CHAPTER 6

The Formation and Limitations of Modern Japanese Confucianism

Confucianism for the Nation and Confucianism for the People

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IN CONSIDERING THE FORMATION and development of modern Confucianism in Japan, it would be useful here to keep two key concepts in mind. The first is "Confucianism for the nation," a school of thought that existed for the purpose of creating the Japanese nation; the second is "Confucianism for the people," another body of teachings, rooted in commoner society, that was separate from and transcended the bounds of nation-making. The modernized teachings of Wang Yangming (hereafter referred to as Yōmei-gaku, as it is designated in Japanese) are what allowed these two Confucianisms to take shape in tandem. It must be noted that this modern Yōmei-gaku was an exceedingly unique interpretation of the Ming dynasty teachings that it referenced. It was greatly informed by the experiences of early modern and modern Japan—that is, from the end of the eighteenth century to the start of the Meiji period and after.

This chapter synthesizes prior research and details the process by which these two Confucianisms emerged as twins. Furthermore, it examines one aspect of the thought of Ishizaki Tōgoku, who established the academic society called the Osaka Yōmei Gakkai, as an important example of Confucianism for the people. Following that, it seeks to uncover a potential path toward another set of universalities within Confucianism for the people that are different from those sought after by Confucianism for the nation.

The Popularization of Confucianism in Early Modern Japan

Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was a philosopher of the Song dynasty who revitalized Confucianism in the wake of the pervading influence of Buddhism. By introducing *li* 理 (principle), and *qi* 氣 (vital force), he renewed the possibility of fully explaining this world without referring to some transcendent deity like the Buddha. Wang Yangming (1472–1529) followed Zhu Xi with a critical attitude toward the latter's teachings. He criticized Zhu's investigation of *li* as often resulting in a reading of the canons that was too complicated and separated from human practical experience. Instead Wang emphasized the importance of the unification of knowledge and action. His philosophy influenced the then-rising middle class, which included rich merchants and farmers.

After the Kansei Edict was issued in 1790 in Japan, *Zhuzixue* 朱子学 (Zhu Xi's philosophy) began to spread throughout the country. It became an ideology in support of the system for recruiting civil servants. Along with *Zhuzixue, Yangmingxue* 陽明学 (Wang Yangming's philosophy) was also taught. Japanese Confucianists in the Edo period learned both at the same time, but *Zhuzixue* was of much greater importance.

In the Meiji period, when Japan started its program of modernization, *Yangmingxue* was regarded as a guiding ideology of modernized Confucianism. It contributed to the creating of a modern notion of interiority in the individual through its emphasis on *xin* 心 (heart/mind).

As a part of the modernization that began during the Meiji period, Confucianism contributed greatly to the making of the Japanese nation. What made this possible was the popularizing of Confucianism, which progressively spread to the various regions of Japan from the end of the eighteenth century. Miyagi Kimiko describes it thus:

> During the *Bakumatsu* period [the last period of the Tokugawa shogunate], the Kansei Edict enriched the Confucian temple [Seidō] and simultaneously facilitated an increase in the establishment of domainal schools in each domain, which led to the implementation of the *gakumon ginmi* system as a means of clearing the way for the employment of lower-level *samurai;* with these elements, a feverish enthusiasm for Confucian education gestated across the land. It spread to commoners who were wealthy peasants and merchants, who studied Confucianism with an eye toward acquiring warrior rank, and thus was Confucian learning popularized. In other words, the learning undertaken by warriors of lower rank and commoners under the old shogunate government was Confucian learning; regardless of one's status or family background, it was the one narrow road that had to be trod in order for one to establish oneself.

> As such, Confucianism for these commoners did not constitute learning chosen of their own free will. Instead it was something they learned as a historical given, a decision prone to becoming part of an unconscious structural paradigm.
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> Moreover, the Meiji government that eventually confronted them used this popularized Confucian learning as a tool of national education on the one hand, but aspired to European-style modernization flying the flag of "civilization and enlightenment" [on the other]. Under a Meiji government thus engaged, these men faced the destiny of having to take on the various problems of Japan's modernization in their capacity as intellectuals trained in Confucianism. While they were living out this destiny, what they inherited from the previous era undoubtedly formed the locus of opposition to the Meiji government.[1]

The Kansei Edict was a statute issued in the fifth month of 1790 by the *rōjū* (senior councilor) Matsudaira Sadanobu to Hayashi Nobutaka, the *daigaku-no-kami* who served as head of education at the shogunate. The disciples of the Hayashi family prohibited the learning of alternate Confucianisms exemplified by the Kobunji-gaku and Kogaku (Ancient Learning) of Itō Jinsai and Ogyū Sorai, respectively, and attempted an enforced conversion to the teachings of Zhu Xi (hereafter Shushi-gaku 朱子学). But this all begs the question of what the purpose of this reform was. According to Miyagi, Matsudaira was worried that Confucian teachings had become mere academic debates between scholars, making this knowledge irrelevant to political affairs. The reform was, thus, in order to promote a so-called "'unity of governance and education,' to realize a situation where government officials were also Confucianists."[2] Given this situation, how, then, was this "unity of government and education" to be enacted? The answer was to enlist fresh talent equipped with Confucian education into the government. This led, in the ninth month of 1792, to the promulgation of the *gakumon ginmi,* a system modeled on the Chinese civil-service examinations by which men of merit were appointed to political office. These examinations utilized the commentaries of Zhu Xi, a practice that resulted in the predominance of Shushi-gaku.[3]

The crucial point here is that in this way the system of recruiting talented men to office in the shogunate government spread to the various domains, causing an increase in domainal schools, where the practice of appointing officials by examinations was implemented. Thus, the enthusiasm for Confucian education spread even further to the commoners; a growing number of rural schools and private academies were opened, and these became the basic infrastructure of Confucian learning in commoner society. Miyagi terms this phenomenon "the popularization of Confucianism."[4] Moreover, as striking examples of "rich

peasants and merchants [who came] from [among] the commoners" who successfully gained autonomy through studying Confucian teachings, Miyagi lists, among others, Bitō Jishū, Rai Shunsui, Fujita Yūkoku, and Yamada Hōkoku.[5]

Within this group, the most attention has been given to Yamada Hōkoku (1805–1877). Hōkoku was a peasant in the Bitchū-Matsuyama domain, an area now known as Okayama Prefecture, who plied his trade in the plant-oil extraction industry. When he was five years old, he entered a private academy run by one Marukawa Shōin located in the neighboring Niimi domain. Shōin had studied Shushi-gaku at the famous Kaitokudō in Osaka, and had been sounded out by Matsudaira Sadanobu himself as a candidate for the post of official instructor to the Confucian temple. Hōkoku later studied in Kyoto, and also went to Edo to become a pupil of Satō Issai, head instructor of the Shōheikō, the official academy of the *bakufu.* Between his stints in these two places, he studied Yōmei-gaku in addition to Shushi-gaku, and ended up being so favorably disposed toward the former that he began criticizing the latter. However, just as Satō Issai adopted a stance of "Zhu in public, Wang in private"—a position also called "The *yang* of Zhu and the *yin* of Wang"—Hōkoku, as the official Confucianist of the Matsuyama domain, based his pedagogy on Shushi-gaku at the domainal school, while treading carefully with teaching Yōmei-gaku. In addition, though Yōmei-gaku actually constituted the true ideal for Hōkoku, he himself possessed even stronger views that went beyond the Yōmei school of learning.[6]

In this way, within the "popularization of Confucianism" that followed the Kansei Edict's ban of heterodox Confucianism, Shushi-gaku was not the only school of learning that was valued; it is certain that Yōmei-gaku also exerted influence at the same time. But this is not to say that Yōmei-gaku was directly involved with the Meiji Restoration.[7] Nonetheless, during the formation of modern Yōmei-gaku, a discourse circulated that it was Yōmei-gaku that actually constituted the real spirit of the Restoration.

Forming Modern Yōmei-gaku: Connections from the Bakumatsu to Meiji Eras

The interpretation of Yōmei-gaku as the true spirit of the Meiji Restoration spread widely, and this became the understanding shared even by modern Chinese intellectuals. Ogyū Shigehiro sums it up in the following manner:

> After Japan's war with Qing China [in 1894–1895], the Qing imperial government, in imitation of the Meiji Restoration, enacted policies of modernization, and many Chinese exchange students traveled to Japan. Moreover, exiled officials and revolutionaries also made Japan a base for their activities. Liang Qichao, Zhang Binglin, and even Sun Wen

> [Zhongshan/Yat-sen] were examples of such figures. They "discovered" the Yōmei-gaku then popular in Japan at the time, and carried [with them back to China] the understanding that Yōmei-gaku constituted the motivating force of the Restoration.[8]

Moreover, Ogyū casts the Yōmei-gaku of modern Japan that the Chinese exchange students "discovered" in terms of a political discourse that is profoundly nationalistic, saying that "it was a 'modern' Japanese thought started anew in the midst of modern Japanese nationalism in the second decade of the Meiji era, a growing flourish of resistance to the governmental policies of Europeanization since the founding year of Meiji. Furthermore, it was a political discourse intentionally constructed to comprise the contemporary assertions of the Meiji era."[9]

Following this assessment, Japan's modern Yōmei-gaku can be seen as represented by two works published in the same year: Tokutomi Sohō's *Yoshida Shōin* (Minyūsha, 1893) and Miyake Setsurei's *Ō Yōmei* (Wang Yangming) (Seikyōsha, 1893). In addition, there was the magazine published by the Tekka Shoin company in 1896 called *Yōmei-gaku* (discontinued in 1900) and its successor serials, the *Ō-gaku zasshi* (Meizen Gakusha, 1906–1908) and the *Yōmei-gaku* (Meizen Gakusha and Yōmei Gakkai [from issue 2], 1908–1928). Each of these publications positioned Yōmei-gaku as the foundation of "national morality."[10]

One of the most important works was Inoue Tetsujirō's *Nihon Yōmei-gakuha no tetsugaku* (Japanese philosophy of the Yangming school) (Fuzambō, 1900), followed by *Nihon Kogakuha no tetsugaku* (Japanese philosophy of the Kogaku [Classical Study] school) (Fuzambō, 1902) and *Nihon Shushi-gakuha no tetsugaku* (Japanese philosophy of the Zhuzi school) (Fuzambō, 1905)—a trilogy of books that examined Edo-period Confucianism. The first of his works in this series, as mentioned above, was the treatise on Yōmei-gaku. In this volume, Inoue delineates a genealogy of Japanese Yōmei-gaku scholars, starting with Nakae Tōju and Kumazawa Banzan, moving on to Satō Issai, Ōshio Chūsai [Heihachirō], Yamada Hōkoku, and Kasuga Sen'an, and concluding with Saigō Takamori, Yoshida Shōin, and Takasugi Shinsaku. It is of deep interest that Katsu Kaishū of the shogunate camp is the final personage that Inoue presents at the end of this genealogy. In short, Inoue attempts to connect the Bakumatsu-era Yōmei-gaku with the Meiji Restoration by giving this idea an erudite lineage.

Inoue's understanding of Japanese Yōmei-gaku as official learning was shared not only by Chinese intellectuals who studied in Japan; in fact, even men of a stance foreign to Inoue's who challenged his outlook were part of that same paradigm.

Christianity and Yōmei-gaku: Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō

For example, let's consider the Christian scholar Uchimura Kanzō. During the ceremonial reading of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1891 at the First Higher School, Uchimura had refused to make the expected deep bow and received the label of being "disrespectful." Inoue Tetsujirō critiqued this incident as a "clash between education and religion." This same Uchimura penned a tract titled *Representative Men of Japan* in 1908, beginning it with an analysis of Saigō Takamori and ending with one of Nichiren, and lauding Saigō—a central figure in the Meiji Restoration—as the bearer of a Yōmei-gaku kind of spirit. Uchimura described Saigō as follows: "only for the lack of Puritanism, he was not a Puritan."[11] Yet this comparison of Saigō, a scholar of Yōmei-gaku, with a Christian believer suggests another possible avenue for understanding Yōmei-gaku, one that differs from Inoue's vision of it as a bastion of official learning:

> His [Saigō's] attention was early called to the writings of Wang Yang Ming, who of all Chinese philosophers, came nearest to that most august faith, also of Asiatic origin, in his great doctrines of conscience and benign but inexorable heavenly laws. Our hero's subsequent writings show this influence to a very marked degree, all the Christianly sentiments therein contained testifying to the majestic simplicity of the great Chinese, as well as to the greatness of the nature that could take in all that, and weave out a character so practical as his. . . .
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> . . . So unlike the conservative Chu philosophy fostered by the old government for its own preservation, it (Yang Ming philosophy) was progressive, prospective, and full of promise. Its similarity to Christianity has been recognized more than once, and it was practically interdicted in the country on that and other accounts. "This resembles Yang-Ming-ism; disintegration of the empire will begin with this." So exclaimed Takasugi Shinsaku, a Chōshu strategist of Revolutionary fame, when he first examined the Christian Bible in Nagasaki. That something like Christianity was a component force in the reconstruction of Japan is a singular fact in this part of its history.[12]

On reading this passage, it becomes clear that Uchimura was trying to connect Christianity to Japan via Yōmei-gaku by means of his reading of Saigō as a Christian-like adherent of Yōmei-gaku. But even so, it must be remembered that this reading was undertaken in Inoue's paradigm of Yōmei-gaku as a motivating force of the Meiji Restoration. It then follows that even Uchimura's deep understanding of Christian teachings cannot overturn the framing of Yōmei-gaku as official learning.

Kojima Tsuyoshi offers a concrete example of this that involves the relationship between Inoue and Nitobe Inazō, who was a Christian scholar and a close friend of Uchimura. The stage for this episode occurred at a meeting of the Yōmei Gakkai, an academic society, and it was hosted by the publishers of the aforementioned serial, the *Yōmei-gaku* (Meizen Gakusha and Yōmei Gakkai [from issue 2], 1908–1928). The Yōmei Gakkai's first lecture event was held on March 21, 1909; both Inoue Tetsujirō and Nitobe Inazō attended and co-lectured on the topic of "A Nonprofessional View of Yōmei-gaku":

> Nitobe actually ascended to the same lectern as Inoue Tetsujirō. At the time, Nitobe had already assumed the post of principal of the First Higher School [its official appellation from 1894 onwards, which he held from 1906 to 1913]. The same school that had ousted Uchimura for "disrespect" ended up appointing his close friend and fellow Christian as its head. The previous year, Nitobe's *Bushidō* had been translated into Japanese by Sakurai Ōson, and it is thought that this was why he had been invited to speak at this lecture event. It is unclear when he joined the Society, but it is certain that he was a member in good standing of the Yōmei Gakkai.[13]

After the Russo-Japanese War, Christianity became incorporated into the religious policies of the Meiji government, and Inoue, perhaps softening his own stance toward Christian thought, did not take Nitobe's lecture to be a critique of Yōmei-gaku as official learning.[14]

Assuming that was indeed the case, distinctions like the ones drawn by Yamashita Ryūji in the following excerpt are not necessarily admissible:

> This same Inoue used Yōmei-gaku in the manner of an explanatory manual for the Imperial Rescript on Education. He praised the notion of "national morality," offering the view that Yōmei-gaku's practical approach could be useful for the purpose of controlling the influence of various kinds of European-style philosophies and ideologies and guiding the nation toward "moral practices." This carried the premise that statist ethics allowed no criticism, and resulted in Yōmei-gaku's inherently anti-authoritarian and anti-official tendencies to be abstracted away. The face-off between Inoue and Uchimura over the Imperial Rescript on Education was also a contest over how to interpret Yōmei-gaku. It was a contest between a statist ethical perspective and an individualist ethical perspective, a contest between the ethical interpretation and the religious interpretation, and also a contest between Japanism and cosmopolitanism. And it goes without saying that Inoue's stance became the orthodoxy in the Yōmei-gaku research that followed thereafter.[15]

Yamashita saw what he terms "Yōmei-gaku's inherently anti-authoritarian and anti-official tendencies" in Uchimura Kanzō, and considered these tendencies to have been oppressed by Inoue Tetsujirō's "statist ethics"—a conclusion that manages to ignore how Uchimura, in fact, shared the paradigm of Inoue's thought. Moreover, the situation gets even more complicated, because Inoue himself actually read "anti-authoritarian and anti-official tendencies" into Yōmei-gaku.

Confucianism for the Nation and Confucianism for the People as Twins

On the one hand, Inoue positioned Yōmei-gaku as Confucianism for the nation, which existed in order to create the nation of Japan; on the other, he thought that Yōmei-gaku stemmed from commoner society. Let us look at the preface to his *Nihon Yōmei-gakuha no tetsugaku*:

> If one desires to understand what the national morality of our country is like, he must reach comprehension of the spirit of the moral teaching [Confucianism] that has smelted and fired our national mentality. Thus, since this treatise is a place to describe the philosophy of Japan's Yōmei-gaku, it also tries to contribute to that end. If one would certify the manifestation of our national morality by realities occurring before our eyes, they only have to observe the actions of our army in China. What indeed is that which, amidst the united forces of the various nations, radiates so conspicuously? That which refrains from arbitrary plunder, from wanton violence, keeping strict observance of military discipline, and [is] never motivated by the desire for private gain—what indeed is it, if not the manifestation of our national morality?[16]

This preface is inscribed with the date of September 24, 1900. Here Inoue argued that Japan's Yōmei-gaku was in fact what had forged modern Japan's "national morality," and spoke proudly of how it was clearly displayed by the actions of the Japanese army, fighting in the Eight-Nation Alliance, to suppress the Boxer Rebellion that had taken place in June of the same year. Furthermore, the preface closes with the statement that "our national morality is nothing but the universal virtue of mind, and the universal virtue of mind can be said to be precisely the essence of Oriental morality."[17] For Inoue, Japan's Yōmei-gaku possessed universality through having a character for the nation.

Nonetheless, at the same time Inoue could also say that Yōmei-gaku differed from Shushi-gaku in that it was something wielded by "commoner scholars," and that it was "for the most part a doctrine for the commoners [平民主義]." Moreover, this work proclaimed its intention to "break the gloom" that

had shrouded Yōmei-gaku's two hundred and fifty years of existence, and that its existence constituted "an excellent thing":

> Because Shushi-gaku was the educational ideology of the government, Yōmei-gaku was primarily promoted by commoner scholars; it produced a distinction between official and commoner learning, and made Yōmei-gaku for the most part a doctrine for the commoners. The teachings of Zhu and Wang were originally different in their ideas, constituting different standpoints between official and commoner spheres. This distinction could not be stopped in the discord between them. Facts demonstrate why this should be so. Yōmei-gaku was ostracized by government authority, and thus fell into a state of gloom where it could not expand its horizons. Now we have forged ahead into a world of free thinking. In this age, it is an excellent thing for the scholarly world to research the historical development of Yōmei-gaku, and to break the gloom that has shrouded it for two hundred and fifty years.[18]

Here, the important point in Inoue's thinking—as if to tear apart the distinction that Yamashita attempted to make—is that Inoue saw the "doctrine for the commoners" that Yōmei-gaku constituted as Confucianism for the people was potentially shifting toward Confucianism for the nation. Confucianism for the nation and Confucianism for the people were born as twins. That is precisely why, right after Kōtoku Shūsui had been executed in January 1911 for his involvement in the Great Treason Incident of 1910, Inoue had been able to speak of how Yōmei-gaku was connected to socialism.[19]

In one sense, this was only to be expected: if, like Inoue, one affirmed the revolution enacted by the Meiji Restoration and saw Yōmei-gaku as its philosophical pillar, then Yōmei-gaku could only be viewed as a revolutionary ideology. The problem here is that this view deviates from the trajectory of the nation created in the age of Meiji, and cannot be contained in the conceptual scope of "national morality." Within modern Japanese Yōmei-gaku, the potential for Confucianism for the people to transcend the bounds of nation-making is found elsewhere—in the Osaka Yōmei Gakkai established by Ishizaki Tōgoku.

The Osaka Yōmei Gakkai and the "Popular Foundation"

Ishizaki Tōgoku (1873–1931) established an academic society in June of 1907 under the official name of the Senshindō Gakkai (after the private academy set up by Ōshio Chūsai [Heihachirō]), before changing its name to the Osaka Yōmei Gakkai in December 1908. Its flagship magazine, *Yōmei,* was serialized from July 1910 and its name changed to *Yōmei-shugi* in 1919.[20]

The December 5, 1911 issue of *Yōmei* commemorated Nakae Chōmin, and carried a photo of him on its cover along with a citation from chapter 6 of his *Minyaku yakkai* (a translation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*); the comment honoring him ran as follows:

> It has been a full ten years since the passing of Master Nakae Chōmin, the Meiji scholar of Yōmei-gaku, who for fifty-five years fought so well for society and humanity. December 13 of this year marks the anniversary of his death. Our association cannot help but admire the master's character, particularly from the vantage point of today's society, and we have thus put together this commemorative volume.[21]

From the start, it had never been intended for this 1911 issue simply to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Nakae Chōmin's death (December 13, 1901). During the Great Treason Incident of the previous year (1910), Kōtoku Shūsui and Okunomiya Kenshi (the son of Okunomiya Zōsai, with whom Chōmin had studied) had been hauled off to prison; regarding this, Tōgoku had written about Chōmin saying, "this desolation is unbearable" (July 29, 1910), which was regarded by Inoue Tetsujirō as a dangerous idea.[22] Moreover, two full pages of the *Shinmin sekai,* a tract written by Chōmin from the position of being a "new commoner [*shinmin*]," the Meiji name for those born into outcaste communities (*hisabetsu burakumin*), were carried in this issue. Tōgoku stridently asserted that the Yōmei-gaku that he believed in belonged to the genealogy established by Chōmin.[23]

Ogyū Shigehiro offers the following synthesis of the situation:

> The same Society (the Osaka Yōmei Gakkai), from its inception, had been labeled by Inoue Tetsujirō as a "dangerous ideology" that "ostensibly assumed to attend the conscience while covertly promoting socialism"; instead, it began vending its flagship magazine externally on the occasion of the Great Treason Incident, and while on the one hand it cast Nakae Chōmin and Kōtoku Shūsui in the genealogy of Meiji-era Yōmei-gaku, it criticized the Yōmei-gaku of Inoue and his ilk as [leaning toward] "government education" and "official learning," which deviated from the essence of Yōmei-gaku, conducting its activities while struggling upstream against the tide of the times.[24]

Ogyū draws out the possibility for the Osaka Yōmei Gakkai to be understood as Confucianism for the people. He says, "It took the 'problems of life' of the masses as its foundation, and cast it in the logic of an international pacific solidarity that transcended the nation-state, reviving itself in modern fashion."[25]

Quite apart from the universality sought after by Inoue Tetsujirō, it revealed the other universality based on a "popular foundation":[26]

> In closing, although he declared that he was cutting ties with the movement to revive Chinese learning [Kan-gaku 漢学: a government-sanctioned movement aimed at molding the morality of the nation], I wish to ascertain whether Tōgoku continued to value the spiritual connection with the Confucianism of the Edo period. Along with his companions in the Osaka Yōmei Gakkai, modern heterodox thinkers such as Iwano Hōmei, Matsumura Kaiseki, and Miyatake Gaikotsu, he supported regional scholars who partook of Bakumatsu-style Confucian learning. And it is especially interesting that the most left-wing member of the Osaka society, who positioned himself as stridently against Chinese learning and caused the society to be divided over his criticisms of Takase Takejirō, was none other than Ikeda Shisei, the step-grandchild of Ikeda Sōan, the Bakumatsu-era Yōmei scholar also known as the "sage of Tajima." Against the new forces of modern Yōmei-gaku espoused by men like Inoue [Tetsujirō] and Takase, who had been educated in the intellectual vein of the modern West, traditional learning was brought into the modern Yōmei-gaku of the people, suggesting a kind of "universal" characteristic that runs to this present day.[27]

In other words, the Osaka Yōmei-gaku inherited the mantle of a "popularization of Confucianism" from the Bakumatsu period; unlike the universality of Confucianism for the nation, which was based in the nation-state, it can be said to have aimed for a kind of earthly universality based on a popular foundation.

Earthly Universality

Let us review, from a different angle, the potential in Ishizaki Tōgoku for a Confucianism for the people that transcends the bounds of nation-making. In his *Yōmei-gakuha no jinbutsu* (1912), Tōgoku's very first chapter is titled "Master Yangming and Master Nichiren." This means he was attempting to interpret Nichiren as Japan's Wang Yangming.

Upon reading Tōgoku's autobiography, *The Path by Which I Entered Wang Yangming Studies* (*Yo no Ō-gaku ni irishi keiro*), it seems that he encountered Buddhism when he traveled to Takamatsu at the age of twenty-six:

> If pressed to explain the change in my thoughts, it was here in this origin point of Kōbō Daishi [Kūkai] that I made some acquaintance with reli-

> gion; however, I became a follower of Nichiren's Hokke rather than of Kōbō Daishi's Shingon.[28]

It is deeply interesting that Tōgoku mentions his decision to convert to Nichiren Buddhism instead of Kūkai's Shingon Buddhism. Tōgoku, in "Master Yangming and Master Nichiren," saw an overlap between Wang Yangming, who succeeded Lu Xiangshan instead of Zhu Xi, and Nichiren, who succeeded Saichō instead of Kūkai.[29] Based on this, in contrast to how Zhu Xi and Kūkai "simply figured out how to appeal to vulgarity and built up a fleeting popularity in their times," Yangming and Nichiren "spurned vulgarity and presented [themselves] as beneficial role models who contributed greatly to the improvement of society and the human heart-mind."[30] Tōgoku evaluated Yōmei-gaku and Nichiren Buddhism in tandem because he felt that both schools of thought had frequently intervened in social problems.

This is clearly borne out in Tōgoku's autobiography. On this note, he moved from Takamatsu to Osaka, and Ōshio Heihachirō's Yōmei-gaku and Nichiren were connected along with the "new commoners":

> Religion surfaced when there was an insight that social problems could not be solved by material things alone. The religion that appeared for me was Nichiren, which I had encountered during my time in Takamatsu. As if by chance, the fifth Exhibition [the fifth National Industrial Exhibition of 1903] was held in Osaka, which was also the home of the new commoners, and a fraternization event called the Congress of New Commoners was also organized in the same year [in 1903 they formed the Dai Nihon Dōhō Yūwa Kai in Osaka]; I devoted myself to this congress and offered all kinds of assistance to it. As a result, while researching the new commoners, it came to me that Nichiren had been a new commoner himself as well as a religious reformer, and that Ōshio had helped the new commoners to raise an army against all odds.[31]

For Tōgoku, Yōmei-gaku amounted to a religion that could solve "social problems." His later crystallization of the concept of a "Yōmei sect" (Yōmei-shū) stems from this interest in the religious dimension.

At this juncture it is probably necessary to say a few words about the relationship of Yōmei-gaku with Nichirenism in modern Japan. As we have already seen, Uchimura Kanzō, in his *Representative Men of Japan,* mentioned Nichiren as one of the five great figures. He also concluded his text by declaring that "Nichiren *minus his combativeness* is our ideal religious man."[32]

Regarding this I wish to make just one observation. It is well known that Miyazawa Kenji (1896–1933) converted from Pure Land Buddhism to Nichi-

ren Buddhism, then in 1920 joined the Kokuchūkai—a lay association of Nichiren headed by Tanaka Chigaku—and then later left it. According to Pullattu Abraham George, it was the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* that enabled the reincarnation into Paradise through one's own chanting of the Buddha's name, while the salvation of every being was guaranteed by the practice and effort of the individual in this world.[33]

On the one hand, the Nichirenism of modern Japan actively intervened in and lent a helping hand to alleviate the social problems in this world, rather than in the afterlife; on the other hand, it thereby fell into a tendency toward statism such as found in the Kokuchūkai. Tōgoku, too, had periods during which he failed to gauge his own distance from the state.[34] However, both Tōgoku and Kenji ultimately turned toward the people.

After Kenji left the Kokuchūkai and returned to Iwate, he established an association called the Rasu Earthly Men Association (Rasu Chijin Kyōkai) in 1926 in the city of Hanamaki. "Earthly Men" (*chijin*) denotes farmers, but in a broader sense it might also refer to people who live on the earth. This activism did not last long, but Kenji attempted to lecture these "earthly men" on science and the arts. Part of his efforts included trying to teach Esperanto. In fact, Tōgoku also tried to publish the Osaka Yōmei-gakkai flagship magazine in Esperanto, but failed. Even so, both Kenji and Tōgoku, via Nichirenism and Esperanto, tried to aim for what I have called here an earthly universality rooted in the people.

Confucianism for the nation and Confucianism for the people as conceived in modern Japan were nourished from the same roots, but their aims stood in contrast to each other. Should Confucianism look to the nation-state? Or should it look to the people? This chapter has examined one part of that complicated process. However, when Confucianism itself was erased from social experience in Japan after the Second World War, it might seem as if studying these debates over Confucianism holds little meaning. Yet even so, insofar as modern Yōmeigaku in Japan was deeply involved in the formation of Japan's modernity, failing to examine it critically presents the risk of falling into the same trap of historical understanding. Moreover, we would overlook the potential once held by Japan's modernity. Ultimately, the question is how we can talk about "earthly universality" today—an issue that we have surely been tasked to engage.

Notes

This chapter was translated into English by Shi Lin Loh and has been reviewed by the author.

1. Miyagi Kimiko, *Bakumatsu ki no shisō to shūzoku* (The thought and customs of the Bakumatsu period) (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2004), p. 24.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Ibid., pp. 26–27.

4. Ibid., p. 27.

5. Ibid., p. 28.

6. The following is Miyagi Kimiko's summary: "Hōkoku's consistent philosophical motif is to reject 'constitutional artificiality,' deliberate intentionality, and utilitarian calculation, which the 'rational principle' of Shushi-gaku unexpectedly exposes, while emphasizing 'natural sincerity'; in his pursuit of genuine 'naturalness,' Hōkoku was criticizing even the 'constitutional artificiality' so bound up with Wang Yangming thought" (Miyagi, *Bakumatsu ki no shisō to shūzoku,* p. 127).

7. Sawai Keiichi, on the purported "absence of Yōmei-gaku" from the Bakumatsu to the initial period of Meiji, has observed: "During the latter stages of the early modern period it is true that many people interested in Yōmei-gaku appeared, but of the thinkers and activists that succeeded these people, only Kasuga Sen'an can be said to have been actually involved in the political movement called the Meiji Restoration" (Sawai Keiichi, "Kindai Yōmei-gaku' no tanjō" [The birth of modern Yōmei learning], UTCP [University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy] Lecture, May 5, 2014, p. 4).

8. Ogyū Shigehiro, *Kindai, Ajia, Yōmei-gaku* (Modernity, Asia, Yōmei learning) (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2008), p. 400.

9. Ibid., pp. 354–355.

10. Ibid., p. 356.

11. Uchimura Kanzō, *Representative Men of Japan,* vol. 2 of *The Complete Works of Kanzō Uchimura* (Tokyo: Kobunkwan, 1972), p. 38.

12. Ibid., pp. 14–15.

13. Kojima Tsuyoshi, *Kindai Nihon no Yōmei-gaku* (The Yōmei learning of modern Japan) (Tokyo*:* Kōdansha, 2006), pp. 115–116.

14. Ibid.

15. Yamashita Ryūji, "Min-dai shisō kenkyū wa dō susumeraretekita ka" (How has research into Ming thought progressed?), in *Nagoya Daigaku Bungaku-bu kenkyū ronshū* (*Tetsugaku*) (Nagoya University Literature Department research essays [Philosophy]) 12 (1964): 59–60.

16. Inoue Tetsujirō, *Nihon Yōmei-gakuha no tetsugaku* (Japanese philosophy of the Yangming school) (Tokyo: Fuzambō, 1900), p. 3.

17. Ibid., p. 6.

18. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

19. Kōtoku Shūsui had been a disciple of Nakae Chōmin; Nakae had studied with Mishima Chūshū, a bastion of Meiji-era Yōmei-gaku. The rest of this paragraph references the previous work by Kojima Tsuyoshi. Cf. Kojima, *Kindai Nihon no Yōmei-gaku,* pp. 123–125.

20. See Ogyū, *Kindai, Ajia, Yōmei-gaku,* p. 405.

21. *Yōmei* 2, no. 6 (December 5, 1911): 1.

22. Ibid., p. 13.

23. Tōgoku's self-affiliation with Chōmin's genealogy and his affirmation of a Yōmei-gaku that was an ally of the "new commoners" remained constant, as seen in his

Yōmei-gakuha no jinbutsu (Figures in the Yōmei School) (Osaka: Maekawa Shoten, Taishō 1 [1912]), which he published the following year. There he described Chōmin as "one of the Yōmei-gaku scholars I revere second only to Ōshio Chūsai" (p. 94), and further that "the revolutionary thought of the Yōmei-gaku scholars has been secretly indoctrinated" (p. 94). However, even saying this, the assertion that "Master Chōmin was actually a Yōmei scholar cultivated in the Okunomiya [Zōsai] academy" (p. 95) cannot be accepted at face value. Okunomiya Zōsai, father of the aforementioned Okunomiya Kenshi, was a Yōmei scholar on close terms with Ōshio Heihachirō. It is true that Chōmin received tutelage from Zōsai, but he never forgot his debt to his other teacher of Yōmei-gaku, namely Mishima Chūshū of the Nishō Gakusha. Chūshū was a stalwart of the Yomei Gakkai in Tokyo, and also instructed the Taishō Emperor on Yōmei-gaku for twenty years. Nonetheless, when considering the fact that Chūshū was a disciple of Yamada Hōkoku, earlier mentioned as the domainal Confucianist of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain, it can be said that Chōmin was indeed connected to the genealogy of scholars in the vein of Confucianism for the people.

24. Ogyū, *Kindai, Ajia, Yōmei-gaku,* p. 406.
25. Ibid., p. 409.
26. Ibid., p. 411.
27. Ibid., pp. 409–410.
28. Ishizaki, *Yōmei-gakuha no jinbutsu,* p. 174.
29. Ibid., pp. 29–34.
30. Ibid., p. 35.
31. Ibid., p. 175.
32. Uchimura, *Representative Men of Japan,* p. 177.
33. Pullattu Abraham George and Komatsu Kazuhiko, eds., *Miyazawa Kenji no shinsō—Shūkyō kara no shōsha* (The deep structure of Miyazawa Kenji: Irradiation [i.e., Radiance] from religion) (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 2012), p. 6.
34. Ishizaki, *Yōmei-gakuha no jinbutsu,* p. 173.