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SUSANNA FESSLER

The Debate on the Uselessness of Western Studies

Abstract: In 1902, Mori Ōgai and Anesaki Chōfū briefly engaged in a public debate on the importance of study abroad and Western learning in general. Chōfū was cautionary about Japan following foolishly in the steps of Germany; Ōgai countered with the argument that the West (and Germany in particular) offered intellectual riches as long as the Japanese student chose his subjects carefully. Neither man “won” the debate, but their arguments reveal how German philosophy influenced modern Japan and how variably that philosophy was interpreted.

The Meiji Japanese experience abroad varied not only across temporal divides but also in accordance with an individual’s training, expectations, and goals. The opportunities to study abroad were initially fairly limited in the 1860s and early 1870s, but they more than quadrupled by the turn of the century. At first, the majority of Japanese sent overseas were expected to study the natural sciences (including medicine), the social sciences (law, political science, military science, education, etc.), and industry.¹ Although these areas of inquiry remained popular throughout the Meiji period, by the 1900s some scholars also focused on the humanities (philosophy or literature, for example). The sponsors of Japanese studying abroad likewise varied with the times: in the *bakumatsu* period, one’s *han* was the most likely sponsor, but immediately after the Restoration, sponsors tended to be government ministries and the military. By the end of the Meiji period, private organizations, both educational and philanthropic, joined the ranks of overseas-study benefactors. One might find any sort of continuity or similarity in this sea of variables surprising, yet for some of those

1. For a breakdown of areas of study, see Tezuka Akira, ed., *Bakumatsu Meiji kaigai tokōsha sōran* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1992).

participating in study abroad, notably Mori Ōgai² (1862–1922) and Anesaki Chōfū³ (1873–1949), the experience qua experience became a point of unifying discourse.

Ōgai studied medicine in Germany from 1884 to 1888, sponsored by the Ministry of War. He divided his time between Leipzig, Berlin, and Munich. Upon his return to Japan, he pursued a military career and also an illustrious career as a prominent author of both fiction and nonfiction. By most accounts, Ōgai's experience in Germany was positive; it was a time of comparative goodwill between Japan and Germany, and Ōgai was treated well by his German hosts. The Sino-Japanese War was still a few years away, and Japan was a relative newcomer to the international community. Ōgai's main objective was to study public hygiene, and he was greatly impressed with the advances in public health he found in Germany. He became determined to bring those scientific advancements back to Japan. Ōgai also became very interested in German literature and philosophy, particularly the aesthetic ideas of Eduard Hartmann (1842–1906). In the years following his stint abroad, Ōgai translated some of Hartmann's treatises into Japanese and became a minor figure in intellectual debates on aesthetics in Japan. But really, for Ōgai, Germany was a land of science and technological advancement.

Chōfū studied religion in Germany from 1900 to 1903, sponsored by the Ministry of Education. His time was divided between Kiel, Berlin, and Leipzig. After returning to Japan, he became a professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University and began what would be a highly respected career in the field of comparative religions. Chōfū's experience in Germany was in sum negative; although he became good friends with his academic mentor, Paul Deussen, and was able to progress in his studies, the national situation in Germany made his stay unpleasant. Between Ōgai's departure and Chōfū's arrival, Kaiser Wilhelm II had taken power and begun his campaign against the "yellow peril" (as he referred to East Asians). In addition to the political unrest which caused Chōfū to fear for his well-being at times, another source of discontent for Chōfū was disillusionment with Protestantism. He had no interest in the scientific advancements that had captured Ōgai's attention; rather, he was in search of the spirituality that drove the West. Before arriving in Germany, he was convinced that Lutheranism must be the driving force behind Germany's success, but after seeing how Wilhelm used religion as a political tool, Chōfū turned away from all forms of Protestantism, labeling them as misguided.⁴

2. Ōgai was his pen name; his given name was Rintarō.

3. Chōfū was his pen name; his given name was Masaharu.

4. Chōfū did not dismiss Christianity in its entirety. Years later, in 1908, he traveled to Italy to learn more about St. Francis of Assisi, finding many parallels between St. Francis and the Japanese Pure Land saint, Hōnen. See Anesaki Chōfū, *Hanatsumi nikki* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1909).

Although Ōgai was not ready to accept all things German without question, in balance he felt that Germany—at least the Germany of the 1880s—had much to offer Japan. Chōfū, on the other hand, turned his focus to France and Italy, essentially leaving German studies behind for good. Why should we compare these two seemingly unconnected scholars? The two engaged in a brief exchange about their experiences in Germany, and through that exchange revealed two unique perspectives on study abroad and Western studies by Meiji Japanese, topics often treated as undifferentiated entities.

Scholarly Debates at the Turn of the Century

Let us begin our consideration by looking at Chōfū's initial complaint about Germany and Ōgai's interpretation of it.

When I was still in Japan and learned of the European civilization only through books, I looked upon it with secret wonder. My greatest wish in crossing the seas to visit this country [Germany] was to acquaint myself with its civilization, and draw from it some spiritual gain.⁵ But there are few in Europe who possess an understanding of philosophy. The great poets are not the vagabonds one sees on the trains in Germany. In particular, the world of German thought in the late nineteenth century was akin to the declining *Man'yō* age. The brilliant French culture of the eighteenth century had moved the German spirit, and the early nineteenth century was the classic age of philosophy and letters. But after the irresistible force of thought and literary production had overflowed into the spiritual world, now we find ourselves in the next age where there are no geniuses, where there are no great minds of production besides those who simply embellish and ornament what has come before. [Anesaki Chōfū]

In the latest issue of the *Taiyō*, I read an open letter addressed by Mr. Anesaki [Chōfū] now studying in Berlin to Mr. Takayama [Chogyū]. Mr. Anesaki seems aggrieved, finding his study abroad hardly meaningful. He states that the only benefit he has gained is his discovery of defects of [the] German nation. He says the fundamentals of German culture and religion are of little value. And it seems there are not a few intellectuals in Tokyo who approve his opinion. This should be interpreted that they consider study abroad futile.⁶ [Mori Ōgai]

The first quotation above comes from an open letter, titled “Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru sho”⁷ (An answer to Takayama Chogyū), which Anesaki

5. The first two sentences here are translated by Hirakawa Sukehiro in “Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Western Learning” (Part 2), *Contemporary Japan*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1967), p. 791. Unless noted otherwise, all translations in this article are my own.

6. Passage translated by Hirakawa in *ibid.*, p. 789.

7. The title, “Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru sho,” refers to an earlier letter on aesthetics by Chogyū, also published in *Taiyō* and part of the *biteki seikatsu ron* (aesthetic life debate).

Chōfū published serially in the February and March 1902 issues of the magazine *Taiyō*. The letter was ostensibly addressed to the editor of *Taiyō* (and Chōfū's close friend), Takayama Chogyū⁸ (1871–1902). The second quotation comes from a speech given by Mori Ōgai to the troops in Kokura, titled “Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu” (On the vicissitudes of Western studies). Ōgai had been stationed in Kokura since June 1899; he gave this speech on the eve of his return to Tokyo. While in Kyushu—in a post usually described by his biographers as a kind of punishment or exile because he complained too much to his superiors and “insisted too much on modern views of medicine that were difficult if not impossible for older officers trained in traditional methods to grasp”⁹—Ōgai kept current on debates and events in the intellectual circles of the capital, and one of the major outlets for such information was *Taiyō*. Ōgai's speech was a direct response to Chōfū's letter.

Although Ōgai and Chōfū were ostensibly discussing the study-abroad experience, to a certain extent they were talking past each other. Chōfū was critiquing German culture; Ōgai was advocating studying German civilization and gleaned what one could from it. It was not that Ōgai willfully misunderstood Chōfū, really. Rather, Ōgai was using Chōfū's letter as an opportunity to continue a series of other debates on aesthetics, debates that involved Chōfū, Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859–1935), and Takayama Chogyū. In order to understand Ōgai's response to Chōfū, then, one must first trace the main scholarly relationships between these four men that led to it.

Chronologically, the debates began with an exchange between Ōgai and Shōyō in 1891–92 on the terms “objective” and “subjective,” incorporating the ideas of Hartmann, whom Ōgai had studied extensively, and the synthesis of English literature which had informed Shōyō's *Shōsetsu shinzui* in 1885.¹⁰ The debate does not lend itself to quick summary; in their dependence on two different literary traditions (German and British), the two men invariably ended up in areas that did not compare easily. Shōyō, as in *Shōsetsu shinzui*, held that literature should be based on real, objective experience. Ōgai agreed with this but with the Hartmann caveat that there was an “absolute beauty” that could “invest the particular with a higher truth.”¹¹ What is important about this debate for our purposes is that it put

This letter was reprinted in *Takayama Chogyū, Saitō Nonohito, Anesaki Chōfū, Tobari Chikufū shū*, Vol. 40 of *Meiji bungaku zenshū*, ed. Senuma Shigeaki (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1965), pp. 210–20. All page numbers for this letter refer to this edition.

8. Chogyū was his pen name; his given name was Rinjirō.

9. J. Thomas Rimer, *Mori Ōgai* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), p. 27.

10. See R. Petralia, “Nietzsche in Meiji Japan: Culture Criticism, Individualism and Reaction in the ‘Aesthetic Life’ Debate of 1901–1903” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1981), pp. 404–5. Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōsetsu shinzui* (Tokyo: Shōgetsudō, 1885).

11. Rimer, *Mori Ōgai*, p. 55.

aesthetics as a scholarly area of inquiry front and center in the Japanese literary world.

A decade later, in 1901–3, there was another exchange of ideas known as the *biteki seikatsu ron* (aesthetic life debate). This was a broad academic debate among many scholars—chiefly Chogyū and the writer Tsubouchi Shōyō—and has been thoroughly discussed elsewhere.¹² But again, for our purposes, it was significant because Chogyū advocated an aesthetic life based on the individual's senses and Shōyō advocated a rational, objective approach. The juxtaposition of “objective” and “subjective” thus reappeared, Shōyō advocating the objective and Chogyū advocating the subjective. Ultimately, this dichotomy was at the heart of what Chōfū found problematic in Germany.

Chōfū, Ōgai, and Chogyū all traveled in the same intellectual circles. Chōfū had been marginally involved in the *biteki seikatsu ron* through his close friendship with Chogyū; Chogyū had published a number of essays in the late 1890s on aesthetics, including “*Rekishi gadai ron*” (Essay on the subject of historical paintings).¹³ And, Chogyū began teaching aesthetics at Tokyo Imperial University in 1898. Chogyū was thus a professional aesthetician; the university asked him in 1900 to go to Europe to further his studies of aesthetics, but poor health prevented him from doing so. It was a tremendous disappointment for him, made all the more sad when Chōfū was sent to Germany on a Ministry of Education scholarship the same year. Although Chōfū's objective in Germany was to study religion, he may have felt some obligation to include aesthetics in his focus as a consolation to Chogyū. Because Chōfū had gone to Germany when Chogyū could not, and Chōfū wrote about aesthetics in the journal Chogyū edited, Ōgai may have viewed Chōfū as a proxy for Chogyū. Chōfū admired Chogyū greatly; he complimented him in his letters and edited the compendium of Chogyū's works shortly after his untimely death in December of 1902.¹⁴

Chogyū was primarily drawn to aesthetics, but his interests were broad and his pen sharp. Before Chōfū's departure for Europe, Chogyū had taken advantage of his editorial clout in three articles taking Ōgai to task for his philosophical and aesthetic ideas, particularly his interpretation of Hartmann.¹⁵ Later Chogyū continued his attacks in articles on Ōgai's

12. See Petralia, “Nietzsche in Meiji Japan,” pp. 520–742.

13. See Watanabe Kazuyasu, “The Aesthetician Takayama Chogyū,” in Michael F. Marra, ed., *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp. 115–22.

14. Chogyū himself was slated to study abroad at the same time as Chōfū, but shortly before his departure he coughed up blood and was thus kept home for medical reasons. His illness turned out to be tuberculosis, which was the cause of his death only months after the events depicted here.

15. See “Ōgai ni kotau” (June 1896), “Ōgai to Harutoman” (August 1896), and “Ōgai no iwayuru chūshō risōshugi” (August 1896), in *Taiyō*.

translation of Hartmann's *Philosophie des Schönen* (Philosophy of beauty, 1887).¹⁶ Chogyū's criticism in these articles was that Ōgai did not represent Hartmann's ideas well in his translation (of Hartmann) and that he oversimplified those ideas in an infelicitous fashion. The friction between Chogyū and Ōgai seems to have been partly based on what they published but exacerbated by a growing stubbornness in each to listen to the other.

This jousting through the media all made for a heady atmosphere between Chogyū and Ōgai. The former had established himself as one of the major voices in the relatively new field of aesthetics and often wrote acerbic and opinionated commentary in *Taiyō*, but he had never studied abroad. The latter was a highly respected man of letters known for his tenacity. He was also a veteran of studying abroad and had had a very positive experience in Europe. Ōgai openly criticized Chogyū in a newspaper article in 1900, expressing his disdain that "all of heaven and earth have fallen under the sway of *Taiyō*"¹⁷ and that Chogyū unfairly received accolades from the literati of Japan. Thus, when Chōfū wrote his open letter "Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru sho" to Chogyū complaining bitterly about his own experiences in Germany, Ōgai sat up and took notice.

The Specific Exchange between Chōfū and Ōgai

Such an atmosphere led up to what Ōgai, in his speech in Kokura, called the *yōgaku muyōron* (debate on the uselessness of Western studies). It was, perhaps, unfair of Ōgai to do so because Chōfū did not at any point say this. The "debate" was brief: Chōfū's first letter in *Taiyō*, dated in December 1901, was published serially in the February and March 1902 issues. Ōgai responded with his speech on March 24, 1902, delivered to the Japanese troops in Kokura. Shortly thereafter, Chōfū published three more letters titled together as "Takayama-kun ni okuru" in the March and April issues of *Taiyō*. Finally, a collection of letters titled "Futatabi Chogyū ni atauru sho" (Again, letters for Chogyū) appeared in the August 1902 issue of *Taiyō*, but the letters were dated May 14, May 17, and May 18, 1902, respectively, and were accompanied by introductory remarks by Chogyū. So, although I call the exchange of ideas between Chōfū and Ōgai a "debate," I should note that this was a debate with only two volleys.

Many scholars make passing mention of the *yōgaku muyōron*, in part

16. Chogyū's attacks were directed specifically at the parts titled "Der Begriff des Schönen" and "Das Dasein des Schönen" which Ōgai published under the title *Shinbi kōryō* (Tokyo: Shun'yōdō, 1899). Chogyū's articles were "'Shinbi kōryō' o hyōsu," *Tetsugaku zasshi*, August 1899, and "'Hiyō: 'Shinbi kōryō' o hyōsu," *Teikoku bungaku*, August 1899.

17. From Ōgai's essay, "Ōgai gyoshi to wa tare zo?" translated by J. Thomas Rimer as "Who Is Ōgai Gyoshi?" in J. Thomas Rimer, ed., *Not a Song Like Any Other* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), p. 8.

because Chōfū is seen as challenging the authority of Ōgai, his senior and one who was well respected among his peers.¹⁸ Another cause of notoriety was that Ōgai took the liberty of paraphrasing Chōfū as saying that study abroad and Western studies were useless, a rather controversial statement at the turn of the century when hundreds of Japanese were headed abroad, particularly to Germany, which was considered to be at the forefront of the sciences, including military science.¹⁹ That said, what was at issue was not really the usefulness of study abroad. The debate was about two tangential topics: first, the benefits of adopting certain aspects of Western culture and technology, and, second, the role of religion and philosophy in Japan's quest for modernization. Ōgai was a strong proponent of Western science, particularly in the field of medicine, and by extension he also took interest in philosophical views that were empirical and "objective."

On the other side of the coin, Chōfū focused (unsurprisingly, given his position as a scholar of comparative religions) on the current form that Christianity—specifically Lutheranism—took in Germany and how detrimental he saw it to be on a broader, global scale. We cannot easily place one man in a "traditionalist" camp and the other in a "progressive" camp because each chose from old and new traditions to suit his world outlook, and the suggestions they made about study abroad were informed by those choices. In a nutshell, Chōfū embraced the views of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and to some extent those of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), and Ōgai rejected them in favor of a scientific approach. How they expressed these positions and how their opinions in the letters and the Kokura speech represent their respective stances is detailed below.

Finally, I hasten to note that Ōgai's speech title, "Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu," implied that the topic was Western studies in general, including all the countries of Europe and North America. However, Chōfū's original letters were specifically aimed at Germany, and Ōgai's response to Chōfū was equally limited to defending the adaptation of German culture and learning. Ōgai did not study abroad in other countries and thus addressed Germany as representative of *yōgaku*; after his bitter experiences in Germany,

18. See, for example, Donald Keene in *Dawn to the West*, Vol. 2 (New York: Henry Holt, 1984), p. 533: "when Takayama Chogyū's planned trip to Europe had been canceled because of his illness, his friend Anesaki Masaharu, perhaps to console him, had published an article asserting that study abroad was of no use to a Japanese, but this view was clearly not shared by the many people who attended the farewell banquet for [Shimamura] Hōgetsu" (who was awarded a fellowship in 1902 to study aesthetics in Europe).

19. *Bakumatsu Meiji kaigai tokōsha sōran* indicates that 289 Japanese went abroad to study in 1899 (115 to Germany), 328 in 1900 (106 to Germany), and 289 in 1901 (105 to Germany). Even accounting for some discrepancy in the data, we can surmise that in any given year around the turn of the century at least one-third of those Japanese studying abroad went to Germany.

Chōfū later traveled throughout Europe, apparently in search of the spiritually enlightened civilization he failed to find in Germany. This point alone refutes much of what Ōgai interprets as Chōfū's stance. In other words, Ōgai accused Chōfū of rejecting *yōgaku*, but Chōfū was simply rejecting Germany.

Germany for Chōfū: A Religious Land

Ōgai's response to Chōfū has been examined by Hirakawa Sukehiro,²⁰ who himself admits that he is more of an Ōgai scholar than a Chōfū scholar. Hayashi Masako has also examined the German influences on Chōfū, Chogyū, and Ōgai, particularly as displayed in *Taiyō* articles by the former two. Yet the heart of why Chōfū disliked Germany and wrote his screed to Chogyū has not been the main subject of any singular scholarly work. Certainly, as Hirakawa notes, Chōfū arrived in Germany at a particularly infelicitous time. Kaiser Wilhelm II, in his infamous "Hunnenrede" speech on July 27, 1900, responding to the murder of the German envoy in China, said the Chinese would be given no quarter. Japanese were lumped by some Germans into the category of "East Asians" and thus were guilty by association. Chōfū had arrived in Germany but one month earlier to study with Paul Deussen (1845–1919) at the University of Kiel. Although later he wrote fondly in his autobiography of his friendship with Deussen and his family, the letter Chōfū wrote to Chogyū for publication in *Taiyō* tells us that his other experiences in Germany were less pleasant.²¹ He writes that children threw stones at him in the street, inspired by the Kaiser's rhetoric against the "yellow peril," and that German culture had fallen into a horrid state, much worse than he had ever imagined. The Germans, he wrote, were barbaric and slavish to the Kaiser. Even Chogyū, who was not one to shy away from his own rhetoric, sought (in a subsequent issue of *Taiyō*) to gently correct some of Chōfū's anger.²² Was it simply the Kaiser who caused this anger? Did Mori Ōgai really understand what it was about Germany that made Chōfū so unhappy?

We can begin to answer these questions by considering Chōfū's context: he was one of 33 students chosen by the Ministry of Education to travel abroad in 1900 to further his education.²³ Having graduated from Tokyo

20. Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Mori Ōgai no 'Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu' o megutte; sei'yō bunka to no 'de ai no shinri' no ichi kenkyū," *Hikaku bunka kenkyū kiyō*, No. 6 (1965), pp. 315–70.

21. See Anesaki Masaharu, *Waga shōgai: Anesaki Masaharu sensei no gyōseki* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1993), pp. 82–88.

22. See Hirakawa, "Mori Ōgai no 'Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu' o megutte," p. 337.

23. Of the 33 students that year, only Chōfū is listed in the *Bakumatsu Meiji kaigai tokōsha sōran* as studying "Religion." Between 1868 and 1912, the Ministry of Education sponsored more than 800 students to study abroad in various fields. Of those, 37 came from

Imperial University and entered graduate school, he tells us in his autobiography that he was unsure when or under whose auspices he would study abroad, but he remained sure the experience would take place. In 1900 he was 27 years old and a promising young scholar who was a personal favorite of the prominent professor of philosophy Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944).²⁴ As he notes, traveling abroad was expected of him and his peers, and in his generation “study abroad” (*yōkō*) more often than not meant study in the West.²⁵ As a student Chōfū had had many German professors, not only of foreign letters but also of history and philosophy. At Tokyo Imperial University, among the foreign academics, the largest group was the Germans, who comprised 38 per cent of the foreign faculty at the university during the Meiji period.²⁶ In philosophy, Chōfū studied with Raphael von Koeber (1848–1923), who lived and taught in Tokyo from 1893 to 1914. Koeber introduced Chōfū to the works of Schopenhauer and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854). Consequently, Chōfū came to view Germany as a country of intellectual inquiry. Already studying English, he also began to study German and to take an interest in German literature such as Johann Goethe’s *Faust* and Franz Grillparzer’s *Sappho*. By 1898 he completed a translation of Eduard Hartmann’s treatise *Die Religion des Geistes* (The religion of the spirit)²⁷ as well as a translation of *Der Buddhismus, seine Dogmen, Geschichte und Literatur* (Buddhism: its dogmas, history, and literature, 1860) by Vasili Pavlovich Vasilév (1818–1900).²⁸ He also had written articles on Schopenhauer and Schelling, for *Tetsugaku zasshi* and *Rikugō zasshi*, respectively.

Indeed, it would seem that before Chōfū left for Germany he was fairly well read in the German philosophers. In addition to Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Hartmann, he had also studied Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), and Max Müller (1823–1900). When he wrote in his open letter in 1902 that

the Philosophy Department at Tokyo Imperial University, of which 6 specifically focused on religious studies (*shūkyō kankei*) as opposed to the humanities (*jinbunkei*). If we examine the students who studied abroad during the *bakumatsu* and Meiji periods, regardless of provenance and sponsorship, we find 240 in religious studies. By comparison, about four times as many (just over 1,000) studied medicine, as Ōgai did.

24. Chōfū had married Inoue’s niece, Masu, in February 1898, at Inoue’s suggestion.

25. Anesaki, *Waga shōgai*, p. 76.

26. See James R. Bartholomew, “Japanese Modernization and the Imperial Universities, 1876–1920,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (1978), p. 263.

27. The translation was first published serially as *Shūkyō tetsugaku* in *Tetsugaku zasshi* beginning in 1896 and later published as a single volume in 1898 by Hakubunkan.

28. This serialized translation appeared in *Tōyō tetsugaku* between March and December 1896. Two more sections appeared in the same periodical in February and August 1897. For a complete listing of volumes and numbers, see Anesaki, *Waga shōgai*, p. 94. Vasilév was a Russian Sinologist.

“the early nineteenth century was the classic age of philosophy and letters” but that “now we find ourselves in the next age where there are no geniuses, where there are no great minds of production besides those who simply embellish and ornament what had come before,” he was lamenting (as we shall see) the eclipse of Schopenhauerian thought at the turn of the century, based on his extensive reading.

How exactly Chōfū came under Paul Deussen’s tutelage is unclear but it is not surprising that he did so. As mentioned, Chōfū was a student and nephew-in-law of Inoue Tetsujirō, who held the first chair in philosophy at the imperial university. Inoue had studied in Germany—at the same time as Ōgai—with various important figures including Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt (1832–1920) and Hartmann. Inoue was also responsible for finding a position at the university for Koeber, an expert on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Presumably, Chōfū became interested in Nietzsche and Schopenhauer through Inoue and Koeber, then chose to study with Deussen in Germany. The two were well suited to each other. Deussen was particularly interested in Buddhism, and, in taking Chōfū under his wing, he gained an informative disciple. Deussen was a close friend of Nietzsche, but by 1900 Nietzsche was mentally incapacitated and no longer producing philosophical works. Also, he and Deussen had grown distant once Nietzsche formally rejected Schopenhauer, whose thoughts Deussen continued to embrace. So, although Chōfū recalls the sad day when Deussen received news of Nietzsche’s death, it would seem that, with Chōfū, Deussen promoted more the ideas of Schopenhauer than those of Nietzsche.

Chōfū was intrigued by Schopenhauer and translated his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (The world as will and representation, 1818) as *Ishi to genshoku toshite no sekai* (Hakubunkan, 1910–11). What was it about Schopenhauer that served as such an attraction? He was widely known as a pessimist and an atheist, neither of which describes Chōfū. But Schopenhauer’s pessimism and atheism were not the negative, nihilistic attributes one might immediately imagine; rather, they were closely aligned with Buddhist ideals—at least, that was how Schopenhauer himself saw them, and we can speculate that this is what appealed to Chōfū. As Peter Abelsen notes:

When the tenets of Buddhism became known in Europe during the third and fourth decade of the nineteenth century, Arthur Schopenhauer was delighted with the affinity they showed to his own philosophy. Having completed his main work *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* as early as 1818, he considered it an entirely new (and thus pure) expression of the wisdom once taught by the Buddha—at times he even called himself a “Buddhaist.”²⁹

29. Peter Abelsen, “Schopenhauer and Buddhism,” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (1993), p. 255. Abelsen rightly notes that Schopenhauer’s grasp of Buddhism was not

Specifically, what probably appealed to Chōfū most was Schopenhauer's rejection of monotheism and his universalist approach to the human spiritual experience. (Although *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* focuses on epistemology, Chōfū's letter to Chogyū does not address this topic.) He expected more Germans to have embraced those ideas; when he arrived in Germany and found that "there are few in Europe who possess an understanding of philosophy," he was referring specifically to their religion, which he saw as the "wellspring" of civilization. He wrote to Chogyū that "religion is where the people's conceptual ideals are concentrated and cultivated—it brings forth the entire state's civilization."³⁰ In a self-deprecating tone, he wrote that religious studies were truly more complex than he had anticipated but that he would not let that hurdle prevent him from continuing his studies in hopes of making some semblance of individual progress. Disheartened by Germany's parochialism, however, Chōfū saw little hope for the country at large. Similarly, he feared for Japan's fate should it continue to emulate Germany:

I am here in Germany and observing its culture, and the realities caused by my lamentations of daily events are similar to your shouts to the world about the deficiencies in Japanese civilization. I do not speak of Germany for the sake of Germany; instead, I speak of German civilization for the sake of Japan, which has the same trends and deficiencies in its civilization.³¹

In sum, Chōfū feared that, should Japan continue to follow the German example, it would fall into a state of cultural corruption. This state would be built on stagnant ideas and could not usher in a modern age. Ōgai, who had also studied in Germany for an extended period 15 years earlier, argued that Chōfū and his sympathizers simply did not understand what technological advancements Germany provided. In that sense, Ōgai was right; Chōfū did not attend to technology or science. It was not at the core of civilization for him.

Modern science, in Chōfū's view, was a product of the age of reason and a slave to "objectivism," the current idea that all of reality could be known objectively. This dichotomy of "objective" versus "subjective" informed the humanities as well as the sciences, including religious studies. Chōfū held that individual spirituality could only be experienced subjectively; the objective manifestation of religion was in its organization or divisions between faiths. As Isomae Jun'ichi explains, "Anesaki [Chōfū] understood religion to be a twofold matter comprised of phenomena and essence, whereby each 'developed religion' was simply a phenomena, while the essence of

strong, but given the nascent nature of Buddhist ideas in Europe at the time that is to be expected.

30. Anesaki, "Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru sho," p. 211.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

religion was found in the religious consciousness of the individual.”³² Through this conceptualization of spirituality and religion, Chōfū saw a unifying “subjective” experience (“essence”) throughout the world, regardless of the tradition (“phenomena”) through which it was expressed. The phenomena were not necessarily bad, but they could be, if they became political tools. Throughout his life, Chōfū admired those charismatic religious leaders who were shunned or who shunned the “phenomena” of their time: Hōnen and Nichiren in the Buddhist tradition and St. Francis of Assisi in the Christian tradition. All three men rejected objective phenomena and embraced subjective essence. Chōfū held that phenomena could facilitate a deeper essence (and had done so in human history), and before he arrived in Germany he thought the Protestant church, in rejecting Catholicism, had done just that. However, he was soon disabused of this notion.

When he arrived in Germany, expecting Protestantism to be at the center of German enlightenment, Chōfū instead discovered the opposite: German Protestants, he wrote, “were promoting their civilization by being the bitter enemies of spiritual freedom, and by fighting spiritual independence.”³³ This focus on the self—on the individual and how the individual experienced the “essence” of spirituality—was key and was what Chōfū found lacking in Germany. He was unhappy to conclude that Protestantism was just that—a movement founded on the idea of opposition to the sacred teachings. This was so important to Chōfū because it meant Protestants ignored the centrality of the grace of God in the individual. As he put it, Protestantism held that “salvation does not come from the grace of God but rather from the autocratic will of God, and man must submit to this. . . . the will of God is everything, and man’s spirit is nothing in comparison. One’s faith does not bring salvation.”³⁴ In other words, religion in Germany had been reduced to “phenomena,” not “essence.”

There was also a political side to religion which Chōfū had not expected. Perhaps the historical relationship, or the lack thereof, between Buddhism and the rulership of Japan had made him imagine that religion naturally stood somewhat apart from government and politics. That religion could be used to justify political sovereignty was not a new concept in Europe—indeed, it had been in play for centuries. But in the case of Japan, if we set aside the phenomenon of State Shintō (admittedly an important development in Japanese history but not a religious phenomenon by Chōfū’s definition), it is hard to find a parallel in which Buddhism played the same sort of role as Christianity did throughout northern Europe or that Islam played in

32. Isomae Jun’ichi, “The Discursive Position of Religious Studies in Japan: Masaharu Anesaki and the Origins of Religious Studies,” trans. Seth Jacobowitz, *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2002), p. 24.

33. Anesaki, “Takayama Chogyū no kotauru sho,” p. 212.

34. Ibid.

the Ottoman Empire. It would seem that this came as a surprise, and not a pleasant one, to Chōfū. He was ready to accept “God” (not denomination-specific but rather the essence of spirituality in the cosmos) as the “sovereign of the world,” but he quickly stated, too, that God’s rule was “not an autocratic monarchy.” Politics should have no place in religion.³⁵

Chōfū said that “Protestantism does not focus in principle on the self,” by which he meant the essence of religion. From what he saw, Lutheranism had become entirely detached from the essence and was wholly focused on the authority of the church. By extension, the individual’s spirit was “nothing” and the will of God “everything.”³⁶ God and the church are conflated in his letter, not because Chōfū felt they were one and the same but because he saw the Lutherans equating the two. But whereas the Lutherans held the will (or wrath) of God as an iron law, Chōfū considered it a benevolent force akin to parental love. This sort of compassion and sympathy was at the core of religious experience for Chōfū. It could be found in Pure Land Buddhism (the tradition into which he was born and in which he remained for most of his life) and in various branches of Christianity. It could even be found in the atheistic ideas of Schopenhauer, who, although he felt that life was a pointless path of suffering, held that there was a place for compassion nonetheless.

The disappointment Chōfū felt upon discovering how parochial the Lutheran church was is palpable here and elsewhere.³⁷ One gets the impression that, outside of the Deussen household (which provided, by all accounts, a warm, nurturing environment), Chōfū felt betrayed and besieged by German culture and the academy. Ōgai addresses this in a voice that verges on patronizing:

let me reiterate what I’ve said of the religion: although [Martin] Luther broke from the restrictive bonds of the Roman Catholic pope, in exchange he took on the fetters of an absolute monarch. That is what it is. The Protestants, as their name implies, following original and conservative vestiges [of religious ideas], held that even if Christ’s spirit could be revived, in the end many evils would arise and there would be a need to combat them. The disillusionment of Anesaki [Chōfū] was surely caused by none other than his excessive hopes.³⁸

One imagines Ōgai impatiently throwing his hands in the air as he says “that is what it is” (*aru wa shikaran*) as if to say, “what did you expect?”

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. See Anesaki, *Hanatsumi nikki*, particularly the section on Rome. Also of note is that, according to one of his grandchildren, Chōfū allowed his grandchildren to be baptized but not in a Protestant church.

38. Mori Ōgai, “Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu,” in Karaki Junzō, ed., *Mori Ōgai*, Vol. 27 of *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1965), p. 386.

That the Lutheran Church suffered under many of the same structural problems inherent in the Roman Catholic Church was a foregone conclusion for Ōgai. Given that, Ōgai chose to dedicate little time to it in his speech, instead focusing on the benefits of study abroad, namely, learning Western science.

Germany for Ōgai: A Scientific Land

In his speech to the troops at Kokura, Ōgai first noted the many scientific accomplishments of his day, including the X-ray, the steam engine, and wireless communications. He was also quick to point to certain failures (as he saw them) of Western learning, such as an increased lassitude among scholars, but insisted that they did not outweigh the progress that Western learning brought to Japan. He criticized Tsubouchi Shōyō for saying “The Japanese have hitherto gone abroad taking with them no settled opinion of their own; so they have become enamored of the West. They must henceforth go abroad fortified with a settled opinion, so that they may be able to select and obtain abroad whatever knowledge they are seeking.”³⁹ Ōgai countered that this would only hold true if the Japanese scholars were superior to Westerners in their knowledge—but, he contended, they are not. Instead, Ōgai identified Japanese scholarly hubris as the root of the problem. In other words, if a Japanese scholar fails to find the good in Western learning, then it is for lack of understanding, not necessarily objective reality. As an argument, it is sound but it does not directly address Chōfū’s concerns. Eventually, though, Ōgai turned to the specific complaints from Chōfū’s letter. The salient passage is long and best broken into sections:

Mr. Anesaki holds that the basis of academic religion in Germany today is inadequate and ties a thread of hope to the intertwining of the popularity of Nietzscheism with the future of spirituality. When I consider the direction(s) of that scholarship, I cannot but feel there is reason to lament study in the West. Let me state what Anesaki [Chōfū]’s thesis is: Today’s objectivism runs wild with a sensationalist analysis of things and forgets the integration of a central spirituality. This pushes aside the school of thought that holds Wundt as representative. If people push aside this school of thought and metaphysically seek a synthesis of spirituality, there is no reason for them to be satisfied by the current scholarly world in Germany. These types of people sympathize with the worshipers of Nietzsche and necessarily pin their hopes on spirituality.⁴⁰

Wundt was a pioneer in the field of psychology. Although his work spanned a broad array of topics, the salient point for our purposes is that

39. Hirakawa Sukehiro, “Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Western Learning” (Part 1), *Contemporary Japan*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (1967), p. 559.

40. Ōgai, “Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu,” p. 385.

he is often credited with establishing psychology as a natural science rather than an area of philosophy.⁴¹ What Ōgai is saying here is that there is a scientific approach to everything, including psychology (and, by a Wundtian extension, spirituality). But if Chōfū was going to insist on rejecting science in the study of religion, naturally he would be disappointed. Ōgai points out:

The current European schools, which are best represented through the ideas of Wundt, emulate the natural sciences by using induction to investigate individual problems. They shun metaphysics or, at least, the metaphysics that has been with us since time immemorial. I fear it would be difficult to construct a [metaphysical] view of the world that would satisfy the spirit of these schools.⁴²

Not only would it be difficult, but, Ōgai implies, unnecessary. The scientific world provides modern man with all the answers. That traditional metaphysics does not conform to science is evidence that it is outmoded and can be safely discarded.

Chōfū's Rejection of Science

In contrast, Chōfū saw a paradox in scholars—particularly philologists—claiming “objectivity” in their research: by claiming that their individual work was supported by objective facts or reality, the scholars lost their individual claims. True scholarship could only be achieved subjectively, but most of the scholars in Germany at the turn of the century had left that mode of inquiry behind. Chōfū deeply disliked the pretentiousness that he saw in the academy and associated it with this corruption of academic inquiry. He described his professors as pompous men who assigned useless readings of dry tomes and lectured in the gloomy halls of the university, never engaging with their students or with the world outside academia.⁴³ German scholarship, as depicted by Chōfū, was stalled in a miasma of useless genuflection to authority, much in the same way that German religion was stalled in mindless genuflection to the authority of the Lutheran Church.

In a subsequent letter, he further criticizes the professional scholars of religion and identifies William Robertson Smith (1846–94) as accomplishing what they could not:

Because Smith approached religion from a human perspective, his research standpoint can be called subjective. That subjective understanding resulted in his clear understanding of the Jewish people. But dear friend! Smith,

41. Bernard Spilka, Ralph W. Hood Jr., Bruce Hunsberger, and Richard Gorsuch, *The Psychology of Religion, Third Edition: An Empirical Approach* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), p. 536.

42. Anesaki, “Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru sho,” p. 211.

43. *Ibid.*

this clear researcher, was not a university professor, nor a doctor, nor a degree holder, but a correspondent for the *Times*. . . . Ah, Germany—and Japan, who emulates her—so-called scientific research in the end cannot supersede the work of a *Times* reporter!⁴⁴

It is worth noting that Chōfū was mistaken: Smith was a professor of divinity and a scholar in his own right. But what is important for Chōfū is that Smith was the subject of a libel suit in the Church of Scotland and eventually found guilty for having written heretical material for an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, for which he was an editor. Thus, Smith had rejected authority. Smith argued in the article and elsewhere that written texts, although certainly important to the “phenomena” or manifestation of religious organizations in human society, were liable to mistakes, errors, omissions, and misinterpretations.⁴⁵ He also argued that one need not embrace scientific rationalization and the denial of the supernatural in order to systematically study religious texts (in particular, the Bible). Smith’s career recovered from the suit and he lived out his life as a professor. Attacking the academy as such is thus a straw man, but Smith proves an interesting choice of hero for Chōfū because on the one hand he championed inquiry into religion, yet he insisted that such inquiry need not be “rationalistic.” Indeed, Smith wrote,

[If] you find me calling in a rationalistic principle, if you can show at any step in my argument that I . . . reject plain facts in the interests of rationalistic theories, I will frankly confess that I am in the wrong. But, on the other hand, you must remember that all truth is one, that the God who gave us the Bible has also given us faculties of reason and gifts of scholarship with which to study the Bible, and that the true meaning of Scripture is not to be measured by preconceived notions, but determined as the result of legitimate research.⁴⁶

This was the Protestant world Chōfū had dreamed of and hoped to find in Germany, before he realized that intellectual innovation had stalled there. Instead of a dynamic world of inquiry, he found musty classrooms with pretentious professors, all of whom claimed to be scholars involved in serious academic quests but whose rationalistic tendencies struck Chōfū as false and invalid. He sought a synthesis, as Ōgai put it, of spirituality, but what he found was a dogmatic approach to religion that claimed ultimate authority and superiority. In the same letter, Chōfū disparages “science” and in

44. Anesaki Chōfū, “Takayama-kun ni okuru,” reprinted in *Takayama Chogyū, Saitō Nonohito, Anesaki Chōfū, Tobari Chikufū shū*, p. 224. All page numbers for this letter refer to this edition.

45. See William Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church: A Course of Lectures on Biblical Criticism*, 2nd ed. (London: A. and C. Black, 1892), pp. 1–20.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

particular philology, saying that he is studying abroad in a country full of philologists, scholars who stand at their lecterns but fail to dig deeply into the wellspring of ideas upon which knowledge is founded.

Chōfū is ruthless with his criticisms:

The vim and vigor of German learning is only that in name. This is especially true of philology, which is surpassed by none in its intricate esoteric doctrines. Most of the people in this world come from this society [of philologists], who pit letter against letter and phrase against phrase, finally spreading their anger through open letters, with such self-esteem as to imply that only philology had such subtleties of inquiry. They separate themselves from others, demarking their own specialty and wearing a facade of [total] vainglory. Whatever they debate, they follow the hard and fast rules of their own specialty. And, if they for an instant enter the world of someone else's specialty, like a Tokyo vagabond who defends his own roped-off turf, they become angry and fight. The research is uselessly detailed; the debates are uselessly numerous. These numerous debates have made the field of vision and capacity of scholars become increasingly narrow and rigid; this is the common evil of today's German scholars.⁴⁷

Chōfū continues in this vein, quoting the German theologian Hermann Schell, who criticized the pointless pursuit of trivial rubbish. Finally, he brings the world of irrelevant studies together with politics by equating intellectual turf building by scholars with the aggressive plunder of territory by nation-states. His ultimate fear is that Japanese students, studying in Germany, were learning behaviors in the classroom that would transform into destructive political behaviors in the future.

In other words, Chōfū saw German scholars—particularly philologists—as game players of a sort: they defined their academic territory and then defended it. But the territory was nothing more than a collection of useless data, the result of splitting hairs. It was not a result of sincere inquiry and thus seemed illegitimate. Worse, this trend could easily spread to Japanese scholars who were training in Germany. It is hard to know exactly what set Chōfū off to write this tirade, but it was likely rooted in both the debates he heard at the university in Kiel and perhaps also in the territorial and imperialistic expansion by many nations across the globe which marked the turn of the century—expansion that seemed void of a deeper destiny beyond political territorial control on the part of the conquerors.

Chōfū on the Arts and Aesthetics

Chōfū's concern was not limited to practices in the academy and across national borders. He also feared that aesthetics—the appreciation of art, the role of art in man's life, the understanding of art—had withered in the mod-

47. Anesaki, "Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru sho," p. 215.

ern age and that this withering was a bellwether, indicating that the West was in cultural decline. He complained that German scholars who claim to know Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) do so after studying irrelevant minutiae such as Goethe’s handwriting, his diaries, and his letters. But to really know Goethe, and Richard Wagner (1813–83), and Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901), he tells us, one had to experience and be moved by their timeless work that spoke to the human spirit. What made them special could not be broken down into syntax, individual notes, or brushstroke technique. In describing these three artists in his letter, Chōfū turns to Buddhist concepts of nirvana and purity. Let us look at each one in turn:

[Goethe] recognized and demonstrated a magnificent, harmonious, and facile spirit, one that brought order to the grand scheme of things in nature. He sang of the deep harmony of man’s nature. His spirit, which was not tainted by lust or injured by pathos, had the power to make him the great teacher of today’s German human spirit and to obstruct the dismantling of the spiritual civilization [of Germany].⁴⁸

Certainly many Japanese writers admired Goethe, not the least of whom was Takayama Chogyū who translated *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The sorrows of young Werther, 1774) in 1891.⁴⁹ What Chōfū finds notable in Goethe is that he captured the “German spirit” which was threatened in the modern world. On the frontispiece of *Fukkatsu no shokō* (The dawn of restoration, 1904), Chōfū quotes Goethe’s poem “Vermächtnis”: “Das Wahre war schon längst gefunden/ Hat edle Geisterschaft verbunden/ Das alte Wahre faß es an!” (The Truth of yore has been descried/ And noble spirits it allied./ To dear old Truth we must adhere!)⁵⁰ In other words, old-fashioned truth—that which came before the age of “science”—should not be eschewed.

On Wagner, Chōfū writes:

From the standpoint of the arts, too, Wagner’s operas, in terms of their thought, their meter, their music—all opposed weak egotism and social formalism. . . . Dear friend, I wrote to you all about my feelings the first time I heard a Wagner opera. In a word, my whole body was covered with goose bumps and I forgot about everything else in the world. In the first piece of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Das Rheingold*, the shallow waters of the Rhine flow between the dark cliffs of the banks. From the chilling scene in which Alberich seizes the Rhine maidens’ gold and curses love, to the final piece of the Ring cycle, the so-called “Song of Omnipotent Love” in which the heroine Brünnhilde mounts Siegfried’s horse and charges into

48. Ibid., pp. 216–17.

49. “Eruteru no niai” was published serially in *Yamagata nippō*.

50. This translation is from Paul Carus, *Goethe: With Special Consideration of His Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1915), p. 244.

the raging flames of his funeral pyre, the whole opera counters the strife of dependent greed in this world. Until the solemn end in which true love—love which abandons desire and the self—reconciles all, there is depicted a boundless supply of the absolute power inside the human spirit, of the absolute unifying foundation. Another work tells of Tristan who hides his love from the world and destroys his desires; this is the gospel of the realm of nirvana. In the end, as when Percival appeals intuitively to the return to nirvana/bliss or the ultimate Christian love, Wagner is not only not a product of today's German civilization. He is a revolutionary genius who wants to overturn fundamentals and seek out a cleansing. It is no coincidence that Nietzsche found a peerless friend in Wagner. This genius's revolutionary verse . . . brought an elixir to the spirit of the German people's hearts and breathed their ideals far and wide.⁵¹

Here Chōfū identifies Wagner's message as the "gospel of nirvana"—he means not that Wagner necessarily made this connection himself but that the connection was naturally there as a part of the human spirit. Furthermore, Percival enters the "ultimate Christian love," by which he seems to mean a Platonic love, a concept that both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche addressed in their works. This is a love that "abandons desire and the self," not a romantic or carnal love, and it follows the "absolute power inside the human spirit." This power was not, however, individually empowering so much as it was simply the omnipotence of all existence. The role of the individual here is not that of an egotistical nature but rather of a subjective nature. Chōfū rejects "weak egotism" by which he means a focus on the individual self to the exclusion of a greater (spiritual) power, a focus that would lead to nationalism and parochialism, not the advancement of the individual's soul.

At no place in this passage does Chōfū identify specific musical aspects of the opera as moving; there is no mention of melody, movements, staging, direction, arias, etc. Approaching the opera in this way would be akin to the academic "hair-splitting" that he so detested in the German university. Clearly the opera moved him—made his spirit soar—and although he was eager to convey that experience, he did not want to do so with technical detail.

On Böcklin he writes:

Are not Böcklin's paintings, in terms of their fundamental ideas and their colors and their poetry, revolutionary products that abolish the form and dry realism in the so-called German Christian civilization? . . . I have already written at length to you about Böcklin; he was born in the merchant town of Basel where people are always chasing after profit (it is the place in Switzerland that most resembled the detestable Germans). However, his

51. Anesaki Chōfū, "Futatabi Chogyū ni atauru sho," reprinted in *Takayama Chogyū, Saitō Nonohito, Anesaki Chōfū, Tobari Chikufū shū*, p. 232.

aesthetic was not suited to his birthplace and instead he took in the spirit of the ancient arts of distant Rome. He lent his hand to depicting the scenic beauty of the countryside around Munich, capturing in his paintings an elegance and hues that are rare in paintings these days. He conveys an exceptional artistry beyond the heavens. He portrays the depths of the human spirit, one that has thrown off the dirt and shackles of this transitory life. In the painting “Roman Woman,” the exceptional artistry of the woman who, in the deep, dark forest, among the fallen leaves, kneels before the dim altar surrounded by smoke and prays to her gods, cannot be conveyed ultimately in today’s dry, Semitic monotheism. [In the painting “Isle of the Dead”] the tall, white-robed woman boards a boat which parts the dark, deathly still waters of the sea and turns toward a cave, the depths of which seem unknown. She proceeds toward “The Isle of the Dead,” among the gray cliffs and darkness. In another painting, in the faint light of a still evening an old monk or priest with torn clothing and disheveled hair performs a song before the Virgin Mary, while nearby an angel lends his ear with one heel raised. In another painting, “Playing in the Waves,” he depicts odd creatures like nymphs or Pan, playing in the piercingly blue, bottomless waves with looks of both kindness and contempt on their faces. As a whole, his works warn against—or perhaps they resist or deride—the fussy social formalism of today’s civilization. Take, for example, his Christ on the grave: the pure blues, the liberated expression on Christ’s face—ultimately, today’s bloody Christianity is not that which Christ taught. Böcklin resists all the aspects of today’s European civilization and expresses with his brush the ancient human spirit and deep colors of antiquity. And, in recent years, this genius has become known in the world, in the end becoming worshiped as a great name to such an extent that it must be said that in Germany, or at least in southern Germany, he stands among the heavenly spirits of mankind. He is unusual in that respect. His spirit was active—behind all the detestable aspects of German civilization—and one cannot but value him.⁵²

Chōfū also described Böcklin’s painting “Isle of the Dead” in his travelogue of Italy (*Hanatsumi nikki*, 1909), and in a similarly laudatory manner. In describing paintings, he occasionally mentions technique—the use of color or shadow, for example—but when he does so, he quickly ties it in with the larger spiritual meaning of the painting. For example, here he tells us that the “pure blues” in the painting express liberation and the true teachings of Christ. In both Wagner and Böcklin, he sees a rejection of the modern world and suggests that a return to some primal world would bring us closer to the true human spirit. In *Hanatsumi nikki*, too, he rejects the Florentine painters of the Renaissance as decadent and instead focuses on the work of Fra Angelico (c. 1395–1455) because of its ability to express the true love of Christ. Chōfū dislikes realism in paintings, associating it

52. Anesaki, “Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru no sho,” p. 217.

with a secular view; after all, it would be impossible to depict one's soul or spirit visually with any acuity.

In all these cases, Chōfū makes an aesthetic judgment based on the spiritual content of the pieces, which is notable because the entire debate between Chōfū and Ōgai began as a dialogue between Ōgai and Chogyū on the topic of aesthetics. However, Chōfū's approach to aesthetics, which was firmly rooted in the idea that art is an expression of the human spirit and should be judged as such, was not the same as Ōgai's approach, which was technical and denied the connection between religion and art. In 1890, Ōgai wrote that in the modern age, visual representations of religious figures no longer held spiritual significance, that "religious belief and religious art [had] become separated. Religious art [had] become independent of religious belief."⁵³ Ōgai translated not only Hartmann's text *Philosophie des Schönen* but also excerpts from many other German treatises on aesthetics, such as Johannes Volkelt's (1848–1940) *Ästhetische Zeitfragen* (Current questions on aesthetics, 1895) and Otto Liebmann's (1840–1912) *Zur Analysis der Wirklichkeit: Eine Erörterung der Grundprobleme der Philosophie* (On the analysis of reality: an articulation of the basic problems of philosophy, 1876).⁵⁴ Indeed, it would be fair to say that Ōgai greatly helped introduce German aesthetics to Japan, but he did so largely through select translations (some excerpts, some abridgements), not through his own interpretive essays. Ōgai's quest seems to have been to find an analytical and scientific approach to aesthetics, which was a relatively new field of inquiry.

In stark contrast is Chōfū, who produced two works of note on aesthetics: a book-length work, *Bi no shūkyō* (1907), which included a translation of Emil P. Berg's collection of letters titled *God the Beautiful: An Artist's Creed* (1901) as well as Chōfū's own essays,⁵⁵ and a collection of other essays, *Fukkatsu no shokō*. Berg's letters closely tie art and aesthetics with religion; the former is the expression of the latter, or at least an expression of the religious consciousness of the individual. Berg's letters are informal, not carefully structured academic arguments such as Ōgai was interested in translating. But Chōfū's interest in them seems to have lasted for a number of years. Not only did he translate the volume in its entirety, he also took from it the strong affiliation between religion and art that became a salient feature in his travelogues, *Hanatsumi nikki* and *Teiunshū* (1911). *Fukkatsu*

53. Mori Ōgai, "Toyama Shōichi shi no garon o bakusu," trans. Mikiko Hirayama, in Rimer, ed., *Not a Song Like Any Other*, p. 111.

54. For a more complete listing of German works translated by Ōgai, see Bruno Lewin, "Mori Ōgai and German Aesthetics," in Marra, ed., *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, pp. 68–92.

55. Most bibliographies of Chōfū's works list this as a collection of "E. P. B.'s letters" edited by Chōfū.

no shokō, described by one scholar as a “manifesto,”⁵⁶ reflects the new worldview that Chōfū developed as a result of his experiences in Germany. He opens the chapter on “Science and the Arts” with this paragraph:

Ultimately, science is not in any way qualified to be the basic wellspring of man’s life. The social welfare that results from science, in most cases, is in inverse proportion to our spiritual needs. Such being the case, what will satisfy our emotion of longing, our spirits, which chase after the eternal light? Through art, we are able to concretize the conceptual world and satisfy our eternal longing. Man’s life is thus enriched; I believe art is the most simple, perhaps the most expedient way for us to achieve complete satisfaction. Consequently, without prognostication or a savior, mankind in the spirit of our age will achieve a deep faith in the cosmos [reality], and art will be the path of salvation for all peoples.⁵⁷

Thus, art not only helps us concretize abstract concepts, it also presents a unifying path to salvation for all of mankind. By embracing art and the abstract in this way, Chōfū rejects dogma and liturgy from all quarters. Aesthetics for him are not simply an academic branch of philosophy; art is holy and sacred.

Religion as a Pillar of Civilization

In sum, the state of the culture and its direction was almost always tied to religion for Chōfū. For Ōgai, it was tied to science. Unfortunately for Chōfū, religion at the turn of the century in the West had been largely dismissed by the academic philosophical elite. When Nietzsche famously wrote that “God is dead,” he meant that the role of an established God in man’s life had ceased to matter. Scholars instead turned to formal philosophy, dismissing religion as a relic of a bygone era. Moreover, Western philosophy, particularly German philosophy, was strongly under the shadow of Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel, one that argued metaphysics and epistemology in a way that Japanese philosophy did not. Chōfū was in uncharted territory in that sense; the Japanese tradition had not undergone the transitions that the European tradition did through a rejection of the Judeo-Christian doctrine as such and a re-exploration of metaphysics.

The closest Japan came to that experience was the relative eclipse suffered by Buddhism at the hands of *kokugaku* (National Learning) during the Tokugawa and early Meiji periods. When Western philosophy was introduced in the Meiji period, the first wave focused on John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte; and although Nishi Amane (1829–97) coined countless

56. Fukasawa Hidetaka, “Bunka hihyō to *Fukkatsu no shokō*,” in Isomae Jun’ichi and Fukasawa Hidetaka, *Kindai Nihon ni okeru chishikijin to shūkyō: Anesaki Masaharu no kiseki* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 2002), p. 172.

57. Anesaki Masaharu, *Fukkatsu no shokō* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1904), p. 29.

Japanese terms in his adaptation of Western ideas, he did not seek to reconcile Buddhist and Confucian concepts with the Western imports. Inoue Tetsujirō made an attempt to reconcile Japanese traditions with German idealism, but as Gino Piovesana notes, he did not have “a real grasp of the problems he was facing in this kind of superficial eclecticism.”⁵⁸ Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) is credited with coming close to blending Japanese and Western philosophical traditions by structuring the Japanese system on a Greek model, but again the gap between the two proved difficult to bridge at best.⁵⁹

What we find instead, at least at the turn of the century, is an academic landscape that did not actively seek to reconcile Buddhism with Western philosophy. Nor, does it seem, were many scholars interested in bringing the scholarly discourses into alignment.⁶⁰ When Chōfū translated Schopenhauer’s *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, he used Chinese Buddhist terminology for Schopenhauer’s philosophical terminology, such as *genshiki* (Skt. *khyāti-vijñāna*) for *Vorstellung*.⁶¹ Likewise, when he traveled through Italy in 1908 and wrote about the many churches he saw there, he used Buddhist terminology for many Christian terms (such as *tera* for *church*). On the one hand, such use of native vocabulary for foreign concepts could be attributed to trying to find a reader-friendly form, but in the case of the Schopenhauer translation it would seem he was looking very hard for a religious affinity between East and West. This affinity is also explored in various articles he published at the time.⁶²

We come a little closer to what bothered Chōfū in another passage from the letters which tries to clarify what he liked so much about Smith, particularly his book *The Religion of the Semites* (1889). Chōfū says that Smith criticizes other scholars of religion for focusing on the incidentals of religions, not the core. He says other scholars of religion “up until now have analyzed the gods’ names, arranged their responsibilities, decided whether

58. Gino K. Piovesana, *Contemporary Japanese Philosophical Thought* (New York: St. John’s University Press, 1969), p. 89.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 89. Note that these efforts on Nishida’s part are dated to the 1920s, long after Chōfū was in Germany.

60. A notable exception would be the Japanese study of Søren Kierkegaard. It bears noting, too, that some Western scholars took an interest in Asian traditions, such as Schopenhauer’s fascination with the *Upanishads*, but that interest did not translate into an effort to reconcile religious traditions into a coherent One.

61. In the preface, Chōfū rationalizes his word choice, showing us that it was carefully considered and in opposition to other proposed translations of the time. See *Ishiki to genshiki toshite no sekai* (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1948), pp. 3–4.

62. See, for example, “Bukkyōshi no kenkyū to Kirisuto kyōkaishi,” *Tetsugaku zasshi*, Vol. 106 (1895); Albert J. Edmunds, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels: Being Gospel Parallels from Pāli Texts*, 3rd ed. (Tokyo: Yūhōkwan, 1905); and “How Christianity Appeals to a Japanese Buddhist,” *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1905).

they were gods of the earth or gods of plentitude, etc. and thus carried out their research”—all of which was pointless in his view.⁶³ Instead, he held, one should focus on the spiritual connection between the gods and man. The language Chōfū uses in his criticism is not gentle; he accuses other scholars of being “corrupt” Confucianists (*fujū*) and “incompetent” (*shimiteki*). By contrast, Smith’s breadth and depth were vast and he “did not become a slave to the material.” Smith’s insights were sharp and clear. One wonders how much of Chōfū’s frustration was due to a difference in writing styles. Certainly compared to Hegel or Kant, Smith’s writing was lucid. The German philosophers were notorious for their oblique diction—Schopenhauer being the exception—and even though he was perfectly comfortable reading in both German and English, it cannot have been easy for Chōfū to read through Hegel. If the same sort of language found its way to the lectern and the classroom, then sitting through Hegel’s classes would have been a trial even for a dedicated scholar.

Ōgai’s response paints a very different picture. For him, German universities were bastions of reason, meritocracies that he could only hope would be emulated in Japan. He writes:

In Germany, a scholar’s worth is judged by his works, and a professor’s position, whether high or low, is in accordance with the quality or inferiority of his works. I fear that our country is not yet like this. In Germany, scholars who are looked up to by others are those whose scholarship is superior. In our country, professors who have [good] scholarship are seen as worthless and cannot escape from being seen in the same light as those shrewd people who falsely gain a good reputation by occasionally producing something popular. Moreover, there are not a few well-known Japanese scholars who produce much scholarship while they are in Europe, but after returning home, although they have their own laboratories, are not able to produce a single thing. I fear that Japan cannot create [an academic] atmosphere. Or perhaps there is no reason to create such an atmosphere within our country. . . . I sincerely hope we will be able to create an academic atmosphere in our own country. However, we cannot say that it exists yet. And, if we continue in this direction, then Western learning will necessarily decline and it seems to me that the self-confidence of the Japanese people will never be fundamentally solidified.⁶⁴

How can we account for this difference in opinion between Ōgai and Chōfū? It probably was due to a mix of variables: differences in time, place, and focus of studies, as well as individual personality. Perhaps because Ōgai had recently been taken to task in the pages of *Taiyō* by Takayama Chogyū, he was on the defensive. Perhaps, as Hirakawa suggests, Chōfū was suffer-

63. Anesaki, “Takayama-kun ni okuru,” p. 224.

64. Ōgai, “Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu,” pp. 384–85.

ing from homesickness and culture shock, plus lamenting that his friend Chogyū could not join him in Europe.

It is also of note that Ōgai changed his tune a decade later in his essay “Mōsō” (Delusion, 1911). In it, Ōgai characterizes his return from Germany as a somber affair, unlike that of his peers:

I was received with disappointment by my countrymen. It was not unreasonable. At that time it was not a common thing to return from abroad with an attitude such as mine. Until then the return from foreign lands had been an affair of faces beaming with hope, of taking gadgets from one’s wicker trunk and showing some new magic for particular inspection. I was one who did just the opposite of this.⁶⁵

But Ōgai does not mean he failed to bring back new ideas. Rather, he means he rejected misguided suggestions on adopting many Western forms for the sake of being Western and instead insisted on practicality and efficacy. He was soon labeled, as he puts it, “a conservative” and, after a brief stint pursuing the natural sciences in the laboratory, his position in the military took him away from conducting research. Perhaps adding insult to injury, he became known more for his literary pursuits than for his skills as a physician, a cross he bore with bitterness.⁶⁶

Ōgai lamented the Japanese misuse of Western ideas and technologies, implying that although it was good for the Japanese to adopt them, as often as not they did so superficially without adopting the bases upon which such things depended. The specific example he gives is that the Japanese did not coin a word for the German *Forschung* (research) (*kenkyū*, he held, was a poor substitute). He also cites the words of Erwin Bälz (1849–1913), a German scholar and physician who lived in Japan for 27 years and taught courses at the University of Tokyo. Bälz (as paraphrased by Ōgai) warned that the Japanese had adopted Western science without adopting the academic environment necessary for its sustenance. Ōgai concludes by saying, “Western learning, since the time of Aristotle, has attached importance to nature; it has never been content with the pursuit of what is only spiritual. In the modern age, the rise of so-called natural science has changed the atmosphere of the entire European academic world by one mighty sweep.”⁶⁷ Here, Ōgai acknowledges that spirituality is one component of Western learning but not the central component—that honor was reserved for the sciences.

65. Translation by John Dower, “Delusion Mōsō,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 25, No. 3/4 (1970), p. 423.

66. In his essay “Ōgai gyoshi to wa tare zo?” he complains that his medical peers dismissed him as a doctor because he was seen primarily as a novelist instead.

67. Translation by Hirakawa Sukehiro, “Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Western Learning” (Part 3), *Contemporary Japan*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1968), p. 155.

What the West Had to Offer Japan and the Japanese

On the whole, then, Ōgai held that going abroad was beneficial. The passage above about his return to Japan is striking in contrast to what Chōfū wrote in his letter:

There are eminent professors who go abroad to spend several years in Western countries, just eating Western meals, having new Western-styled clothes made, and stacking Western books in their trunks. Upon return home, they introduce their civilized air to their countrymen. As for me, unlike them, I have realized that traveling to the West and studying abroad is a Pandora's box, or a talisman that metamorphoses a human being into a machine. In a word, I am fortunate at having realized my own foolishness in having in the past placed empty hopes in such a Pandora's box.⁶⁸

So, by their own accounts, both Ōgai and Chōfū returned from Germany without producing modern curiosities from their luggage. And, both men imply that those who did so were shallow and uncomprehending of the West. The difference lies in what each man did bring home. Chōfū had opened a "Pandora's box," which here means a box of false hopes. He was "foolish" to expect the West to be a place where human spirituality transcended the "phenomena." Moreover, there was not a secondary discipline to which he could turn. He came home defeated.

Ōgai's argument against Chōfū runs parallel to his argument against the Japanese scientists of his day. Regarding the scientists, Ōgai argues that they misinterpreted what made German culture and civilization great and tried to transplant German concepts and objects that were not suited to the Japanese tradition. Similarly, he says that philosophers who expect to superimpose Western concepts on Japanese traditions, particularly metaphysics, inevitably face disappointment. He writes:

The study of religion is similar [to the study of philosophy]; Buddhism, which exists in the East, and the depths of Indian philosophy which gave rise to it have no place in Christianity. Consequently, those who study the different fields in religious studies, likewise, go to the West and discover that, after all, their views are not necessarily true.⁶⁹

But if this is Ōgai's interpretation of Chōfū's dissatisfaction, it is mistaken. Chōfū did not expect the Judeo-Christian traditions to conform to Buddhism; his main focus was on the human experience that transcended all phenomena. Ōgai argues that such a "spiritual synthesis" simply does not exist.

Parallel to the "spiritual synthesis" that Ōgai claims Chōfū seeks was

68. Translation by Hirakawa in "Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Western Learning" (Part 2), pp. 801 and 803.

69. Ōgai, "Yōgaku no seisui o ronzu," p. 385.

the idea of a universal human experience. Spirituality could take many forms, Chōfū held, but these forms were invariably “subjective.” That is, the spiritual experience was necessarily something the individual experienced, not the group. That a group of people might form through a spiritual affinity was fine, but the group as such could not define the spiritual experience. That Germany had become a land of chauvinism and parochial groups was a sure sign in Chōfū’s eyes that it was headed toward destruction. Of course, the bigotry against Asian people helped spur this opinion, but it was not the only factor; Chōfū feared that a militaristic cause would replace a cultural ideal as the unifying factor in a country:

I see that no good can come of bearing arms under the banner of cultural implantation in the euphemism of national unity. In doing so, one cannot have confidence in a cultural ideal that brings together the citizens’ spirituality, and after the war, when the military is in control, the people’s vanity is increased through expanding nationalism. The country is burdened with military preparations, and all aspects of government are entrusted to political maneuvering without any direction or objective. I cannot but fear that this is what we have come to.⁷⁰

In other words, unification of the people was good, but it had to be brought about spiritually, not politically. And, organized religion (Isomae’s “phenomenon”), although it could play the role of a community of individually like-minded spiritualities, too often played the role of government puppet.

Ōgai did not ignore German philosophy entirely, even if he criticized Chōfū’s interpretation of it. He had a long-standing interest in it, as was demonstrated by his translation of Hartmann. But that interest did not indicate a dedication to a particular school or trend. In “Mōsō,” Ōgai tells us that he rejected Hartmann’s concept of three periods of illusion but, being intrigued by certain aspects of it, read works by those who influenced Hartmann, including Max Stirner and Schopenhauer. Ōgai’s interpretation of Schopenhauer is strongly negative and pessimistic—Schopenhauer says our lives are meaningless, so there is nothing for us to do but die (in the due course of time). Ōgai “shakes his head” and turns away from philosophy, focusing on science for the remainder of his studies in Germany. Of the journey home, he writes:

I was not returning with only the results of a branch of natural science. I believed I was bringing a young plant which could be developed in the future. But in the homeland to which I was returning there was no atmosphere to nourish this plant. At least there was none “yet.” I feared that this plant might wither to no purpose. Thus I was visited by a dull, gloomy, *fatalistisch* feeling.

70. Anesaki, “Takayama Chogyū ni kotauru no sho,” p. 213.

In my wicker trunk there was no philosophy whose light dispersed this gloomy darkness. What I had was the pessimistic philosophy of the school of Schopenhauer and Hartmann. This was a philosophy which made it better not to have than to have the phenomenal world. It was not that they did not recognize progress. But it was progress toward the awareness of non-being.⁷¹

The “young plant” is the natural sciences, which Ōgai felt could greatly benefit his mother country if only they were properly understood and employed. Yet he had no confidence that they would be, and thus he suffered a fatalistic feeling. The Germans gave him no philosophy that would counter this problem; for while their natural sciences progressed at the cutting edge, their philosophy did not address such technological advancements. Instead, all Ōgai had was Schopenhauer whose ideas bordered on Buddhist concepts of nonbeing, at least as he saw them. All of this must have caused Ōgai a certain amount of cognitive dissonance, for while he knew that German science offered great hope for mankind, he feared that German philosophy would undermine it.

Chōfū, on the other hand, had little interest in the natural sciences. For him, the threat to the future lay not in Schopenhauer (whose ideas he admired) but in the staid, stolid, and restricting form of the church and its liturgy. In other words, from Ōgai’s point of view, the Germans had many things right, if only they could reject their philosophy and embrace science. From Chōfū’s point of view, the Germans had many things right, if only they could reject their material bonds and embrace their philosophy.

How could these two men end up at opposite poles? There were clearly many junctures where the two spoke past each other. Chōfū was not a scientist, he did not have much interest in science, nor did he see any beauty in technological advancement. Although he was a very liberal thinker when it came to synthesizing world traditions, his was a conservative mind when it came to infrastructure, technology, industry, and the natural sciences. In this sense, it was unusual among the Meiji generations of “modernizers,” most of whom borrowed Western know-how but not religion. Ōgai, much more typical, took a mild interest in German philosophy but quickly rejected it as a necessary component to modernization. Chōfū’s embrace of Schopenhauer—one that lasted well beyond the letters in *Taiyō*—and Ōgai’s dismissal is indicative of this difference in the two men, as is their approach to Nietzsche.

Although Nietzsche stopped publishing in Ōgai’s last year studying abroad (1888), his shadow over German philosophy was broad. In Chōfū’s case, part of the influence was undoubtedly Chogyū, who was fond of Nietzschean thought, and Chōfū’s German mentor, Deussen, who was friends with Nietzsche. R. Petralia claims that Nietzsche was introduced to Ja-

71. Translation by Dower, “Delusion Mōsō,” p. 423.

pan largely by Inoue Tetsujirō, who brought Nietzsche's collected works back from Europe with him in 1897 and shortly thereafter introduced his students—including Chōfū and Chogyū—to the materials.⁷² A couple of months later, Chōfū published "Niiche shisō no yu'nyū to bukkūō" in the March 1898 issue of *Taiyō*, although the article was anonymous. This is commonly identified as the first substantive article on Nietzsche in Japan, but Graham Parkes characterizes it as "primarily an exhortation to Buddhists in Japan to respond positively to the influx of German philosophy by becoming more philosophical."⁷³ Petralia characterizes it as flawed and misguided, especially in Chōfū's interpretation of the Nietzschean concepts of the *übermensch* and the "will to power." Charitably, Petralia writes, "as Chōfū was no fool, one can only infer either that his judgment was clouded by his zeal for a Buddhist philosophical revival or, more probably, his research into Nietzsche at this time was rudimentary."⁷⁴ Given that Chōfū was only 25 years old when he wrote the article, the latter seems most likely.

Chōfū's work on Nietzsche did not stop in 1898—the third open letter in *Taiyō* ("Futatabi Chogyū ni atauru sho") comprises a comparison of Nietzsche, Wagner, and Schopenhauer. Here the thinking is more sophisticated and detailed. Chōfū goes to great lengths to explain Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's work in Buddhist terms, something he could not have done had he, like Ōgai, dismissed both Japanese and German traditions early on. Nietzsche espoused egoism, which could be seen as an outgrowth of the "subjectivity" that so appealed to Chōfū. Eventually Chōfū turns away from Nietzsche, though, and returns to Schopenhauer. One can surmise that Chōfū would have approved of Nietzsche's rejection of the Christian church (much along the same lines as he himself rejected Lutheranism) and his embrace of the individual. The split comes when Nietzsche holds the individual as the ultimate point of reference, whereas Chōfū saw the individual as intimately and importantly connected to the cosmos but not the "center."

Although Inoue was the major conduit through which Nietzsche was introduced to Japan, we also know that Ōgai recorded having received some works by Nietzsche from a friend in 1894.⁷⁵ And, of course, he mentions Nietzsche in his Kokura speech, rejecting Nietzsche's embrace of spirituality. When he said, "If people . . . seek a synthesis of spirituality, then there is no reason for them to be satisfied by the current scholarly world in Germany. These types of people sympathize with the worshippers of Nietzsche, and necessarily pin their hopes on spirituality," he identified Nietzsche with

72. See Petralia, "Nietzsche in Meiji Japan," pp. 213–14.

73. Graham Parkes, "The Early Reception of Nietzsche's Philosophy in Japan," in Graham Parkes, ed., *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 181.

74. Petralia, "Nietzsche in Meiji Japan," pp. 220–21.

75. Parkes, "Early Reception of Nietzsche's Philosophy," p. 189.

the nonscientific, spiritual world. In “Mōsō,” he says he was momentarily “intoxicated” by Nietzsche but that he “did not go so far as to seriously accept discarding the promise of reason.”⁷⁶ In his Kokura speech, he treats Nietzscheism as a fad, one whose fate is unclear but in any event not one in which he has any long-term interest. In the introduction to his collection of essays titled “Tsukikusa” in 1896, Ōgai mentions Nietzsche only to say that, in comparison to the thought of Hartmann and Wundt, his ideas could hardly be called philosophy.⁷⁷ In sum, Ōgai dutifully familiarized himself with Nietzsche but did not see him as part of the integral fabric of German success nor, by extension, as a part of Japanese modernization.

Conclusion

The *yōgaku muyōron* debate, shortlived as it was, shows us the philosophical and cultural tensions at the forefront at the turn of the twentieth century. Ōgai, more than ten years older than Chōfū, had waded through the ideas of Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Nietzsche and rejected them. Or, perhaps more accurately, he had deemed them unimportant in the greater scheme of modernization. The scientific advancements of the West clearly outweighed the pessimism of German philosophy, which Ōgai saw as fruitless pontification. Chōfū found his own version of fruitless pursuits in Germany, but it was not in the study of Schopenhauer; rather, it was in two different directions, the first being the parochial, political, and dogmatic nature of Lutheranism and the second being the pedantic world of the German university which, according to Chōfū, had become a petty world in which professors staked out their intellectual stances and then defended them to the bitter end.

From a different standpoint, we could say that Ōgai and Chōfū shared some common ground. Both men felt that German culture had been misappropriated in some way. For Ōgai, the blind application of new technologies imported from Germany to Japan resulted in waste and poor end results. But that was not to say that the technologies themselves were bad, simply that they had been improperly applied. For Chōfū, a man who seems to have expected to find a country of Schopenhauers when he first went to Germany, the realization that the common German was a provincial and slavish to the Lutheran church to the exclusion of any larger integrative philosophy was a shock. Again, that was not to say that Germany itself was bad, simply that the people had failed to see the wisdom of their earlier philosophers (from what he refers to as a golden age) and had improperly interpreted Christianity.

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76. Translation by Dower, “Delusion Mōsō,” p. 428.

77. Mori Ōgai, *Tsukikusa* (Tokyo: Shun'yōdō, 1896), p. 6.