

Chapter 1

DISCOVERY OF PASTS

Morse in Japan remains what he has been all his life—a man locked in a silent struggle with time, one whose days are filled with a pursuit of practical truths that can be shared with a world hungry to understand itself.

—Robert A. Rosenstone (1998)

WE ARE QUITE FAMILIAR with the Meiji period as one of considerable transformation of all aspects of life on the archipelago. But its characterization as a move from old to new—as simply exiting from its self-incurred immaturity—obscures the historicity of modernity, that process described above by Rosenstone: a “pursuit of practical truths” for a “world hungry to understand itself.” Several steps are necessary to begin that process: first, the idea of immaturity suggests that one’s present society is incomplete and living in the past. In other words, there is a recognition of a progressive time and a separation of pasts from present. Second, one must recognize that the world of inadequacy is man-made, not because of a degeneration from some originary ideal, but because of the artificial constructions posed by such primitive ideas and institutions. And third, any attempt to explain this level is dependent upon a different configuration of the whole, a “struggle with time.” Now, inherited ideas and men that were the subject of chronicles became the past, which reflected recognition that the aristocratic system is not natural or endowed but anachronistic. These discoveries occurred in Europe from the late medieval period to the nineteenth century.¹ During the Tokugawa period, intellectuals began the separation of humans from nature (*rangaku*) and the formulation of an alternate origin (*kokugaku*). But this discovery of the past and its separation from the present occurred principally during the Meiji period.

The discovery and separation of the past is one of the central components of the Meiji period. In early Meiji, various practices and ideas that had been connected with the Tokugawa era became the objects from which society would be emancipated. But unlike previous reform efforts, improvement would come through something new rather than a restoration of an ideal located in some pure originary moment. But this transformation of the conceptual order must

¹The specific periodization depends on who one is reading and which objects and transformations are described. See, for example, the essays in Bender and Wellbery (1991); Toulmin and Goodfield (1965); Koselleck (1985); and de Certeau (1988).

not be described today within the same temporal ordering that was used to argue for the new. To do so accepts the neutrality, or emptiness, of time. That is, it fails to consider the arguments by scholars who point out that time is not external, but a constituent of and constitutes life. Thomas Luckmann writes,

Time is constitutive of human life in society. Of course it is also constitutive of human life in nature: *all* life is in time. But as a dimension of human life time is not only the matrix of growth and decline between birth and death. It is also the condition of human sociality that is achieved again and again in the continuously incarnated contemporaneity of face-to-face interaction. (1991, 151)

If we are to take Luckmann's point seriously, as I do, then we must also recognize that when the reckoning of time changes, then human life in society also changes. Blumenberg's notion of an absolutism of reality provides an analytical structure for dealing with the centrality of time, especially in moments of change. It helps us recognize that it is crucial to separate the object of study from our analytical apparatus. In other words, we must be mindful that the temporal structures that give meaning to objects and relations, too, are historical. Moreover, as I will describe below, they came into particular use to address particular reasons, to reconcile this new temporality and the dislocation and anxiety it set off. By grounding thought in this basic condition that gives rise to a fear of one's lack of control over the social and natural environment, Blumenberg removes the hierarchy of science over myth, instead seeing both as two modes for "working up reality" (1985, 50–51). Thus myth is not exclusively past—nor is it implied that it should be—but, rather, is coexistent with science, though differentially valued. Moreover, if myth and logos function to allay fear in the unknown, our inquiry shifts to what one is familiar with, rather than pointing to sites where ignorance hindered the fulfillment guaranteed by knowledge (enlightenment).

The trope of discovery is important to the characterization of logos as the progressive separation from myth. As I hope was evident in my discussion of calendrical reform, the discovery of a past does not mean that knowledge of previous people, events, deeds, and so forth did not exist. Indeed, many of the discoveries I will discuss were well known prior to Meiji. For example, even though Edward Sylvester Morse has been credited with discovering shell mounds in Ōmori (between Yokohama and Tokyo), numerous people knew about these mounds, and collections of paraphernalia from them existed in the Tokugawa era, if not earlier (Bleed 1986). The principal difference is how those objects relate to knowledge (logos). The pre-Meiji world is characterized by multiple temporalities. Recurrence and cycles coexisted with a linearity where the past located the ideal from which society had degenerated and toward which it must return (or come to an end). That ideal was in the sages, the *Nihon shoki* (720) and, from the eighteenth century, the *Kojiki* (712). The curios from the shell mounds were understood through and in support of the belief structure at the time, rooted in the age

of the gods and the spirits that pervaded communities. Thus, a stone scraper was called Tengu's rice paddles, a stone mace was a thunder club, and long projectiles were spears of the gods (Bleed 1986, 63). Today, we are amused by these labels as stories of the past, that is, as myth or ignorance.

In contrast, one of the constituent parts of modernity is the separation and denigration of the past, as something to move away from. De Certeau writes, "Historical discourse makes a *social identity* explicit, not so much in the way it is 'given' or held as stable, as in the ways it is *differentiated* from a former period or another society. It presupposes the rupture that changes a tradition into a past object" (1988, 45). One characteristic of nonmodern societies is the fluid boundaries between other periods and other societies and communities: they are both different and part of one's own society. Often what we call myth has been a principal device to establish separations from the unfamiliar, the uncanny. In contrast, in modern societies, what we consider a separate and dead past no longer has such a potential, even likelihood, of returning to the present or of returning the present to a past ideal. Instead, a historical discourse domesticates the alterity of pasts by making it into a former version of the present and into proof of the distinctiveness of oneself.

There is no single discovery that has led to this historical sense of the world. It is widespread; it is connected through intellectual discoveries, scientific observations, and sociopolitical changes. Moreover, it is gradual; numerous scholars have shown that the understanding of time has changed throughout human history (see, e.g., Toulmin and Goodfield 1965; Borst 1993; Dohrn-van Rossum 1996). Yet a major break does occur around the Enlightenment—the growing separation of God from nature and mankind brought about by scientific observations, the discovery that the Earth has a history beyond known history, and the discovery of ancient civilizations in Asia (Smith 1991; Toulmin and Goodfield 1965). In Japan one can see such a transformation accelerating during the Tokugawa period. The introduction of recent European scientific advances through the Dutch brought hints of the separation between humans and nature that led to the scientific and industrial revolutions in Europe. Tokugawa intellectuals were aware of Copernican heliocentric theory, Newton's mechanics, and Linnaeus's classificatory system (Bartholomew 1989, esp. chap. 2). Ogyū Sōrai's separation of political institutions from the sages created a break of sociopolitical institutions from the ideal structures of the sages, and Kamo no Mabuchi and Motoori Norinaga's discoveries of a Japanese origin brought out the possibility of a linear history (as opposed to the chronological and dynastic-like histories of writers such as Arai Hakuseki). But the transformation accelerated near the end of the Tokugawa period and was punctuated by the fourth article of the Charter Oath, which declared, "Evil practices of the past shall be abandoned" (Spaulding 1967, 11). This recognition of an evil past is a recognition of change but itself is not necessarily modern. *Neuzeit* unfolds as the horizon changes from an ideal located in the classics to the possibility of exiting from that "self-incurred

immaturity.” This separation is one of the key moments in the possibility of a historical society; the ability to relegate those inherited forms of knowledge that bind into a past potentially liberates humanity.

In this chapter I hope to show this process. To articulate the past, a new conceptualization of time was necessary—that of progress, one that separates the present from the past and then re-emplots that past as an earlier, now dead, moment of one’s “experience.” This is teleological: a historical understanding is necessary to give meaning to the past, while the past proves a historical understanding (see, e.g., Hides 1997, 11–13). This re-employment of pasts is based on criteria that are separated from social forms and knowledge. This articulation of a different time alters the meaning of space, that is, how persons interact with their human and natural environment. Inside and outside were redefined: on the one hand, space first becomes blank, an abstract notion separated from human beings; on the other hand, space is circumscribed according to national units.

DISCOVERY ONE: PASTS PRIOR TO HISTORY

One of the first discoveries of the past, one that is common in revolutionary movements, is the destruction of previous symbols of power. One of the first laws of the new government separating bodhisattva and kami (*shinbutsu kyōri*) set off widespread pillaging of Buddhist temples, many of them former sites of political and economic power.² Buddhist statues were decapitated; sutras and other texts burned; buildings torched, torn down, or sold; and priests and monks retired en masse.³ Destruction at the Kōfukuji, the most powerful temple in Nara up through the Tokugawa period, was considerable. Either books were burned (the bonfire reportedly lasted for more than three months) or their pages were used as wrapping paper for lacquerware or as lining for tea boxes. The three-roofed pagoda was sold for thirty yen, and local officials proposed to burn down the five-roofed pagoda but demurred, fearing the spread of fire (Mizuki 1921, 171–73). Fortunately this pagoda was not reduced to ashes, but it was saved not to preserve an irreplaceable monument but out of the fear that nearby houses and shops would also be destroyed.

In contrast, a neighboring temple, the Hōryūji, was largely spared, probably due to its lower status, its relative isolation, and the popularity of the Taishi cult.⁴

²This law is usually translated as the Law Separating Buddhism and Shinto. I have instead followed Allan Grapard’s practice, which recognizes the syncretism of what we now separate as two distinct religions. See his *Protocol of the Gods* (1992) and “Japan’s Ignored Cultural Revolution” (1984).

³James Ketelaar describes the discovery of a graveyard of decapitated statues of Buddhist statues in Kyushu. It has now been turned into a local shrine, the Hall of the Headless Kannon (1990, 57).

⁴In contrast to the 104 pages of material on the Kōfukuji in Murakami et al. (1921), the 5 pages on the Hōryūji were essentially speculation on why it did not suffer such damage. Murakami et al. suggested that in addition to the connection of Shōtoku Taishi to the imperial line, the tutelary deity of the Hōryūji was not on the temple premises.

The local name for this temple was *bimbōdera* (poor temple). At the outset of the Meiji era, the new government cut its annual stipend to 250 *koku*, and in 1874 it reduced it again to 125 *koku*. The temple was dilapidated: many monks had retired or left, local government officials proposed the demolition of the cloister walls on both sides of the south gate (*nandaimon*), and cows and horses were housed inside the cloister (Takada 1987, 88). In other words, the years of relative obscurity throughout the Muromachi and Edo periods facilitated a forgetting of or indifference toward the temple that saved it from the rampage that beset the powerful Kōfukuji. Yet, it was not completely forgotten; it was part of that experiential space of the everyday where farmers could keep their livestock.

The difference between the Kōfukuji and the Hōryūji indicates that this discovery of the past was more an attack against the powerful institutions such as the Kōfukuji that served as symbols and institutions of power. The Hōryūji in this discovery is far from its current status as the originary moment of Japanese architectural history as well as of historical Japan. Indeed, it is not a discovery at all; instead, it is indicative of a limited notion of the past, an indifference to the past as past, especially to this site, which is now the archetype in the emergence of a “Japan.” In fact, it shows that time, the past, was not separate from the present; the temple was indeed part of the present, but one connected to a disgraced power structure that oversaw local matters. The masses (often at the instigation of Shinto priests) who destroyed Buddhist symbols and icons were reacting to the system that enveloped them in their everyday existence; it was part of a power structure of oppression, not a past that incurred immaturity. Second, there is no Japan or East Asia here. Decisions over the fate of the Kōfukuji and Hōryūji rested in local needs and meanings: the fear of a conflagration of the town and the need to contain livestock. It would be a leap to extrapolate the latter into evidence of a nation.

DISCOVERY TWO: LOSS OF FUNCTION

In the fifth month of 1871, the Dajōkan, concerned about the destruction of objects from the ancient and recent past, issued an edict on the preservation of old things (*kyūbutsu*), stating in part, “There are not a few benefits of some artifacts and old things in the investigation of today’s transformation from old to new and of the history (*enkaku*) of systems and customs. It is natural to hate the old and struggle for the new, but actually we should lament the gradual loss and destruction of evil customs” (Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan 1996, 6). This was the first official recognition of the importance of a past, what can be called “discovery.” One of the results of the edict was that the Ministry of Education sent out an investigatory team, headed by Machida Hisanari. Machida was a key figure who recognized the continuity between modern society and its past while on a study tour in Europe. The *Jinshin* survey began in May 1872 and lasted four months, visiting Kyoto, Osaka, Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Aichi, Watarai, Sakai,

Ashigara, Shiga, Wakayama, and Nara (Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan 1973 [hereafter TKH100], 73–74).⁵ Machida was accompanied by Uchida Masao from the Ministry of Education and Ninagawa Noritane (1835–82), an official with the exhibition section (*hakubutsukyōkyō*), of that ministry.⁶

Although it was not articulated in this way, this edict was a recognition that modern society has no fixed referent.⁷ One effect is the loss of previous congruence between meaning and object, or, in de Certeau's terms, the “destruction of tradition” (as custom and habit). This issue, of course, is not new; intellectuals and commoners in transforming societies have constantly searched for the limits of change, the point where society will no longer be recognizable to its anterior, rather than as another homogenized place. We must remember that the nation will fill this vacuum; but during the 1870s, it was unclear that the idea of nation will become that referent where particularities of the past—customs destroyed by modern liberal-capitalist forces—are re-emplotted as “traditions” authorizing the nation as an immanent form.

This survey designed to confirm the existence of and record artifacts was the first step in the new government's preservation efforts, that is, to establish that referent or the idea of tradition within modernity (TKH100, 75). One of the aspects that stands out most clearly is that, historical rhetoric notwithstanding, from this early date the new leadership showed concern for old things along with an insistence on transformation to the new. To best facilitate that transformation to the new, administrative personnel in the Dajōkan saw value in retaining a past, that is, old things. Ninagawa's draft report of the survey complained of “a foreigner's” observation that Japanese like novelty and shun old things, and that people were selling artifacts from the temples and shrines of the western capital (Kansai). Ninagawa then warned that if this continued, in a number of years there would be no remnants of the ancient provinces (TKH100, 77).⁸

But we must not go too far. There is an idea of history, but it is *enkaku* (closer to chronicles and accounts, *histoire*), not *rekishi* (today's developmental notion

⁵ Many of the site visits were rushed (including those to the Shōsōin and Hōryūji) because the leaders had to return to Tokyo to participate in the decision on the location of the museum; in addition to Ueno, Oji was also being considered.

⁶ Other members of this team were Kashiwagi Masanori, whose role was to copy text, Yokoyama Matsusaburo, who photographed objects, Kasakura Tetsunosuke, and Takahashi Yūichi, a painter.

⁷ Drawing from Henri Meschonnic, Osborne writes, “‘Modernity,’ then, has no fixed, objective referent. ‘It has only a subject, of which it is full.’ It is the product, in the instance of each utterance, of an act of historical self-definition through *differentiation*, *identification* and *projection*, which transcends the order of chronology in the construction of a meaningful present (1995, 14).

⁸ Much of the information from this survey derives from Ninagawa's diary, *Nara no settō*. Ninagawa was perhaps referring to Edward Morse, with whom he had considerable contact. Indeed, Morse's fine collection and his expertise on pottery and ceramics drew heavily from Ninagawa, a collector of antiquarian objects.

of history).⁹ There is little teleology. At this point, the Dajōkan seemed concerned about destruction and neglect, but a belief in value did not necessarily correspond to an articulation of what that value is. Moreover, despite this newfound concern for the past, not all shared it, especially those such as temple officials, who were in dire need of money—why not pawn a statue or painting rather than watch a mob destroy it—for food or maintenance as well as those who quickly learned a central tenet of modern society, self-interest.

More important, this event indicates an emerging sense of separation of the present from the past. Things were becoming important because they were old, not because they were tied to some form of belief or spirituality. The materiality of the object or textual data took precedence over the idea and transmitted knowledge. Buddhist items that lost their connection to previous ideational and political structures were deemed at this moment particularly “worthless,” their materiality as old not yet established. But even in the desire to save, there is a nostalgia, a fear of loss that is possible only through recognition that an object is currently of another world. Here the past is becoming foreign (Lowenthal 1985). It is a separation that is necessary for the production of history.

We must be careful not to confuse this interest in the past with our current knowledge of Japanese history. Indeed, these men have largely been forgotten. I believe that the principal reason for their demise was the lack of history, especially the history of the nation (and East Asia) as we know it today. Their past is not yet nation, national, though it is moving in that direction (TKH100, 74–75). Ninagawa’s invocation of the “foreigner” can at best be read as a lament of an antiquarian that Japan is discarding its charming artifacts; the delineation of this past as proof of distinct national cultures—Japan, China, Korea, etc.—is absent. Ninagawa’s interest in using artifacts to educate the inhabitants indicates both an early recognition of the importance of the past in fostering support for the new government and the still unformed idea of the nation-state. The objects that he selected in this survey are rather eclectic by today’s disciplinary structures. The most important criteria were old things and objects connected to the imperial, especially ancient, lines.

The principal object of the survey’s attention was the Shōsōin (Imperial storehouse) of the Tōdaiji.¹⁰ The survey of the Shōsōin, which lasted for twelve days, is indicative of a coexistence of this transformation of time: on the one hand, the connection with the imperial family suggests the inherited idea of renewal, halting the degeneration of the world by returning to that pure original moment of ancient emperors and empresses. But on the other hand, it is indicative of the shift from practices to pasts: a veneration of old objects not

⁹ Doug Howland (1996) translates *enkaku* (Chinese: *yange*) as successive administrative changes of a unit. For an account of the rise of *Geschichte* from *histoire*, see Koselleck (1985, 21–38).

¹⁰ Even though they did visit the Hōryūji, little has been written about that visit; see, for example, TKH100, 74–75. The desire to tie the past to the emperor is parallel to the rituals and pageants described by Takashi Fujitani (1996) to turn the emperor into the public centerpiece of the nation.

seen throughout this storehouse's history. From the middle part of the Heian period, its objects were largely forgotten. Tastes had changed; the Tang culture that such objects represented was passé (*tōi*), having become commonplace from frequency of intercourse as well as a changing style. The storehouse had last been opened in 1833. The transformation that the 1872 survey set off is summarized in an introduction to a recent history of the Shōsōin: "It is now always included in history textbooks and today there is nobody who does not know of the treasures of the Shōsōin. But, the attention paid to these treasures is not very old" (NHK 1990, 178).

The ambiguity of this moment is evident in the ceremony convened to open the doors of the Shōsōin. It was a great event; Uchida likened the excitement to a wedding ceremony or a meeting of a potential marriage partner (*miai*). Ninagawa's diary records the anticipation:

We followed the procedure for removing the treasures from storage. Present were Governor Shijo and three lower officials; among the temple priests, one colored robe, three white robes, and six black robes; ten temple officials; and four carpenters and blacksmiths. At the storehouse, the previous day a platform across the front about 1.8 meters deep and a ramp were built. On a stage, the priests lined up on the left and officials on the right; they sat on chairs. After 12 o'clock we commenced the ceremony. A black-robed priest called the *yakushiin* and four carpenters went up to the platform and used a lever to remove the gate bolt from the south door, and then they removed that of the middle and north. And then the head priest (*shiseibō*), wearing a perfumed robe, removed the official temple seal from the lock on the south; next, the *yakushiin* removed the bamboo wrapping of the imperial seal from the middle and north. And then Seko [Nobuyo, the imperial envoy] went up, took the imperial seal, and showed it to all. We looked. And then the *yakushiin* took all seals from the lock. And then they inserted the key. And then they opened the door, and everyone entered. They removed ten long boxes and the temple officials carried them to the head priest. And then they closed the doors as before and removed the lock. At this time lots of people came from everywhere to look. A line formed and they opened the boxes. (THK100, 80)

The continuous use of "and then" (*tsugi*) suggests the careful ritual procedures the priests followed. The priests were conducting the ritual for the first time in thirty-nine years as they could best reconstruct it. Their ceremony indicates that the value of objects that were rarely seen was in its connection to the imperial court. For the survey team, *tsugi* suggests some exasperation at the length of the ceremony; indeed, the sudden attention of many people when the boxes were opened suggests a transformation of meaning whereby the ritual had lost significance. Value was in knowing and seeing, something to be catalogued and displayed. They were not disappointed when they finally saw the contents. Ninagawa's account marvels at the craftsmanship of the objects, especially the *koto*, flutes, *go* boards, and boxes; they returned him to the past, a sense of the eighth

century. He rejoices that these objects are “sufficient to envision the ancient system” (NHK 1990, 184).

For Ninagawa, the antiquarian, the ancient period was reborn; it came alive again. But his purpose was not just to relish in the moment. He advocated its political potential, that the past and the wide dissemination of this information—the education of the population—would foster belief in the nation. In this sense, through acts of preservation or restoration, the subject had changed to the nation, making this more new than a restoration. Although Ninagawa was relishing in this imperial regalia, his efforts began the transformation of the artifacts from forgotten paraphernalia tied to the imperial families into objects that depict a national past. Ninagawa also advocated the establishment of museums as sites for preservation and display; many of the objects unearthed in this survey were placed on display three years later at the Nara exhibition (*hakurankai*), held in the Tōdaiji. The survey and subsequent exhibition are indicative of what de Certeau calls the transformation from “tradition into a past object” where new categories of differentiation transform the meaning of objects. A phenomenon of the new international world of the latter half of the nineteenth century was the plethora of exhibitions and world’s fairs (see, e.g., Rydell 1984; Mabuchi 1997). Indeed, one of the reasons for the 1872 survey was to locate material to send to the world’s fair in Vienna (another survey was conducted to prepare for the Nara exhibition). Exhibitions were one of the new organizational forms through which culture and technology could be distilled into a presentation for large audiences. Public displays, *per se*, were not new; these exhibits relied heavily on antecedents from the Edo period.¹¹ The purpose, however, was quite different.

The 1875 Nara exhibition was one of a series of public displays being held throughout the archipelago. The idea was connected to the exhibitions in the West that displayed industrial products, antiquities, nature, and cultures of the world. Meiji displays were usually public (*i.e.*, sponsored by central and local governments), presented as new, organized by categories rather than ownership, and money making (they charged admission) (Kornicki 1994). Ninagawa envisioned a connection between artifacts and the production of a new arts industry of export items. In these early years, artlike objects were seen as an important export commodity. Much of the Nara exhibition consisted of artifacts from the Shōsōin and Hōryūji, but objects were usually arranged with little sense of historical order. The list of objects is different from today’s standard inventory of important objects from that age; they fit in a category of orientalia that could be reproduced for export. There were few of the large Buddhist statues that are now canonized as Japanese art, and many smaller bronze statuettes of bodhisattva. Moreover, of the text I have seen, Ninagawa did not distinguish what was Japanese or from the continent (even subcontinent).

¹¹ For the transformation of public displays during Meiji, see Kornicki’s fine essay, “Public Display and Changing Values” (1994); in Japanese, see Yoshimi (1992).

But these very acts of preservation, display, and reproduction (as export item and as a depiction of ancient society) indicate an increasing objectification of previous practices. First, the selection of the Tōdaiji shows a new significance of temple space: it was a large, enclosed site that could contain the exhibition. It no longer possessed the grandeur, spirituality, power, and wealth of the past. It was now a public (i.e., empty) space (the closest thing in 1875 to a convention center) whose meaning depended on the contents of the moment. The exhibition indicates a concern among the government to preserve important aspects of the past, especially those connected to the imperial family and art objects, such as the register of objects donated by Empress Kōken to the temple and a cushion that had once belonged to Shōtoku Taishi (*Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan* 1959, 4). Even though the *kaichō*—temporary unveiling, or viewing, of sacred statues—served as an important antecedent for these exhibitions, religious objects no longer dominated; most of the objects, especially the large statues that now fill the art history books on Japan, were not included. Those Buddhist icons that were included were bronze statuettes of *kannon* and *nyōrai* that demonstrate the casting skills of Japanese artisans. The more famous of the 140 objects from the Hōryūji included in the exhibit were the Yakushi *nyōrai* from the main hall (*kondo*), the guardians Jikokuten and Tamonten, and the Tamamushi shrine.

Perhaps the best indication of this transformation of meaning is the removal of the Yakushi *nyōrai* from the main hall of the Hōryūji and its display among many other objects in the Tōdaiji as an important artifact of the past. Important objects that had been seen by so few people and were connected to specific temples could now be seen by the vast public (NHK 1990, 185). The value of the *nyōrai*, the principal icon of the Hōryūji, changed: it was now separated from that site and resituated as something old. The separation reflects the contradistinction of mobility and stability in modernity. Old things became a symbol of stability that grounds a changing society. Moreover, the removal of spirituality from this statue indicates an early stage at which these objects become aesthetic images that speak for an abstract idea, in this case a national past. Though not well framed yet, Ninagawa's desire to display artifacts in order to inform the masses was an early attempt at the use of aesthetics to connect the masses to the whole of the nation. The icon was now outside, something for people to see (which was not usually possible in the past), and thus it penetrated their lives. Those who went to the exhibit saw evidence of an emerging nation-state and experienced the result of a specific sequence of changes that explained the significance of what they had formerly known as a local site (Elias 1992, 76–80).

The final moment of this divestment of the objects from their function culminated in 1878.¹² Chihaya Jōchō, the head priest of Hōryūji, completed negotiations with Machida for the donation of more than three hundred temple

¹² For a discussion on the relation between function and the subjectivity of a divested object, see Baudrillard (1994).

objects to the Imperial Household. In return, the temple received a donation of ten thousand yen. From Chihaya's point of view, the donation would help avoid the dispersal of the temple's objects, remind the government of the temple's existence, and restore temple finances (Takada 1994, 66). This is indicative of the transformation of conceptual space. For Chihaya, the objects were part of the Hōryūji's space of experience, not an example of some history—of the imperial court or of a Japan. Not all objects were willingly relinquished; in the early negotiations in 1876, the temple proposed donating 157 objects. The number was increased after a prefectural (Sakai) survey determined that the temple's buildings were so dilapidated that they could not protect the objects. Some of the meaningful objects included on the final list were the shoes placed before the statue of a seated Shōtoku Taishi, the sword from the statue of Mochikuni in the main hall, and a brazier from the five-roofed pagoda. None of the large statues was included.¹³ In short, for Chihaya, preservation was in the site itself, which gave meaning to the objects. But "to save" means the restoration of structures that were of value in an old system where lore and sacredness have power. To save that site—to pay for repairs to the main hall (*kondo*)—he had to relinquish many of the objects that gave meaning to the temple. It is important to remember that the temple used objects connected to Shōtoku Taishi to elevate its position among the believers of the Taishi cult (and thus earn money) during the Tokugawa period, and at the beginning of Meiji many bodhisattva had been burned, decapitated, or dumped unceremoniously in storage. From the viewpoint of Machida, the donation was important to provide a safe place to store the objects, now valued because of their connection to a past of Japan. Machida was ushering in a new system in which objects themselves have value even though they are separated from the institution that had given them their significance. This was an early moment where the nation-state would become the abstract system that determines possession, not only in terms of physical holding, but also in the criteria from which the objects gained their meaning.

The identification of old things was a key moment in the separation of pasts from present. In the process, there was the beginning of the reduction of the heterogeneity and specificity of society according to specific places into categories of a national past. The expertise that had been varied and local began to shift, where important knowledge of the old increasingly gained meaning as the past of Japan. The way that ideas and sites were identified and made known altered their meaning by differentiating them from their own local and specific sites, the space of experience, and resituating them as moments of a national past. But at this point, we must be careful that we do not overstate this common concept. This new past did not yet organize a history of Japan. The celebration of old things does not necessarily order them into a historical narrative. Indeed, the

¹³ For a list of the donation, see Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan (1959).

author of an 1880 series of photo essays, *Kokka yohō* (Glories of the country), indicates this ambiguity:

It is a principle of nature [that works] when we see nobility in the ruggedness of mountain peaks and get a desire to study the flowing rivers and bays. More important, because we contact the spirit of ancient people in various books, pictures, and artifacts, when we come into contact and are edified, we will understand those secrets and miracles. In a country like ours, with an unbroken imperial line, we should honor more those artifacts that still exist. Last year, upon orders, I visited each prefecture and inspected books, paintings, and artifacts in the imperial treasuries, shrines, temples, and homes of samurai and merchants. I, an observer 1,100 years later, could not help but be inspired by the exquisite and elaborate details, the bequest of sages and philosophers, and products of expert artisans. . . . I have tried to animate the spirit of the ancients for [those of] the present. . . . I hope [the volumes] spread throughout the public and become a tool that nurtures the principles of patriotism and, most of all, augments (*hiho*) civilization. (Tokunō 1880)

This passage demonstrates both an emerging separation of past from present, as well as the limits of this process. On the one hand, the declaration “to animate the spirit of the ancients” as a tool to encourage patriotism indicates that separation: the past is dead and thus is able to be used (animated) for a quite new purpose. This is part of the process of becoming modern. Susan Buck-Morss writes that Walter Benjamin was struck by an “incontestable, empirical fact: Consistently, when modern innovations appeared in modern history, they took the form of historical restitutions” (1989, 110). The idea of unifying the archipelago into a nation-state is such a modern innovation. A part of that innovation is the reorganization of space from the locale to the nation-state. Indeed, in 1871 the old domains were abolished and reorganized into prefectures. The title *Kokka yohō* is instructive: the characters for *kokka* are those for country (*kuni*) and brilliance (*ka*) (not family, which combines into the more familiar nation-state), and *yohō* suggests continuity. These volumes suggest the beginnings of a shift from the importance of local places filled with lore, superstition, and magic to a new grouping as sites with a common past.¹⁴

But the organization of these volumes also indicates that in the restitution of pasts, the new both uses the past and is also understood through the past, that is, through inherited forms of knowledge. The organizational structure is closer to the travel guides (*zue*) of the Edo period. The content—shrines, temples, and imperial tombs—emphasizes regions and important sites. The images of these volumes are organized by region, not by time. The prefectures listed are Ise, Yamato, Kii, Izumo, Kawachi, Yamashiro, Saikio, Ōmi, Owari, Mino, Suruga,

¹⁴ Luke Roberts argues that the Meiji government’s use of the word *kokka*, which had signified regional domains, to represent Japan was related to its desire to transfer allegiance from those local places to the new nation-state (1998, 4–9).

Kai, Shinano, Kōzuke, Shimotsuke, and Nikko. The images are of views from distant vantage points—roads leading to the shrines, temples, or imperial tombs, bridges, and landscapes—of the temple gates, as visitors first view the site upon their arrival, and of principal buildings. Photos of statues, paintings, or artifacts from inside the temples or shrines are noticeably absent. The past that is being celebrated in this series is of sacred and meaningful sites, not historical artifacts. In short, while these sites and artifacts are now valued for their significance to a common past, they are not yet organized into a structure that orders the space of the nation.

DISCOVERY THREE: THE ARCHIPELAGO HAS A PAST

One of the limitations of the notion of old things is the dependence on the Chinese classics and the Japanese texts, *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. The conceivable past is that which is tied to what was a part of the world as known through these ancient accounts. Moreover, Ninagawa's discovery of old things did not necessarily lead to the idea of development. To be sure, there were ideas of progress in Japan. But the discovery of pasts did not lead to the writing of a historical narrative of Japan. In the 1870s, progress was an idea that was evident in the West, and Japan was characterized as the past, still in the first stage. For example, Fukuzawa writes in his famous *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*:

Therefore, throughout the whole twenty-five centuries or so of Japanese history, the government has been continually doing the same thing; it is like reading the same book over and over again, or presenting the same play time after time. Thus when Arai Hakuseki talks about "nine stages" and "five stages" in the general spirit of the country, he is just presenting the same play fourteen times over. A certain Westerner writes that, though there have indeed been upheavals in Asian countries, no less than in Europe, in Asia these upheavals have not advanced the cause of civilization. In my opinion, this is undeniable. (1973, 142)

Later, Fukuzawa explicitly states that Japan is still at the first stage of development; that is, even though he recognizes change and the separation of past from present, it does not guarantee that Japan, too, can have a history (159).

The problem for Japanese intellectuals was that even though they were attempting to break from and separate the past, they were still working within a conceptual system in which an originary ideal determined knowledge. The distinction does not necessarily lead to the next issue, the way that the past and present interact to understand a future. In the organization of modernity in Western nations, such as France, Germany, and Great Britain, the elevation of themselves as modern innovators was built upon the old, either that of ancient Greece or an Indo-German language. Both serve as originary moments from which a narrative of development (history) becomes possible.

There is an obvious dilemma: the synchronization of Japan (or any other non-Western place) into the world at this point entailed placing Japan into that original category. A problem for Japanese intellectuals like Fukuzawa, and I believe all non-Western societies confronting the modern, is one of history; while Fukuzawa recognizes a history in the West, there is a question whether Japan also has history. For Fukuzawa, Japan's past was twenty-five hundred years of stagnation. In this attempt to synchronize Japan with the temporality of progress, it is not a question of whether previous forms or change existed. Change was occurring throughout the Tokugawa era and accelerated during the *tenpō* and *bakumatsu* periods. But the threat and allure of the West catalyzed that change and also made impossible the return to an ideal located in some past.

It is at this point that civilization as defined by the West not only is the goal but also becomes the impediment. The possibilities seen in science and capitalism that cannot be accommodated in past ideals encouraged change. As Vico once wrote, life and nature is full of incertitude; it is dominated by chance and choice (1990, 34). But as is hinted in the Charter Oath, uncertainty or lack of direction is one of the evil customs of the past. Yet science and capitalism also rendered (renders) Japan to the certainty of perpetual inferiority. Thus the problem was not only the uncertainty of direction, but also the certainty of inferiority. Japan was (is) located within one of de Certeau's scriptural tombs, that of the Orient; within the nineteenth-century, imperialistic world, it was a society revered for its antithesis to modernity, rather than as a dynamic society with its own autonomous history. In this sense it, too, faced many of the problems of colonized places, especially on the sociocultural level.¹⁵

But as in so many of modernity's contradictions, the very nature of Japan as past provided the venue for its movement out of that past. In the 1870s Japan, according to a developmental rendering of history, was still one of those "un-explored" lands that had suddenly been "opened" from "seclusion" (different metaphors for "mankind's exit from its self-incurred immaturity"). Japan became an opportunistic retreat for numerous Europeans and Americans who desired to observe its people and land and share their experiences with academic societies in Europe, such as the Royal Society. On the one hand, those accounts described Japan as a living past. Morse, for example, placed it within a nostalgic context: "To an 'active American' all this is a terrible waste of time—but charming, most definitely charming" (Rosenstone 1998, 125).¹⁶

But on the other hand, many of these same individuals operated within the nineteenth-century "planetary consciousness" described by Mary Louise Pratt in her marvelous book *Imperial Eyes*. Pratt describes the way that travel, science,

¹⁵ I believe that this relegation of the past as if dead weighs heavily in today's penchant for interpreters of Japan to vacillate from Japanophiles to Japanophobes, describing either a good Japan (that is, dead—malleable to the wishes and interpretations of the West) or a bad Japan (that is, the ghost that haunts the modern West).

¹⁶ For more on Morse's Japanophilia, see Ishikawa (1968, esp. 352). Morse's *Japan Day-by-Day* (1879) is filled with examples: his observation of Buddhism and healing can be found in 1:127.

and imperialism converged in the classification of objects throughout the world according to European categories of knowledge. She writes, “One by one the planet’s life forms were to be drawn out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings and rewoven into European-based patterns of global unity and order” (1992, 31). While Pratt focuses on Linnaeus’s project, travelers were also wandering the globe armed with science and history with which they sought to demystify the globe. Morse went to Japan to study brachiopods. Many others went to Ezo (present-day Hokkaido) and reported on the Ainu, where, like Morse, they revelled in the primitiveness, observing society as ethnographers speculating on Japan’s protohistory.¹⁷ Many were geologists who sought to demystify the Earth’s geology by separating geophysical forms from the cultures that inhabited them and by placing this knowledge into a global geological history.¹⁸

Today we understand that imperialism is not unidirectional. While these travelers were attempting to integrate Japan into this planetary consciousness, the ambitions of Western explorers/travelers/scientists often converged with the desires of the Meiji government. The new government sought out those same scholars and explorers, experts who would foster the goal of *fukoku kyōhei*. Here, the goal of economic development coincided with the writing of history. For example, Benjamin Smith Lyman was one of the first Westerners to examine the geomorphology of the archipelago. His *Geological Survey of Hokkaido* (1877) maps the island and analyzes the mineral resources, especially coal, of what became the fourth major island of Japan. But this imperialistic endeavor to unlock the key to Japan also opened the way for Japanese to write a history; that is, to create a narrative of development that shows change beyond the category of primitive or Hegel’s Descriptive. In his travels, Lyman also collected fossils, beginning the historicization of the archipelago. Others who arrived in Japan during the 1870s (many of whom were employed by the Japanese government) continued this synchronization of Japan into their modern world. The geological work of men like Morse, John Milne, and Heinrich Edmund Naumann released the past from Japan’s classics by demonstrating a history prior to and separate from those accounts. In particular, Morse’s “discovery” of the shell mounds of Ōmori, Naumann’s mapping of the geological structure of the archipelago, and Milne’s seismological studies gave the archipelago a history independent of any previous understanding of the past and comparable to that being written for the Earth in Europe. In other words, the synchronization of Japan in this case did not involve the placement of Japan into preexisting categories but was part of the reconceptualization of this history and movements of the Earth.¹⁹

¹⁷ It seemed almost obligatory to visit the Ainu to explain the key to Japan’s history. Isabella Bird (1984 [1880]) devoted a considerable portion of her book to her discoveries in Ezo, while John Milne, a geologist who became one of the founders of modern seismology, made an early investigation in the north.

¹⁸ For a description of geology and travel, see Leeds (1991, 198–204). For descriptions of American and European experts hired by the new state, see Beauchamp and Iriye (1990) and Jones (1980).

¹⁹ For an account of the discovery of geological time in England, see Winchester (2001).

Today, it is hard for us even to conceive of how people understood their world without knowing the geological structure and history of the Earth. In Europe the idea that the Earth has a history that predated that of the scriptures emerged only in the eighteenth century. But with this knowledge, it became possible to conceive of a very different temporal understanding of the world and human relations (see, e.g., Toulmin and Goodfield 1965). The explication of the geology of the archipelago, too, was crucial in forcing a new temporal structure on Japan. It did two things: it showed that histories existed independent of what had been accepted as true, the accounts in the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*; and second, it severed natural time from human time.

One of the most famous discoveries of the 1870s was Morse's excavation of the Ōmori shell mounds. Morse noticed the shell mounds on his first train ride from Yokohama to Tokyo in 1877 and began excavation within months. The principal publication of his findings was in the first memoir of the new Tokyo University (Morse 2539).²⁰ Morse pointed out that because mounds were usually created near water, the location of the Ōmori mounds about one-half mile inland suggests that the waters of Edo Bay had receded. In other words, it is evidence of geological change. More shocking was his conclusion that, based on the pottery, bone fragments, and stone tools, the people who left the refuse were a "savage" people who practiced cannibalism. He concluded, "It can be stated with absolute certainty that they are pre-Japanese; and there are as good reasons for believing them pre-Aino as early Aino" (266).

Morse has achieved status as the father of archaeology and anthropology in Japan. The significance of his discovery is that he was the first to place those stone implements, pottery shards, and human and animal bones into the temporal framework of modernity. Torii Ryūzō credits Morse for exposing a history of Japan that is not in the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* (1967, 7–8). But as in the other discoveries that I write about in this book, Morse was not the first to see it. According to the *Hitachi fudoki* (713), such mounds are the refuse of giants who lived in the area, locals knew about shell mounds, and antiquarians had collections of artifacts from various sites. Torii writes that these sites were known by Tokugawa scholars such as Fujii Tadayoshi and Kariya Ekisai (1974, 128). These fragments were interpreted through the known history, that is, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Thus in the *Sandai jitsuroku*, because arrowheads were often found after thunderstorms, they were believed to have been deposited by rain and thunder (Bleed 1986, 58).

Moreover, Morse's discovery was possible only because of the modern transformation of which he was a part. To lay the track for the train from Yokohama

²⁰ This *Memoir* lists the year of publication as "2539 (1879)" in accordance to the recent changes in the reckoning of the calendar. The practice more common in the latter half of Meiji, such as Meiji 12, was not followed.

to Tokyo, crews had to cut through a shell mound, exposing it to a glimpse by those who could afford to ride the train. This itself was the changing dominance of a mechanized and efficient order over nature. Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes this transformation: “‘Annihilation of time and space’ was the *topos* which the early nineteenth century used to describe the new situation into which the railroad placed natural space after depriving it of its hitherto absolute powers” (1977, 10). In this case, the past—which had been an everyday space that people walked on and/or around—is only possible in the modern. The building of a railway facilitated a discovery that according to Torii made it “understood for the first time that there was also a stone age in Japan” (1967, 150). But even here, it is possible that this credit to Morse as the first is in error. At Ōmori, Morse reportedly ran into the young German geologist, Edmund Naumann, who some claim had already investigated the shell mounds (Yoshioka 1987, 40–43).

But it was Morse who not only publicized his discovery, but, more important, placed the archipelago within a Darwinian framework that raised a controversial issue—the possibility of humans hitherto unknown—that forced Japanese to question or defend their inherited knowledge.²¹ One of Morse’s former students, Ishikawa Chiymatsu, recalls the impact of this discovery: “To us Japanese, who used to believe in the tradition of our ancestors [sic] coming down from heaven, the idea of the existence of the savages on our islands was quite a shock” (1967, 179). In other words, it was the possibility of a past that was prior to the beginning of time as it had been understood. Morse’s public lectures were well attended, and it seems that many of the elite Japanese audience (attendees of the lectures, students, and avid readers of the *Tokyo nichi nichi* newspaper) were not bothered by a non-“Japanese”—even cannibalistic—origin, nor were they troubled by the idea of evolution. After one of several public and well-attended lectures on Darwin’s evolution (his first was on October 6, 1877), Morse remarked with pleasure the positive acceptance he received from his Japanese audience. Miyake Setsurei (*Yūjirō*) wrote:

By far the greatest impression produced upon the thinking public of Japan was the advent of Professor E. S. Morse, who spared no pains to introduce the theories advanced by Darwin and Huxley. The Darwinian theory of man’s descent from a monkey was in itself enough to surprise the Japanese students, and Professor Morse’s eloquent discourses, accompanied by skillful figures on the black-board not only made a great impression on students, but also had a great influence on the public.” (Wayman 1942, 249)

²¹ Morse is generally acknowledged as the first to introduce the ideas of Charles Darwin to Japan. Morse’s lectures on Darwin were translated by his student Ishikawa Chiymatsu in 1881, and the *Descent of Man* was translated by Kōzu Senzaburō in 1881. The *Origin of Species* was not translated into Japanese until 1914, by Ōsugi Sakae. See Shimao (1981, 93–102).

Two groups—conservative Japanese and Protestant missionaries—did question his findings. Some conservative scholars and politicians criticized Morse and came to the defense of the classics. One reactionary bureaucrat wrote:

Wait a minute, I looked at the excavation at Ōmori because of its novelty. Regardless of whether Morse's so-called cannibalistic practices existed or not, what were the relations between the Ōmori people and the ancestors of Japanese [i.e., gods of the age of the gods]? Morse says that the Ōmori people were earlier inhabitants without any connection to Japanese; but if so, why were such different people (*minzoku*) living in the Tokyo vicinity? This is unbearable. From the standpoint of one's strong faith in the *kokutai* (national body), this field called archeology is exceedingly dangerous (*yabai*). (Quoted in Tozawa 1977, 100)

Within a matrix of evolution or progress, Morse's discovery, which suggests a movement from primitive to more advanced, seems commonsensical. But these Japanese critics did not operate within the same temporal matrix; theirs was a space of experience, of which the most authoritative texts were the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. In this case, archaeology is dangerous because it brings a different time, a prehistory that is prior to that space, the founding of the country according to the age of the gods.

The general conservative reaction reflects these different temporalities: they criticized a reduction of Morse's argument from the idea that a pre-Ainu people were probably cannibalistic to Japan's ancestors were cannibalistic. Here, of course, it required a different temporality to accept that any people on the archipelago, created by the gods themselves, were anything but Japanese. In a conceptual world where a prehistoric time does not exist and cannot demarcate one type of society from another, the Ōmori discovery suggested that people in "Japan" were barbarians. These critics were still operating within the Chinese barbarian/civilized world order, rather than a progressive, primitive/civilization order.

The reaction of Matsumori Taneyasu is perhaps indicative of the difficulty that the new "deep time" presented. Matsumori wrote his critical reactions to Morse's shell mounds in 1878. But rather than a reaction or attempt at preservation, it shows a critical and careful engagement as well as the difficulty of moving from one temporal conception to another. Matsumori accepts the idea of human progress that divides human prehistory into the stone age, bronze age, and iron age. But then he seeks to understand this new time by locating his inherited knowledge in it. He criticizes Morse's hypothesis of a similarity between the pre-Ainu and peoples in North America. The idea that people at that time migrated is inconceivable; if sea routes were not open until Columbus discovered the New World, how could there be a connection between the pre-Ainu and North American Indians? He dismisses the idea of a land bridge as crazy (that is, the land is fixed). Instead, he argues that the similarity in the artifacts of the two peoples is because they are both at a primitive level with few resources. He then attempts to

adjust the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* to evolution. Matsumori locates the age of the gods as Japan's stone age. But because these sections refer to metal weapons such as the *ama no sakahoko* and the *kusunagi*, which were believed to be bronze and iron, he modifies this stone age to suggest that the commoners used stone while the gods (elite) used metal, and that many of the stone artifacts, such as the stone arrowheads and Tengu's rice paddles, were made by the gods before using bronze and iron (Katō 1977, 86–89). In this case, even though Matsumori accepts a developmental time, he does not give up his understanding of a "Japan," but tries to adapt the fixed world to a progressive one.

On the other hand, Morse did engage in a debate, but it was with other Americans—Protestant missionaries—and John Milne, who offered a different interpretation of Japan's origins. The most vehement criticism of Morse's lectures on Darwin came from the Protestant missionaries in Japan.²² Henry Faulds attended (some would say hounded) Morse's lectures and tried to refute Morse's interpretation of evolutionary theory.²³ Another missionary lamented in the denominational newsletter *The Heathen Woman's Friend* in February 1879: "Prof. Morse is untiring in his efforts to sow scepticism. His peculiar socialistic views find a ready lodgements in the hearts of the Japanese and it has looked sometimes as though he were going to raze all that the missionaries are building" (quoted in Wayman 1942, 248). It seems that the demise of Christianity should not be blamed on a conservative, that is, national, reaction, but, just as evolution upset religion in the West, the introduction of science and evolution in Japan also upset Western theism.²⁴ For many Japanese students at that time, this debate questioned the unity between Christianity (especially Protestantism) and enlightenment. In this case, the Protestant missionaries were both defenders of an anachronistic past and the spiritual and ethical underlay of modernity (if one is to believe Weber and Bellah). In other words, Japanese who listened to evolution, which was just as unsettling to their inherited conception of the world, did not yet have enough of an understanding of their modernity to have a stake in a particular past. The Westerners were fighting over a difference of originary moments that was not yet at issue in Japanese society.

Morse's debate with Protestant missionaries replayed the battle taking place elsewhere. It indicates the centrality of the past to one's own understanding of modernity: the absolute necessity of a past for a horizon of some progress. But interestingly, a different critic, a fellow scientist, indicated another role of the

²² For a discussion of this debate, see Ōta (1988, 41–67).

²³ In his travelogue, the only reference Faulds makes to his disagreements with Morse is the following oblique statement: "The Priests all seem to foresee the decay of Buddhism in Japan; and some of them also see pretty clearly that even now the battle amongst educated Japanese is between scientific agnosticism and Christianity" (1973, 104).

²⁴ This is especially evident in the report of Yoichi Honda, bishop of the Japanese Methodist Church: "Japanese Christians found the drift of the theory to be irresistible, and changed their logic, claiming theism to be consistent with evolution" (quoted in Wayman 1942, 248–49; see also Ōta 1988, 62–63).

newly separated past. John Milne challenged Morse's claim that a "pre-Aino" people created the Ōmori mounds; the implications were to push this discovery into a quest for the origins of Japanese themselves. Yoshioka Ikuo has argued that Morse's debates with other Western scholars are the origin of the question of race in modern Japan (1987, 12–13).

Milne was another hired foreign expert (*oyatoi*) who became professor of geology and mining at the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo in 1876. He is best remembered as one of the founding fathers of the modern field of seismology. One biographer writes, "It is not, I think, too much to claim that Milne lifted the science to an altogether different and higher plane" (Davison 1927, 177).²⁵ Especially before 1880, Milne, too, was interested in uncovering prehistoric Japan. Apparently he conducted his own excavations of shell mounds, burrowed into tumuli, and explored caves. He also worked with Morse, especially on visits to Hakodate and Otaru. In May 1880 he presented a paper to the Anthropological Institute on "The Stone Age of Japan" in which he outlined his disagreement with Morse.

Milne drew upon the work of Morse, his visits to the north, and also Japanese historical texts to offer a different interpretation. He argued that based on evidence of rectangular pits found on Nemuro and on Hokkaido at Hochishibetsu and Hamanaka, and their similarity to the houses of Aleuts and Kamchadales (also Kurilsky), the earliest inhabitants of Hokkaido were probably these Kamchadales or Aleuts. Given this evidence, Milne concluded that these people co-existed with the ancestors of the Ainu who migrated from Papua-New Guinea and first settled throughout the archipelago. The Ainu gradually moved north as another people migrated via the Korean peninsula and forced the Kamchadales to the north of Hokkaido. Here Milne turned to the accounts of the Ebisu in the ancient myths. But rather than basing his ideas on the myths like Matsumori, Milne used them to corroborate archaeological evidence. He also studied old maps and estimated that through the process of silting, the mounds at Ōmori were probably created between 1,500 and 3,000 years ago. In this case, he concluded that this evidence suggests that Ainu, not pre-Ainu, peoples left the shell mounds at Ōmori (Milne 1881).

This disagreement between Morse and Milne over the origins of Japanese was continued by professors Koganei Yoshikiyo and Tsuboi Shōgorō and has traveled through different manifestations up to the present.²⁶ The idea of a stone age or prehistory was part of a growing body of geological evidence, where "questions about the temporal sequence of those changes were inescapable"

²⁵ Because Milne did not enjoy sea voyages, he decided to go to Japan by traveling through Russia and China. He left London on August 3, 1875, and arrived in Shanghai on February 23, 1876. During his first night in Yokohama in March, he experienced his first, rather mild, earthquake.

²⁶ Koganei argued for the similarity of the Ainu and Jōmon and that the former were driven north by the ancestors of the present-day Japanese. Tsuboi argued that the ancestors of the present-day Japanese were the Korobokkuru, pygmies according to Ainu lore, today considered ancestors of Eskimos.

and snowballed into a new temporal framework. Other Japanese anthropologists, archaeologists, and paleontologists also began to excavate evidence of a prehistoric past. In the 1880s historians in Japan began to examine the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, exposing their inaccuracy or transforming them to the realms of literature and mythology. The idea of cannibalism disappeared (as did the dirty, unkempt, flea-ridden leader of Wa in the *Wei Zhi*), perhaps a casualty of the imperial history that would subsequently emerge.²⁷ But again we must remember the processual nature of this changing understanding. Morse's descriptions of transformation of the bay were supported by other scholars whose observations of Japan's geological structure suggested that nature has a history that is autonomous from human society. But just as early attempts to date the history of the Earth in Europe coincided with biblical history, even though both Morse and Milne calculated the silting of the bay as if nature, not humankind, was the cause, they dated the mounds around the mythical beginning of Japan.²⁸

Any question of the possibility of maintaining a connection between the history of the archipelago and the ancient histories was removed by Edmund Naumann, whose careful surveys of the geomorphology of the archipelago and discovery of prehistoric elephants in Japan extended the past beyond an early presence of humans to a deep time. Naumann was another of the *oyatoi*, arriving in Japan in 1875 (one month shy of his twenty-first birthday) to teach at the Kaisei gakkō. Overall, he spent ten years in Japan, traveling throughout the archipelago and writing numerous papers, especially in German, that have established him as the founding figure of modern geology in Japan. During his early years in Japan he cooperated and competed with Milne, but by 1880 Milne's inquiries led him toward the investigation of earthquakes, while Naumann continued his geological mapping of the archipelago.

Naumann is best known for founding the Geological Survey of Japan in 1878, and it is this work that set the foundation for our modern geological knowledge of the geotectonics of Japan. To give an idea of its concurrence with geological activity elsewhere, the U.S. Geological Survey was established in 1879. In that year, Naumann began publishing his ideas on the origins of the Japanese archipelago, and it is largely his work that modern geologists have built upon, corrected, and modified.²⁹ Though he is not as famous (nor important) as Eduard Suess, as further evidence of the integration of Japan into this global geological map, Suess's important *Das Anlitz der Erde* discussed the geotectonics of Japan, primarily using the work of Naumann and his successor and former student, Harada Toyokichi (Yabe 1917, 75–104). Naumann's lasting contribution was the identification of a “rupture region” (Bruchregion), and after refining his

²⁷ For an attempt to revive this and other evidence of cannibalism, see Nishioka (1989, 19–20).

²⁸ For eighteenth-century efforts to date the Earth, see Toulmin and Goodfield (1965). Milne considered silting the primary force of change and dismissed land reclamation as inconsequential (1881, 413–20).

²⁹ His first essay was “Ueber Erdbeben und Vulcanausbrüche in Japan.”

interpretations more in line with the seminal work by Suess on the Alps, he called this fissure that divides central Honshu from Shizuoka to Nagano the Fossa Magna. As he refined his understanding of the various mountain systems and geological features, Naumann speculated that the archipelago was formed from three foldings of the Earth's crust, in the pre-Paleozoic era, the late Paleozoic era, and the Miocene era, and that it is composed of two basic mountain systems, the southwest and northeast, each with an inner and outer zone. In other words, the archipelago formed over a long period in which the Earth's crust reformed to create the archipelago.

Second, in 1881 Naumann published the results of his investigation of fossils of prehistoric elephants in Japan. He did not excavate these fossils; they were in collections of Japanese antiquarians and unearthed by Westerners for more than a decade preceding this report. Also, elephants were known in Tokugawa society through Buddhist images, as well as the Korean embassies (Toby 1986, 415–56). Today, one of the elephants that Naumann studied and attributed to India, the *Elephas namadicus*, is known as the *palaeoloxodon naumanni*. This article further confirmed the archaeological and paleontological evidence reported by Morse by giving that prehistory greater precision. Naumann located these fossils in the late Pliocene era. But the main contribution of this essay was his connection of prehistoric creatures to geographic and geological transformation. He suggested that because the quantity of fossil evidence suggests that there were numerous such creatures, they came to the archipelago via a land bridge that at one time connected the islands to what is now the Korean peninsula to the south and the Kuriles and Sakhalin to the north. Finally, based on plant fossils, he argued that the climate of the archipelago during the late Pliocene era had been tropical (Yamashita 1992).

The synchronization of knowledge about Japan into the emerging science of the Earth, that is, into a universalistic framework where nature was separated from culture, ruptured previous knowledge that had made sense of the relation of the Earth to humans. In their quest to contribute to the rapidly changing geological knowledge of the Earth, these geologists brought Japan into the same kinds of morphological histories that comprised the discursive field of the West. Naumann not only provided empirical evidence of geological change—that the archipelago was not even an archipelago but an appendage of the continent—he also offered a chronology to the “stone age” that was not remotely connected to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. It is a timeline of the archipelago—a prehistory: the Paleozoic, Cenozoic, Neolithic, etc.—that is completely autonomous from human activity.

ELEVATION OF TIME OVER SPACE

Interestingly, this reconstitution of space on the archipelago was completed almost without meaningful contribution from geography or its precursor in Japan, topography (*chishigaku*). This absence is not from a lack of concern. Quite the

contrary, the first use of the word *chiri* (geography) in the new government occurred in 1869 when the Ministry of Civil Affairs reorganized itself into three units: geography, public works, and postal service (Ishida 1984, 29). Moreover, in the same year a Department of Topography (*chishika*) was established in parallel to the Department of History (*rekishika*). Other ministries, such as Education, Military, and Finance, also created geographical offices as early as 1870. In the initial period, even though the two departments were created in parallel, topography, possessing administrative and budgetary oversight, had preeminence over history (Miura 1930, 463). But this situation had completely reversed by the end of the century: the Department of History eventually emerged into the present-day Historiographical Institute, and its early members, such as Shigeno and Kume, raised a number of controversial issues on the relation of history and historical documents to the nation-state. The Department of Topography was subsumed by an earlier incarnation of this historiographical office and eliminated in 1893.

The most important individual in the development of topography in Meiji society was Tsukamoto Akitake (1833–85). Tsukamoto was a former bakufu retainer who became a professor at the Rikugun heigaku and in 1872 was appointed by the Dajōkan to lead the compilation of the *Kōkoku chishi* (imperial topography). Despite his background, he did not seek to restore the past; he was committed to unifying the nation-state and believed that information about the various places was crucial to that goal. Moreover, Tsukamoto was the petitioner for the reform of the calendar, certainly not an act of a conservative or traditionalist. The major publications of the Office of Topography were the *Nihon chishi teiyō* (2534), which was compiled as an updated geographical description for the Vienna world's fair,³⁰ and one volume (volume 3 on Awa) of a planned multivolume compendium, the *Dai nihon chishi*. Between 1904 and 1917, Yamazaki Naokata and Satō Denzō published all ten volumes.

From this early desire for knowledge about places, the limitations of such topographical knowledge to a modern world became increasingly apparent. Following the publication of the first three volumes of the *Nihon chishi teiyō*, the office was reorganized into the Office for the Compilation of Topographical Materials and was merged with the Office of Historiography (*shūshikyoku*). Until this office was terminated in 1893, its goal was to provide a more detailed topography, focusing on villages (*mura*) and counties (*gun*). The project sought to collect as much textual data as possible on all the villages and counties and also conduct field research. The information was organized spatially along the lines of previous topographies, such as the *fudoki* from the Nara period and the domainal topographies of the Tokugawa period. Much of the information was

³⁰ The first three volumes appeared in 2534 (1874), the year given on the title page. The following four volumes appeared by 1877.

based on texts that had been accepted as authoritative.³¹ But the merger of this office with the Office of Historiography reflects the growing importance of time as a way to understand the past; when the offices were merged, the director came from the historiographical office. Indeed, when the office was abolished in 1877, it was over disagreements between the respective directors, Shigeno and Tsukamoto.³²

This relatively low level of publication of the Office of Topography is reflective not of the marginality of geographical information, but of a changing valuation of space. The customary topographies were compilations to enable the local elite to know something about their lands. They were organized to highlight the locale and include information about the past, socioeconomic conditions, and production. This project generally followed this intellectual practice. For example, the draft on Ishikawa prefecture included a section on customs (*fuzoku*) of local people: “Being astute, they are obedient; however, they have an annoying habit of stealing time. They do not have a brave and adventurous character, and long ago had the system of four classes. Their customs are different, even the style of men’s and women’s hair” (Ishida 1984, 74). Even though, from our perspective, the descriptions bear more similarity to Tokugawa versions, the Meiji accounts did reflect changing knowledge structures, especially in the growing separation of culture from nature: entries were more descriptive and did not associate place with songs and poetry; data were also gathered from actual site visits; and they did try to include recent geological evidence. For example, the volume on Awa incorporates information on geological change—earthquakes, volcanoes, and sedimentation—that recognizes the historicity of the earth.

Thomas Richards (1993) describes this changing valuation about space during the nineteenth century as a penchant to know about the world, an obsession

³¹ Some of the sources for a draft of the *Kōkoku chishi* for Ishikawa prefecture are *Hakusan sōgen kōki*, *Sannomiya kōki*, *Akamatsu saikōki*, *Kasukayama nikki*, *Heike monogatari*, *Taiheiki*, and the *Nihon sōkoku fudoki* (Ishida 1984, 55).

³² The Department of Topography suffered through numerous organizational changes. After the Department of Geography was created in 10.1872 as part of the Seiin, in August 1874 it was combined with a similar office in the Ministry of Finance and merged into the Division of Geography (*chiriryō*) in the Home Ministry. One year later it was returned to the Seiin as the Office for the Compilation of Topographical Materials (*Chishi henshū*) and merged with the Office of Historiography (*Shūshikyō*). This office was abolished in January 1877 and reorganized into the *Shūshikan* ten days later. In December 1877 Tsukamoto, the director of the section on topography, resigned in disagreement with Shigeno, and his office reappeared eighteen days later within the Ministry of Home Affairs. This arrangement lasted until 1890 when the Office of Topography was moved to the Ministry of Education, which housed it in the Imperial University. In 1891 it was merged into the Temporary Department of the Compilation of a Chronological History (*Rinji hennenshi hensan kakari*). This department was abolished in 1893 following the controversy surrounding Kume Kunitake, and when the Historiographical Institute (*Shiryō hensanjo*) opened in 1895, the section on topography was not continued (Ishida 1984, 43, 44, 60). Also see Mehl (1998a) for information on the various incarnations of the historiographical office.

with “the control of knowledge.” The discovery of a past severed nature from culture and created the possibilities for the utilization of evidence differently. Virtually all topographical accounts of the Tokugawa period had been conducted by the domainal administrators to understand the social and economic conditions of their territory. Tsukamoto was an advocate for the use of topographical information for national, not local, purposes and sought to adapt their methods to the needs of the nation-state. Ishida writes: “There were many similar categories among [the village and county surveys] but they differed in the way they were recorded: to know the circumstances of all villages the village survey sought detail so that nothing would fall through the cracks; the district survey summarized minor matters of towns and cities and worked to bring out the general trends” (1984, 14). Even though Meiji topography drew on the *fudoki* and the domainal topographies of the Tokugawa period, unlike the earlier studies, which emphasized the peculiarities of each place, the new topography began to show the similarities. County studies now used the locale to describe and demonstrate the nation.

This changing valuation, however, where data became important for their relevance to temporal categories, the past and the prehistoric, and were shorn from their significance to place, the locales, was too much for a field of knowledge based on the peculiarities of place to survive. Ishida’s account brings out the limitations; place-based compilations brought out the peculiarities and uniqueness. These compilations did not provide the generalizations, commonalities, and comparisons that would facilitate interchangeability among regions. Nevertheless, one might argue that the decline of topography stems from the importance of its knowledge, increasingly severed from place. The two major types of information that had been its domain—statistics and history—gained autonomous status. Statistics, which was a category included in the initial compilations, gained increasing importance, but rather than enhancing the importance of topography, it gained autonomous status beginning in 1874. Various ministries also began collecting their own statistics.³³

Accounts of the past, too, were separated from their specific locale and became data that made it possible to know the nation. The content that had filled the topographies became textual materials for the domain of history, statistical data about people and communities, and evidence for the workings of nature. This isolation of data is similar to the way that the objects within the Shōsōin gained in importance simply because they were old and historical evidence of imperial grandeur, and the way that archaeological and geological discoveries became objects and containers of inert things that could be measured and used to demonstrate the history of the archipelago. In the end, geography was seen as

³³ Statistics became sufficiently important that the Division of Statistics (Tokeiin) was organized in 1881; it was the predecessor to today’s Statistics Bureau in the Prime Minister’s Office (Ishida 1984, 19; see also Mizuchi 1994, 75–94).

an enhancement to historical study: topographical research was merged into the Temporary Department of the Compilation of a Chronological History (the predecessor to the Historiographical Institute) in 1891, and the initial lectures on geography at the Imperial University were taught in the history department by Ludwig Riess and Tsuboi Kumezō (1858–1936).³⁴

When geography was institutionalized at the Imperial Universities (1907 at Kyoto and 1911 at Tokyo), it was with a historical emphasis in Kyoto or through geological sciences at Tokyo. In short, space was now studied through a temporal epistemology. When geography finally gained a professorship at the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1911, it was in the College of Science. The first professor, Kōtō Bunjirō, was a student of Naumann and specialized in geology, geomorphology, and seismology. Ironically, it is the field of study that contributed to the temporalization of the archipelago and separated culture from nature that becomes the foundation for the new study of geography at the Imperial University. In other words, spatial forms became primarily significant as containers for temporal categories; they became “conceptual spaces with a history.”

In spite of this denigration of space as an object of study, we must remember that these fields were important in one very significant way: they began the reconfiguration of space from the parts to the nation. Japan was becoming the container that needed to be filled with content—a nation. This was a goal of Ninagawa in the *Jinshin* survey, as well as Tsukamoto in his compilation of topographical data. In his essays on the history of the discipline of geography, Ishida Ryūjirō laments that the singular focus on the nation as the principal political and geographical unit was one of the reasons that geography developed more slowly than other social scientific disciplines. Yet this criticism is also indicative of the success in beginning the transformation of the unit of analysis from the local to the nation. For example, the *Nihon chishi teiyō* also reflects this space of Japan as the principal unit, shifting topographical studies from the locale to the locale as a part of a whole. Historical information, the data that had given the local flavor and emphasized peculiarities of place, became important to show commonalities, especially those that helped unify the nation rather than points of differentiation. On the other hand, the writing of a prehistory of the archipelago confirmed the presence of a Japan that can be traced back beyond the Pliocene era.

In establishing the place of the nation as the principal unit, the idea of Japan was becoming a natural space. The discovery of a history of the archipelago actually strengthened the idea of a Japan as an always existing entity. Even though all discussions of the archipelago now had to recognize geological change, it became possible to talk of the archipelago, a “Japan,” prior to settlement. The chronology now extended into the prehistoric era confirmed the idea of Japanese islands as if they had always existed as Japan. This prehistoric chronology

³⁴Tsuboi graduated from the College of Science (Yoshida 1982, 192–205).

then continued into the historic, that is, the founding of the imperium by Jimmu and the calculation of years from that date. Publications from public institutions during the 1870s, such as the *Nihon chishi teiyō* and Morse's essay, use the publication date 2534 (1874) and 2539 (1879). In short, as the archipelago gained chronology and deep time, it became a natural place, shorn of its historicity.

This reorientation of space, or the “emptying of space,” destabilized the categories and connections that had given meaning and content to places within the archipelago, now a unit. As the discovery of a prehistoric past severed the environment from culture, it exposed the limitations of the inherited knowledge forms in mediating what Blumenberg has called the absolutism of reality. We must remember that these myths existed, not because they were old or tied to some beginning, but because they “worked,” that is, they alleviated anxiety in ways that connected to the humans. These stories stabilized their lives by “explaining” the unknown in ways that connected to their lives. But the discovery that the archipelago has an autonomous past separated nature from culture and destabilized these stories. In the next chapter I will turn to some of the agents, spirits and tales that had to be exorcised in this increasingly abstract world of rationality and science.