *The Japanese Difference*, and like many Japanologists before him, remarks on how so much literature on Japan , both from within and without, emphasize "Japanese uniqueness, Japanese exceptionalism, or Japanese particularism.ﷺ

Also, much of what is written by outsiders in the West is often "closely related to

 (Bellah 2003, 1).[6]

It is and has always been especially difficult to place Japanese culture in all of its dimensions, not least of all the political, in comparative perspective. And any discussion of Buddhism in Japan , or the teachings of the Buddha, is problematic only more so. For example, the relation of the Buddhist tradition in Japan to modernization begs a consideration of *haibutsu kishaku*, the movement to ban the religion during early Meiji, a movement that led to the removal of Buddhist images from Shinto shrines in 1868. The *genro* thought Buddhism too eccentric to be associated with anything modern and so efforts were made to destroy it or diminish its influence. These efforts proved unsuccessful at least partly because of Daisetz T. Suzuki's insight, and as elegantly argued in his classic *Zen and Japanese Culture*, that all aspects of life in Japan are saturated with Buddhist teachings. Also, though it is customary to distinguish Buddhism and Shinto in discussions of Japanese religion, it is very difficult to grasp the intimate relationship of the two. When Buddhism arrived in Japan by way of Korea in the sixth century there was less a rivalry with the indigenous Shinto religion than the beginnings of a syncretistic fusion. Over time and through the various schools of Buddhism, such as the Shingon, Tendai, Shinshu, Jodoshu, Nichiren, and the Zen, religion in Japan came to be a blend of the native Shinto and the various Buddhist schools into what was called *ryoubu Shinto* or a "dual Shinto system. Within this scheme Buddhist priests would often be in charge of Shinto shrines. With the Meiji Restoration, however, and the coming of "modern influences, mostly from the West, the *haibutsu kishaku* movement led to a decline of Buddhist influences. Still, this decline was temporary and incomplete. For as Suzuki has shown, the Buddhist tradition in Japan , particularly through the Zen schools, has played a central role in the development of Japanese

culture. This is true in the arts, in interpretations of Confucius in Japan , and in the development of the *bushido,* or way of the warrior. The *zen* influence is particularly apparent in the development of aesthetic concepts such as *wabi* (understated taste), *sabi* (elegance in simplicity), and *mono no aware* (a convergence of beauty and sadness). According to Suzuki, *zen* "has entered internally into every phase of the cultural life of the people" (Suzuki 1973, 21).

This influence is even evident in, and perhaps especially evident in, aspects of the Japanese language. A poem (*shi*), for example, is written with a compound *kanji*, Chinese character, in which the elemental character on the left represents "speech" or "words" and the elemental character on the right represents a Buddhist temple. A poet (*shijin),* therefore, is a person (*jin*) who "speaks" at the "temple." Similarly, *samurai* is written as a compound with the character on the left indicative of "man" or "person" and the character on the right representing a Buddhist temple. The *samurai* is the one who "protects" the temple. So what precisely Maruyama means by his reference to the "splendid concept" of *zaike bukkyou* is complicated by numerous nuances. One possibility is to compare Maruyama's understanding of *zaike bukkyou* to Voegelin's understanding of "common sense," briefly considered below.

**On Confronting the Modern**

On first reading there appears to be a clear difference in the works of Maruyama and Voegelin in their respective considerations of modernity. For Maruyama, the root of the crisis leading Japan into imperialism and war was a failure to embrace modernity understood primarily as the development of "subjectivity" (*shutaisei*) in Japanese society. According to Andrew Barshay, Maruyama was, since the 1940s, associated with a group of scholars known as

"modernists.“ This was a term applied by others, however, mostly Marxists, and was intended as "pejorative.“ Central to this group was a concept of the "autonomous self“ understood as a basic prerequisite to democracy. And "democracy,“ according to Barshay, was "modernity in its political aspect.“ Among these scholars, the *tennosei* had made the Japanese people "vegetative“ and incapable of "subjectivity“ (*shutaisei*) without which "democratic citizenship was inconceivable“ (Barshay 1992, 366, 367). But the concept of modernity included more than subjectivity. According to Thomas, modernity for Maruyama meant humanity "overcoming nature.“ For him, "true modernity provides individuals with autonomy by liberating them completely from nature.“ Nature represented a "cage“ to Maruyama and in three respects: as the past; as a way of distinguishing Japan from the West; and as "sensuality.“ The last is a condition which "obstructs the formation of an autonomous political subject“ (Thomas 2001, 18, 19). Curiously, with respect to "sensuality,“ the Chinese characters or *kanji* for *shutaisei* are highly suggestive as symbols. *Shu* means lord or master and can also mean "main thing.“ It is the same character as in the commonly used and heard *shujin*, meaning husband, and *shuga* meaning ego or self. *Tai* usually refers to body, as in human body, though it is also the *tai* in *kokutai* meaning the mystic bond between the emperor and his people and the "public philosophy“ of the *tennosei.* The *sei* in *shutaisei* usually refers to sex. For example, *sei kyoiku* means sex education and *seiyoku* is sexual desire. The *sei* in *tennosei* is a different character and refers to system or organization and can also refer to imperial command.[7] What is suggestive here is that the "subjectivity“ of *shutaisei* traditionally suggests a "physical“ more than a "spiritual“ or "moral“ independence. For Maruyama, however, "subjectivity“ or "autonomy“ meant a good deal more.

For Rikki Kersten, in her study of *Democracy in Postwar Japan: Maruyama Masao and the Search for Autonomy,* the *shutaisei* debate of 1947, 1948, conducted largely within Marxist terminology, was particularly important in "turning Maruyama towards a ‘freedom from' version of personal autonomy.‘ Because Maruyama first encountered Marx within the context of neo-Kantians of the Heidelberg School , he established in his approach the "primacy of consciousness and the will as important aspects of any consideration of the philosophy of history.‘ Through the influence of this school, Maruyama sought to "find a legitimate place for consciousness, ethics and value in scientific knowledge‘ (Kersten 1996, 78-81). In his essay on the theory and psychology of ultranationalism, Maruyama was particularly critical of the failure of those in the liberal, Western, people's rights movements in Japan to take the problem of "internalizing morality‘ seriously: "How frivolously they regarded the question of internalizing morality (a prerequisite of any true modernization). . . .‘ He quotes the leader of the Liberal Party, Kono Hironaka, on the latter's conversion to the "liberalism‘ of John Stuart Mill: "Now all these earlier thoughts of mine, *excepting those concerned with loyalty and filial piety*, were smashed to smithereens. At the same moment I knew that it was human freedom and human rights that I must henceforth cherish above all else.‘ What is astonishing to Maruyama is how casually and thoughtlessly Kono could "except‘ loyalty and filial piety as if these were meaningless terms or concepts easily compatible with the freedom and rights concepts of Western liberalism. This refers back to the nonsensification of language of continuing concern to Maruyama. In the opening to the West and the "struggle‘ with "liberalism‘ it is clear to Maruyama that "the question of the individual's conscience never became a significant factor in defining his freedom‘ (Maruyama 1963, 4, 5). Modernism (*kindaishugi),* a concept deeply intertwined with Marxist categories and concepts, had neo-Kantian overtones for Maruyama

such that subjectivity meant the development of an internal moral compass on the part of individuals such that they could resist the extreme disorder and "dwarfishness" of Japanese fascism.[8]

Voegelin's analysis of modernism would appear at first to be based on very different assumptions. In Chapter Four of *The New Science of Politics* Voegelin identifies the growth of gnosticism as the "essence of modernity" (Voegelin 1987, 126). In an elaborate examination of the redivinization of the political sphere dating from the middle ages in the West, Voegelin traces the origins of all modern ideologies, including liberalism and Marxism, to an immanentization of Christian eschatology. Such an immanentization denies the philosophical and theological insights regarding the dedivinization of the world and the realization of the psyche as "a new center in man at which he experiences himself as open toward transcendental reality" (Vogelin 1987, 67). Modern ideologies, as new forms of gnosticism, as based upon philosophies of history claiming certainty, come to be the dominant features of modernity. Among the greatest tasks of scholars, therefore, is to regain the insights of those both prior to and within modernity regarding the opening of the soul and experiences of the transcendent. Although Voegelin's work is often frustrating to those who first encounter it, often due to his use of philosophical concepts from ancient Greece no longer used in mainstream academic discourse but upon which he insists we theorize due to their conceptual precision and transparency as symbols of experience, there is at the heart of Voegelin's work, as noted by Glenn Hughes, a defense of "human dignity." Though he rarely uses the phrase in his work, and there is "no extended analysis of the concept of dignity per se," Voegelin is among the "strongest defenders" of "human dignity" (Hughes 2005, 77). Also, there is a healthy respect for common sense. By common sense Voegelin means, according to James Wiser, the sense one finds in Cicero and

Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid. That is, human beings have a potential according to which can be established a "minimal stage of development in the life of reason which is necessary if there is to be political and social order" (Wiser 2005, 99). It is certainly reasonable to look for parallels in Maruyama's attempt to find meaning in and give meaning to a concept of *shutaisei*, understood as modern, and Voegelin's examination of traditional philosophical concepts as symbols of engendering experiences of a community of being understood as god, man, the world, and society and understood as "beyond" modern. For both, comprehensive ideological systems, whether pre-modern (*tennosei*) or modern (various isms), are threats to "order" in history.

**Philosophy and Life in Tension**

Among the most consistently observed parallels in the works of Voegelin and Maruyama, two dimensions particularly stand out. First is the importance of philosophy to the study of politics and to the discipline of political science. Second is a "language" of existence in tension. With respect to the first dimension, both scholars begin with philosophical questions. For Voegelin, and as Dante Germino expressed it, philosophy is at the "core" of any science of politics:

> So the domain of 'empirical' political reality expanded from constitutions to the ideas that undergird them and, further, from these ideas to the experiences of participation in political and social reality of which the ideas were expressions and finally to the comparative study of experiences of order and disorder in the psyche of representative human types, the philosophers, sages, and prophets who have done the most to illumine the contours of the drama of humanity. Philosophy, then, Voegelin teaches us, is not

> something optional for a political science worthy of the name: it is the core of that science (Germino 1978, 111).

For Maruyama, the possibilities for serious scholarship in Japan were opened up by the end of the *tennosei* beginning in August, 1945. In his essay on "Politics as a Science in Japan ,[illegible] published in 1947, he looked forward "for the first time[illegible] to "criticize rationally the very hub of State power.[illegible] At last scholars in Japan could study in the manner of past masters:

> We must do as Aristotle did with the ancient polis, as Machiavelli did with Renaissance Italy, as Hobbes and Locke did with seventeenth century England, as Marx did with the Revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune, as Bryce did with the democracies, as Beard, Merriam, Laski, and Siegfried did in the twenties and thirties. By analyzing the complicated trends that underlie Japanese politics, we must elicit the laws of political process and behavior, constantly trying to verify in the actual political situation the propositions and categories thus acquired[illegible] (Maruyama 1963, 233, 234).

Voegelin and Maruyama would certainly disagree on the various particulars regarding what constituted the practice of philosophy. Voegelin was more deeply immersed in the Western tradition of philosophical discourse and, ultimately, in how that discourse reflected engendering experiences well and poorly. Maruyama was more deeply immersed in dialogue and discussion regarding the meaning of modernity, democracy, subjectivity, and the prospect of Japan "overcoming[illegible] nature. There is in the work of each, however, an honesty, a diligence, and a tenacious resistance to political disorder characteristic of a "love of wisdom.[illegible]

Existence in tension is the primary theme in Voegelin's work. Recognition, acceptance, and courage with respect to a life in tension between polarities variously conceptualized as time and the timeless, the immanent and the transcendent, the human and the divine, the beginning and the beyond, among other expressions, is essential for Voegelin. Following Plato and William James Voegelin stressed the importance of human consciousness understood as a consciousness of participation in an in-between reality consisting of both human and divine aspects. Preferring Plato's concept of *metaxy* to express this experience of in-betweenness, Voegelin increasingly cautioned in his work to avoid *hypostases.* By this he meant "the fallacious assumption that the poles of the participatory experience are self contained entities that form a mysterious contact on occasion of an experience" (Voegelin 1989, 73). It is in the ability to resist the collapse of this tension that resistance to extreme politics with "logics" of history and utopian expectations is made possible. In the end, according to Thomas Hollweck, Voegelin's work represents a search for a "post-Imperial" order and a recognition that not only is there no logic to history, but what we call history is an "open horizon" (Hollweck 2005).

The language of life in tension in Maruyama's work is more closely allied with his experience in a uniquely Japanese context with "Imperial" order. Robert Bellah, in a tribute to Maruyama as "scholar and friend," stresses how there was a tension in Maruyama's work between "universalism and particularism." This, for Bellah, is a more accurate rendering of what is central in the body of Maruyama's work, not that he was a "modernist." The latter designation is, for Bellah, "unfortunate:" "The use of this term, by encapsulating him with a small number of like minded thinkers who flourished at a definite time period, is a way of dismissing him." Similarly, to label Maruyama "Eurocentric," as many do, is "finally

trivial.&#65533; Maruyama "spent his whole life in the study of things Japanese&#65533; (Bellah 2003, 146-148). Mikiso Hane, in his translator's preface to the English version of *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, relates that Maruyama once told him that his early studies represented a "tug of war&#65533; between German idealism and Western positivism: "ultimately he settled somewhere in between German historicism and English empiricism, that is, in the scholarship represented by men like Max Weber, Hermann Heller, and Karl Mannheim&#65533; (Maruyama 1974, viii).

It is certainly premature to suggest anything more than these few parallels between two eminent scholars whose work is under constant review by a wide range of scholars in several disciplines. Still, the parallels observed here suggest the reasonableness at least of a fuller comparison of the scholarly and scientific contributions of Voegelin and Maruyama. Each began from the political realities of their times, and each insisted on the personal experiences within those realities as the starting point of their professional concerns. Each was particularly sensitive to the corrupting influence of ideologies and to the special problems brought on by the corruption of language in particular. Each turned to the study of history and philosophy for a comprehension of the crises of their times and each confronted the challenges of modernism, though in divergent ways. Each is considered a preeminent scholar with a large following and each has left collected works to challenge future scholars. Neither believed in a logic of history and each appealed in one way or another to a concept of human dignity which cut across civilizational boundaries. For each politics was more than the clash of interests or the particular dynamics of power relationships. Ultimately, Eric Voegelin and Masao Maruyama each contributed above all to the prospect, in Maruyama's words, of distinguishing "between those

events which are pregnant with a further growth in the human capacity and those which have no meaning but of ‘turning back the clock' of human history’ (Maruyama 1963, xvii).

*End Notes*

[1]See especially the article by John G. Gunnell (1988) where the impact of these scholars on traditional political science in the United States , and the role of scholars in the U.S. such as John H. Hallowell, is dramatized.

[2]Two of the authors here, Voegelin and Arendt, have been honored by the American Political Science Association with the Benjamin Lippincott Award for works in political theory by a living scholar whose works are still considered significant after fifteen years.

[3]On Voegelin's work in particular regarding this emphasis, see Gephardt (2005).

[4]See Robert Bellah's introductory essay in *Imagining Japan* (2003)

[5]Voegelin always considered himself something of a literary critic and frequently refers in his work to works of fiction. He expressed his thoughts in this regard in correspondence with Robert Heilman. According to Voegelin, literary criticism was one of his "permanent occupations.” For a thorough consideration of Voegelin as literary critic, see Charles R. Embry (2008).

[6]For a careful consideration of "orientalism" and the sense in which Bellah uses the concept here see Edward W. Said's classic work (1979).

[7]For a careful study of these characters see Nelson (1994). The characters referenced here may be located as follows: *shu* at character 285; *tai* at 405; and *sei* at 1666 and 16 respectively.

[8]For Maruyama's analysis of the "dwarfishness" of Japanese fascism, see (Maruyama 1963, 115-128).

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