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Christianity and Gender Relationships in Japan Case Studies of Marriage and Divorce in Early Meiji Protestant Circles

It is accepted that Victorian attitudes to love, chastity, marriage, and the family, all rooted in Christianity, played an important part in changing norms of behavior related to gender relationships in Meiji Japan. But writers on Christianity in Meiji Japan have paid little attention to women and the influence of Christian ideals on the actual behavior of Meiji Christians. This paper examines gender interaction in early Meiji Protestant circles and the evidence available for the marriage relationships of five Protestant leaders: Ibuka Kajinosuke, Uemura Masahisa, Ebina Danjō, Kozaki Hiromichi, whose marriages seem to have been successful, and Uchimura Kanzō, whose first marriage was not. Particular attention is paid to four issues: the extent to which the individuals studied had participated in gender interaction in Christian circles before becoming deeply involved, how partners were chosen, how the partnerships developed and, finally, the tensions that arose and what was done about them.

KEYWORDS: Meiji Japan — Protestant — converts — marriage — gender relationships — Uchimura Kanzō

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IN LATE Tokugawa Japan, marriage customs, the role and position of women in the family, and attitudes to female chastity differed according to status and occupation. It was acceptable for elite males to have concubines, and for peasants to sell their daughters into prostitution. Beauty and desirability were the attributes of high-class geisha rather than of ordinary, marriageable, women. Women who belonged to the merchant and farming elite had opportunities for education and were able to take part in cultural pursuits, such as membership in literary circles, on the same terms as men. Female members of the samurai class, however, led more restricted lives. They were educated, but it was an education specifically for women. Their lives centered on the home and subservience to their fathers, their husbands, and their mothers-in-law. While the concept of male-female equality was present, for example in the writings of Andō Shōeki 安藤昌益 and the preaching of Kino きの, the founder of Nyoraikyō 如来教, Confucian teachings about the inferior status of women were able to reach a wide audience through the use of texts such as *Onna daigaku* 女大学 in reading primers for women of all classes (HIROTA 1994, 325–27; KANDA 1994; WALTHALL 1991 and 1998).

As is well known, early Japanese visitors to America and other Western countries were surprised by the prominence of women in public life and shocked by the deference paid to them by men (KUME 2002, 253–54). It is therefore not surprising that there was much discussion about the position of women in society in the early Meiji period. The status of women, the relationship between husbands and wives, prostitution and concubinage were among the topics raised by the early “enlightenment intellectuals” in their journal, *Meiroku zasshi* 明六雜誌 (BRAISTED 1976). SAEKI Junko (1998) has analyzed the influence of the Victorian concept of love on Meiji literature. In the Tokugawa period, love (*iro* 色) was not linked to chastity and the search for the right marriage partner; it existed outside marriage and focused on the sexual act as a way of transcending everyday experience. Sexual activity belonged to the sacred, not the profane. But in the Meiji period, *iro* came to seem uncivilized and was replaced by *ai* 愛, the Victorian concept of romantic but chaste love which made sexual activity a conjugal duty rather than the goal. Although the pleasure quarters remained

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the easiest place for novelists to explore gender relationships into the 1890s, the relationships sought by the heroes and heroines of writers such as Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 and even Ozaki Kōyō 尾崎紅葉 were spiritual rather than physical (SAEKI 1998, 7–64; KOHIYAMA 2005, 1–7).

It is accepted that Christianity played an important part in these changes (SAEKI 1998, 13–16; KOHIYAMA 2005, 7–11). But writers on Christianity in Meiji Japan have paid little attention to women and the influence of Christian ideals on the actual behavior of Meiji Christians. Standard works on the history of Protestant Christianity in Japan, such as that of DOHI Akio (1980, 81), mention the important role of Christian schools for girls, but little beyond this, mainly because their focus is on church leadership. There has been interest in the activities of foreign women missionaries (KOHIYAMA 1992), and the campaign against organized prostitution has been widely studied, with the female Christian campaigners of the Japanese branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai 日本キリスト教婦人矯風会 (NIHON KIRISUTOKYŌ FUJIN KYŌFŪKAI 1986), attracting criticism for condemning prostitutes rather than the causes of prostitution (FUJIME 1999, 100–11; FUJINO 2001, 10–16). But only two—admittedly prominent—scholars, TAKEDA Kiyoko (2001) and MORIOKA Kiyomi (2005), have examined the marriage relationships of Japan's early Protestant leaders.

Takeda's aim was to emphasize the progressive attitude to women of two leading members of the Yokohama band 横浜バンド of Christian converts, Uemura Masahisa 植村正久 and Ibuka Kajinosuke 井深梶之助, by contrasting them with the prejudices which she found in two members of the Kumamoto band 熊本バンド, Ebina Danjō 海老名弾正 and Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (TAKEDA 2001, 50–58). Morioka focused on the first three of these Christians and Kozaki Hiromichi 小崎弘道 (MORIOKA 2005, 73–100). His object was to identify common points in their choice of a marriage partner and their relationships with their wives after marriage. In this paper, I will examine the same partnerships as Morioka, but with less attention to the construction of an ideal type, and with the addition of the failed partnership of Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 and Asada Take 浅田竹, which MORIOKA only mentions in a footnote (2005, 99). This relationship has been studied, in particular by MASAIKE Megumu (1977), SUZUKI Toshirō 鈴木俊郎 (1986), and in English by John HOWES (2005), but these writers have concentrated on Uchimura and the effect of the breakup on his later career and spiritual development rather than on gender relations in Meiji Japan. My object is to examine the evidence that we have for these five partnerships, almost entirely from the male side unfortunately, against the background of gender interaction in early Meiji Protestant circles. Particular attention will be paid to four issues: the extent to which the individuals involved had participated in this gender interaction, how partners were chosen, how the partnerships developed and, finally, the tensions that arose and what was done about them.

Gender Interaction in Early Meiji Protestant Circles

As was mentioned above, novelists in the first half of the Meiji period found it difficult to find any realistic and acceptable setting for men and women to meet socially other than the pleasure quarters. In the mid 1880s there was a debate about how best to provide suitable forums for gender interaction among the elite (MEHL 2005, 166–68). But such encounters were already taking place in Christian circles.

KOHIYAMA Rui (1992, 186–87) has observed that if wives are counted, around two thirds of all the foreign Protestant missionaries sent to Japan in the years 1859–1882 were female. Although male missionaries dominated decision-making, women played a significant role at the grass roots level. The wives of married male missionaries presented practical evidence of Christian family life in their daily lives, and normally participated in missionary work themselves, to greater or lesser degrees. Single female missionaries were also active in Japan from the early Meiji period. Early converts were therefore able to observe authentic interactions between male and female Christians. If we take the Presbyterian-Dutch Reformed community associated with one of the main streams of Japanese Protestantism, the Yokohama band, in the 1870s as an example, two of the three pioneer missionaries, Samuel Brown and James Ballagh, had a positive attitude to female missionary activity (KOHIYAMA 1992, 188–89, 252). I buka Kajinosuke, a member of the band, was aware of the activities of female missionaries such as Louise Pierson, and clearly respected them (IBUKA 1969b, 297–301). As KOHIYAMA (1992, 261–62) points out, a major purpose of mission schools for girls was to teach them about Christian home life, including the ideal of marriage as a love match between equal partners. When the thirty-nine-year-old Mary Kidder of the Dutch Reformed Mission married Edward Miller, a Presbyterian missionary ten years her junior at Yokohama in 1873, she invited her pupils to the wedding. Miller left his mission board in order to join Kidder in her educational work, a very unusual step at the time. A living example of the “ideal” Western-style couple, they lived at the Ferris Seminary, the school which she had set up, along with the boarding pupils (KOHIYAMA 1992, 255–60).¹

According to Yamamoto Hideteru, in the early 1870s, another mission school for girls in Yokohama, the Presbyterian-linked Kyōritsu Jogakkō 共立女学校, “seemed like a center of Christianity” 基督界の中心たるの観があった (YAMAMOTO 1969, 305). Its buildings were widely used for Christian gatherings,

1. Of course, this Victorian American ideal did not necessarily translate well to Japan. Uchimura Kanzō’s criticism of female mission school graduates was probably colored by the failure of his marriage with one. However, Alice Bacon, an acute foreign observer, accepted criticisms about the behavior patterns taught in mission schools for girls since, compared to other Japanese women, their “manners...seem brusque and awkward” (BACON 1891, 56). She also pointed out how difficult it could be for graduates of such schools to accept life as a daughter-in-law in a traditional household (78–80).

including separate prayer meetings for foreigners and Japanese organized by James Ballagh. The Sunday evening prayer meetings for Japanese were attended by pupils at the school as well as by other Japanese, and the pupils were joined by Ballagh's male students for the hymn singing practice that preceded the meetings. This was an opportunity for young men and women to meet, under the supervision of Miss Pierson on the organ, and share the struggle not to laugh at the clumsiness of the early attempts to translate hymns into Japanese (YAMAMOTO 1969, 303–305).

It is likely that there was a similar atmosphere in early missionary communities in the other treaty ports. The members of the Kumamoto band, the second of the three main streams of Protestant Christianity, initially had only the example of Captain Leroy L. Janes and his wife, Harriett, whose relationship was not always harmonious (NOTEHELPER 1985, 119–22, 168–75). After the closure of the Kumamoto School of Western Learning 熊本洋学校 in 1876, however, they went either to Tokyo, which had a diversified Christian community, or to the Dōshisha 同志社 in Kyoto, which soon had an affiliated school for girls, and missionaries of both genders. Niiijima Jō 新島襄 had stayed with New England Puritan families during the ten years he spent in the United States after his illegal departure from Japan in 1864. As an associate missionary of the American Board, he made a point of using the honorific suffix *-san* when addressing his wife Yaeko 八重子 and sat beside her in rickshaws, just as if they were a foreign missionary couple (SAKAMOTO 2002, 170–71). TAKEDA (2001, 52) points out that this closeness shocked the young Tokutomi Sohō, but it was meant to. Only the members of the third main stream of Protestant Christianity, the Sapporo band 札幌バンド, spent their formative period as Christians isolated from almost all exposure to examples of gender interaction in a Christian community.²

When Uchimura came to live in Tokyo in late 1882, the converts who had been students in the 1870s were adults and in the process of forming Christian communities independent from direct missionary control. He seems to have been attracted by the opportunity for mixed socializing that he found (letter to Ōta, 25 July 1883, UCHIMURA 1983, 63). After the failure of his first marriage, however, he described the atmosphere much less favorably:

God's kingdom was imagined to be one...where tea-parties and love-makings could be indulged in with the sanction of the religion of free communion and free love.... We, dear brethren,...and sweet sisters with woman's right bestowed upon you by the new faith,—let us be going to tea-parties and church-sociables,...and pray and weep and dream and rejoice. Away with that Confucian superstition that forbids children of two sexes above seven years of age to sit together in one and the same room, and with that Buddhist nonsense that requires from sweet womanhood modesty and subjection so debasing to

2. On this point, see also HOWES, 2005, 42.

her noble sex. Love is a mutual affair, and heaven itself cannot interfere in the communion of youthful hearts prompted by this holy and all pervading influence!³ (UCHIMURA 1971, 96)

This description is clearly exaggerated, but it suggests that there was a tendency among at least some of the younger adult Christians to associate Christian fellowship closely with romantic love. Perhaps it is relevant to note here that at one point Uemura Masahisa proposed to Presbyterian colleagues that all marriages should have go-betweens, only to find himself turned down on the grounds that this would restrict personal freedom (AOYOSHI 1935, 71). In any case, there can be no doubt that in the early Meiji period Protestant communities in Japan offered members of the Western-educated elite the opportunity to observe and practice social interaction between the genders.

The Marital Relationships of Early Japanese Protestant Leaders

The five partnerships that will be examined here all involved members of the Western-educated elite who had experienced this social interaction to at least some extent. With the exception of Yamauchi Sueno 山内季野, the daughter of a wealthy merchant family, all were of samurai stock. Ibuka Kajinosuke, a member of the Yokohama band who was to become a leader of the Japanese Presbyterian Church, first came into contact with missionaries as a seventeen-year-old student in 1871. From 1873, he spent several years living in Samuel Brown's household, next door to Kyōritsu Jogakkō, and was therefore in a good position to observe missionary behavior. He also attended the prayer meetings and hymn practices mentioned above (IBUKA 1969b, 296–98). In the mid-1870s, his father, living back home in Aizu, arranged what he thought was the perfect match for his son with the daughter of a high-ranking and relatively wealthy friend. Ibuka himself had not been consulted. Even though the bride's name had already been entered in the household register, he refused to marry. It was, he later observed, “a clash between Confucian ideas and Christian ethics” 儒教思想と基督教倫理との衝突 (IBUKA 1969a, 87). After much consideration of how to extricate himself from this situation, he explained that he had three conditions for marriage: he must know the person he was going to marry; she must have received an education suitable for the new Japan; and she must be baptized. He therefore suggested that the young lady should be sent to Yokohama to be educated at a missionary school. This was done, but in 1880 Ibuka married another person who fulfilled his conditions (IBUKA 1969b, 86–88). This was Mizukami Sekiko 水上関子, the daughter of an ex-bakufu retainer. She had studied at Kyōritsu Jogakkō for two years from the age of fourteen (1873–1875), before returning to Tokyo and attending a short-lived government school. She was baptized in

3. Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Uchimura are in his own English.

1874, and it is likely that she and Ibuka got to know each other, at least by sight, at the joint prayer meetings and hymn practices mentioned above. After their marriage she supported him in his church work, for example in the Sunday school, started an elementary school, and taught English and the Bible to nurses (KIKUTA 1969, 197–98).

Letters from America written by Ibuka to Sekiko in 1897 suggest a relationship between equals. He tells her what he has been doing. He relates his shock at seeing female students at an athletics meet cheering their sides on just like their male counterparts and even doing the high jump (which he suggests would not be desirable for Japanese female students). He inquires after his mother, the children, and his wife's rheumatism (IBUKA 1970a, 423–37), and even admits to frequently “feeling homesick”: “I want to get back as soon as possible and see you all again” (letter to Sekiko, July 23, 1897, IBUKA 1970a, 436). Sekiko died the following year. Ibuka's diary describes her death, recording how even her doctor was impressed by her demeanor, and how his distress robbed him of the ability to concentrate on anything (IBUKA 1970b, 414–17).⁴

Uemura Masahisa, another member of the Yokohama band and future Presbyterian leader, first came into contact with Christianity as a student of James Ballagh in Yokohama in 1872 at the age of fourteen. He advocated an active role for women in society. While in England in 1888 he noted his approval of female suffrage and equal rights for women in his diary (UEMURA 1934b, 56–57, 63–65). It is possible that his church in Tokyo was the first anywhere in the world to select women as elders (UEMURA Tamaki, 1966, 125; also 43–46), and in 1933 and 1934 he ordained the first Japanese Protestant women ministers. His wife, Sueno, came from a wealthy and cultivated Wakayama merchant family with strong Shinto and Kokugaku 国学 connections. A talented poet and artist, she had studied Chinese learning and taught at an elementary school before deciding to study Western learning as well. She entered the Ferris Seminary in Yokohama in 1875, at the age of seventeen, studying English-related subjects in the mornings, and teaching *kanbun* 漢文 to her classmates in the afternoons. Sueno was baptized in 1877, after which she managed to convert all the members of her immediate family, including one who was a Buddhist priest (ODAGIRI 1984, 54–55). While Sueno was not in Yokohama when the Millers married, the fact that she was a teacher as well as a pupil must have given her opportunities to get to know the couple and see them working together. Kidder was very critical of traditional Japanese marriage practices, as she understood them, and supported students who were unwilling to marry men chosen by their parents (KOHIYAMA 1992, 261). References to the Millers in Uemura's letters to Sueno during their engagement show that they knew about the match and supported it (letters to

4. For Ibuka's second wife (Ōshima Hanako 大島花子), a science teacher with a B.Sc. from Mount Holyoke, see TAKEDA 2001, 54; KIKUTA 1970, 448–53.

Sueno, 16 August 1881, and 30 August 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 145 and 148).⁵

Uemura must have become aware of Sueno during church services, or at social activities in the Yokohama Christian community. He seems to have approached her indirectly through an older member of the Yokohama band, Okuno Masatsuna 奥野昌綱, whose daughter was also at Ferris (MORIOKA 2005, 82). After receiving a written reply from her, Uemura wrote what was probably his first love letter:

Since it is not the custom for men and women in our society today to exchange letters, it is very inconsiderate of me to address you in this way, but I hope that you will treat me kindly. I have long observed you, and love you deeply for your unparalleled piety, integrity and wisdom. For some time I wished to ask for your hand in marriage, but had no opportunity to do so... Recently, however, I dared to inquire after your feelings through the offices of Mr Okuno. I was overjoyed when you gave an immediate acceptance, and my heart's desire was fulfilled.... (letter to Sueno, 23 April 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 113)

He agreed to wait until she had obtained the consent of her family, who may have been opposed to the match (MORIOKA 2005, 82), and then made a declaration of his aims in life:

My wish is not to gain a government post, but to remain in private life and make a small attempt to repay the divine blessings that I have received through literary activities... and by working towards the spreading of the gospel. I pray to God that I will be able to follow his will with your help, and that you will pray for this too....

(letter to Sueno, 23 April 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 114)

In his second letter, he described the Christian idea of marriage. The purpose was not physical pleasure, but a pure joining together of two bodies and souls. He loved not only her fine mind, but also her piety and steadfastness (letter to Sueno, 27 April 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 169–70).

Odagiri Hiroko observes that in the frequent letters he wrote during their engagement Uemura addressed Sueno with respect, like an older friend (ODAGIRI 1984, 59–64). As she points out, he tells Sueno of his plans for the future, and exchanges ideas about poetry with her. He encourages her to keep writing poetry, and asks her to comment on his contributions to *Rikugō zasshi* 六合雑誌, the Christian periodical which he and Kozaki Hiromichi had started (letter to Sueno, 6 December 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 156). In general the tone of his letters is extremely serious, sometimes even sermon-like (for example, his letter to Sueno on 12 July 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 133–38). An exception

5. For the dating of Uemura's letters to Sueno during their engagement, see AOYOSHI 1935, 70–71; ODAGIRI 1984, 57.

is the detailed account of a speech meeting in which he has taken part, complete with sound effects to show the enthusiastic response of the audience (letter to Sueno, 30 June 1881, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 129–31).

Sueno's eldest daughter, Sumie 澄江, thought that had her mother concentrated on developing her individual potential, her impact on society could have equaled that of Kishida Toshiko 岸田俊子, a female People's Rights Activist whom Sueno was apparently in contact with during the late 1880s (SABA Sumie 1943, 43, 44). However, despite her teaching experience and their lack of money, after their marriage in 1882 Sueno mainly devoted herself to household affairs. Sumie described her mother's role as follows:

Like a shadow, she served her harsh mother-in-law and helped her equally strong-willed husband; husband and wife were like the outer and inner layers of a lined kimono, incomplete while apart. Just as the inner layer is indispensable, even though it is never seen, so she led a life of selfless self-sacrifice for the fifty years of her marriage. (SABA 1943, 42)

While Uemura was on his first overseas trip in 1888, Sueno taught *kanbun* at Meiji Jogakkō 明治女学校 in order to support the family, which now included two small girls (born in 1883 and 1886). Uemura's letters home show that they continued to have a close intellectual and emotional relationship. In intellectual partnership mode, he praises *The Duties of Women* by Francis Power COBBE (1881), an important mid-Victorian feminist who was both a Unitarian and a prominent journalist. In the book Cobbe criticized both women who were content to be little more than domestic machines, and those who gave the cause of female suffrage a bad name by drinking, smoking, and neglecting their primary household role (HAMILTON 2002). He promises to bring this book and others on women back to Japan for Sueno (letter dated 8 July 1888, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 203). Meanwhile, in supportive husband mode, he sympathizes with the difficulties Sueno must be experiencing in teaching, encourages her to make the time to spend at least two to three hours a week painting as a means of relaxation, and gives her advice about their daughters. Influenced, perhaps, by Frances Cobbe, he wants her to encourage them to think for themselves rather than submit to other people's opinions just because this will make them appear feminine (letters to Sueno, 8 July 1888, and 23 July 1888, UEMURA Masahisa 1934c, 201–4, 210).

However, the marriage was not without its strains. A poem that Sueno wrote after beginning her married life in Uemura's family home laments: "How unexpected: awaiting my entry to the capital, a harvest of bitter sorrow" 思いひきや花の都に入りしよりおどろおどろの憂きを刈るとは (ODAGIRI 1984, 66). The main problem was her mother-in-law. Apparently when the latter complained about her daughter-in-law's inability to cook, Sueno declared that she would go home to her family in order to learn, and would not be dissuaded. Uemura

had to go to fetch her back again.⁶ Around four months after their marriage he noted in his diary, “Sueno is in an unpleasant mood again today, so I feel unpleasant too. The whole family feels unpleasant.... How agreeable is the life of an unmarried person! ...He who wishes to take a wife had better not do so if he has to live under the same roof as his parents” (entry for 24 December 1882, UEMURA Masahisa 1934a, 7).

But there were other problems. While Sueno had known no financial hardship while growing up, Uemura’s income was limited. Even so, he spent money on expensive foreign works of theology—expenditure that she accepted as necessary—(UEMURA Tamaki 1996, 127, 136–37), enjoyed taking friends to eat at good restaurants, dismissing their worries about the effect on the Uemura budget (AOYOSHI 1935, 75), and gave freely to them if they were in need (TANAKA 1943, 38). Sueno was left to cope with the practical consequences of such behavior. The record suggests that she did so without complaint, making frequent visits to the pawnbroker (UEMURA Tamaki 1996, 136), and quietly mending the holes in her daughters’ *tabi* after putting them to bed (SABA 1943, 43), but the situation must have been stressful for her. There is also the issue of Uemura’s behavior towards Sueno at home. It is said that he tended to shout at her, but that she accepted this as his way of letting off steam once free from the constraints of his public persona as a Christian minister (TANAKA 1943, 38–39). While he is recorded as admonishing a younger colleague who obeyed the rules of formal self-deprecatory discourse by saying “my stupid wife” (*gusai* 愚妻) (ODAGIRI 1984, 70), he is also said to have called his wife “Oi” (equivalent to “Hey, you”) at home.⁷

TAKEDA Kiyoko (2001, 52, 58) contrasts the “progressive” attitudes of Ibuka and Uemura with the conservative attitudes to women that she ascribes to members of the Kumamoto band, namely Ebina Danjō and Tokutomi Sohō. However, this labeling is rather misleading. Ebina, who went on to become a leader of the Japanese Congregational Church, entered the Kumamoto School of Western Learning in 1872 at the age of sixteen, and moved to Dōshisha four years later. As Takeda points out, Ebina protested to Janes when he allowed two girls to sit on the veranda and listen to his classes at the school (they were originally pupils of his wife, but she had become too busy with household affairs to teach them). However, as Takeda does not point out, Janes’ response, that Ebina’s mother was also female, apparently convinced Ebina that he should support women and coeducation thenceforth.⁸ In fact, Ebina later married one of the two female pupils, Miya みや, daughter of Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠, and the younger sister of his friend and fellow pupil, Yokoi Tokio 横井時雄. Miya was

6. Anecdote by Matsuyama Kōkichi 松山高吉 recorded in AOYOSHI 1935, 74.

7. See the anecdote from Furuya Yasuo 古屋安雄 about his father’s experience when staying at Uemura’s house (SATŌ 1999, 130; see also Ibuka Kajinosuke’s anecdote in AOYOSHI 1935, 75).

8. This is according to one of these girls (Miya), as recorded by WATASE 1938, 122–23; NOTEHELPER, whose source is Janes, says that Mrs. Janes had refused to teach them at all (1985, 141).

thirteen when she joined the students at the school in 1875; later she attended mission schools in Tokyo and Kyoto.

According to Ebina's biographer, when Ebina and Yokoi were spending some time together in 1881, Yokoi mentioned that his mother was willing to consider Miya's marrying one of the Kumamoto band Christians. Ebina expressed interest, since he knew her and her "pedigree" (血統), and she was good at English. However, before committing himself he made sure that a friend who had once wished to marry her had turned elsewhere. He was also worried because he knew that Miya had health problems, and these might prevent him from full devotion to his vocation. However, he was able to persuade himself that his love for her was much more important than any practical concerns. With Yokoi and his wife acting as intermediaries between Ebina and Miya and her mother, the match was settled (WATASE 1938, 163–65; MORIOKA 2005, 87–88). Morioka mentions that until fairly late in their married life, Ebina did not consult his wife when deciding whether or not to move to a new post. This was because for a long time he thought that his love should be centered on God rather than on his family (MORIOKA 2005, 90–91). However, Miya was active in the Japanese branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and later belonged to the editorial staff of *Shinjokai* 新女界, a magazine aimed at female readers started by Ebina in 1909. She wrote many articles, including critiques of the Japanese family (SAKAMOTO 1999).

Kozaki Hiromichi's case also casts doubt on Takeda's suggestion. Like Ebina, he was sixteen when he entered the Kumamoto school in 1872 and twenty when he entered Dōshisha; like Ebina again, he was to become a leader of the Japan Congregational Church. During 1885 and 1886 he serialized a famous comparison of Confucianism and Christianity (*Seikyō shinron* 政教新論) in which he criticized the unequal marriage relationships in Confucian societies. By contrast, he explained, in developed societies men and women were of equal status, and each newly married couple set up a new family rather than continuing the parental line. This was the result of the influence of Christianity, which was responsible for the high status of women in Western culture and its practice of monogamy. "In God's eyes, [men and women] are equal... marriage has a lofty significance: man and woman become as one, fulfilling their duties by helping each other" (KOZAKI 1938b, 338–39, 376–77).

Kozaki's marriage took place six years before the completion of *Seikyō shinron*. After graduating from Dōshisha, he had taken up evangelistic work in Tokyo. There he became acquainted with Tsuda Sen 津田仙, a Meiji enlightenment figure and father of Tsuda Umeko 津田梅子. A Christian himself, Tsuda introduced Kozaki to the eighteen-year-old Iwamura Chiyo 岩村千代, his great-niece. Kozaki seems to have accepted the offer, since he investigated Chiyo by asking other people about her reputation (KOZAKI 1938a, 44–47). However, Chiyo was not so pleased. A mission-school student, she had been living at Tsuda Sen's

house since the age of eleven, and was baptized in 1876. She wished to become a teacher and was unwilling to marry, even if it was to a Christian. On the other hand, her mother (who only became a Christian later) was anxious for Chiyo to marry before she passed the appropriate age, and was determined that it should *not* be to a Christian—until Tsuda encouraged her to consider Kozaki. For her part, Chiyo succumbed to pressure from the American headmistress of her school, whose predecessor had been convinced that Chiyo would be happier as a housewife than as a career woman. Luckily, there was a six-month gap between their first meeting in December 1880 and their marriage, so that she had the chance to deepen her acquaintance with Kozaki to a certain extent. Moreover, Kozaki's mother seems to have welcomed the match. Apparently she greeted her daughter-in-law tactfully, saying that she would teach Chiyo what she knew, and hoped that Chiyo would do the same (KIYO-IZUMI 1938, 478–508). In addition, Chiyo did not have to give up all her career aspirations. She was able to do some teaching and was active in the Japanese branch of the WCTU. The Kozakis had not chosen each other, but their marriage seems to have worked well.⁹

The above are successful cases of partnership-style marriages between Protestant leaders and wives educated at mission schools. However, there is also the famous contrasting case of Uchimura Kanzō, the charismatic founder of the Nonchurch Movement. He became critical of Western-educated Japanese women and Western-style marital relationships after the failure of his first marriage, to a mission-school graduate. Because so many of Uchimura's letters have survived, it is possible to examine his view of the relationship as it developed, his distribution of blame after he had ended it, and his attempts to get his wife to accept his refusal to consider a reconciliation. Unfortunately, no direct evidence from the wife survives.¹⁰ Their daughter, Nobu ノブ, born after their separation, was interviewed by both Masaïke Megumu and Suzuki Toshirō, and her son has also spoken of what she told him, but her version of events seems to have come almost completely from Uchimura, who very possibly told her his side of the story in an attempt to justify his actions, rather than from Take (MASAIKE 1977, 89, 91; SUZUKI Toshirō 1986, 422, 438; HINAGA 1987, 186).

Uchimura entered the Sapporo Agricultural College in 1876, when he was fifteen. No missionaries were stationed at Sapporo at that time. He had some sporadic contact with missionaries from Hakodate, in particular with the Methodist missionary Merriman C. Harris and his wife, with both of whom he developed a close relationship. However, as was pointed out above, his first real experience of gender interaction in a Christian community did not come until he left Sapporo for Tokyo in 1882, at the age of twenty-one. This was older than the other

9. For Kozaki Chiyo's point of view, see KIYOIZUMI 1939, 458–59; for her husband's point of view, see KOZAKI 1938a, 44–47.

10. According to MASAIKE (1977, 87) the letters they exchanged in English before their marriage were destroyed by their daughter.

Christians dealt with in this article, particularly Uemura, had been at their first exposure. Perhaps because of this, although Uchimura was later to criticize this gender interaction, at the time he was clearly an enthusiastic participant. In one letter he wrote, “I received an invitation from the Methodist Girl School!!!!!! [sic] A fair chance for hunting” (letter to Ōta Inazō, 25 July 1883, UCHIMURA 1983, 63). However, his parents did not approve of such activities. In September 1883, after being admonished because of his friendship with a married woman, he decided that “as long as my parents live, I cannot commune much with female friends.” He went on to exclaim, “Brother, was it my fault to have sought friends and consolators in female circles? If I wish to be a Shaka, shall I be like him on my relations to female sex? What a fool am I? Led by my passions, I have fallen into many troubles and anxieties” (letter to Ōta, 21 September, UCHIMURA 1883, 75).

Despite this declaration, by the end of the next month, less than a year after his arrival in Tokyo, Uchimura had decided to ask his parents for permission to marry Asada Take. She came from Annaka, also the birthplace of Nijima Jō, and had been baptized by him along with the rest of her family. She entered Dōshisha Jogakkō in 1878 at the age of seventeen, and then Kyōritsu Jogakkō. A later description by Uchimura is not entirely flattering: “She is a pretty accomplished lady, sharp, though calm, passing through several bad experiences, and full of spirits to work for Christ. She is...of intro-mental temperament, writes Japanese well, though poor in English. Her feature is far below the average, still her spirit and faith are rarity.... I believe she will be a very useful woman at any rate” (letter to Miyabe Kingo, Christmas 1883, UCHIMURA 1983, 88). He seems to have first met her only about two months before, during an August visit to Annaka. Later he was to admit that the decision to marry had been too hasty (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 25 April, 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 230–31).

Uchimura expected opposition from his parents, and his mother did not disappoint him, although: “her grumblings are so childish and groundless, that I do not think worth to be used as to cause a disappointment on the part of sister Asada. Such murmurings as, ‘She is too wise, too learned, too intelligent,’ etc. are very unreasonable” (letter to Ōta, 30 October, 1883, UCHIMURA 1983, 78–79). Even so, Uchimura was prepared to end the relationship at least twice because of his mother’s hostility, since “I would rather live alone through the life than to have my home set upside-down with wife-matters” (letter to Ōta, 28 December, 1883; also letter to Ōta, 30 October, 1883, UCHIMURA 1983, 89, 78–79). In February 1884 he was ready to do so again, this time because of unspecified rumors about Take’s behavior: “...she had one great defect in her characters,—and that is either her extreme innocence or her recklessness.... I received many useless suspicion about her from the world; and on that account, after full considerations, I determined to cut all relations with her” (letter to Miyabe, 18 February 1884, UCHIMURA 1983, 100). But just at this point, “apparently seeming to have realized the purity of our hearts and desires,” his parents removed their opposi-

tion (letter to Miyabe, 18 February 1884, UCHIMURA 1983, 101). This may have been because Nijijima Jō acted as an intermediary (HINAGA 1987, 184).

Uchimura had originally intended to postpone the marriage for at least a year, so that Take could continue her education, but he changed his mind. This was both because of the poverty of the Asada family, and because his mother needed Take's help in running the Uchimura household. In fact, in the same letter to Miyabe, he made it clear that Take's value to him as a wife would depend on the extent to which she made his life easier: "A wife well used is a decided help in our future career; misused, a grand obstacle.... Whether I have been blessed with an 'ato-woshi' [source of strength], or simply a 'sunekajiri' [dead-weight] can only be ascertained after real experience; but...I believe that God answered my long made prayers, and furnished me with a mate, *which is beneficial to me*" (UCHIMURA 1983, 102; italics in original).

They were married on March 28 by Harris, among the guests being Kozaki, other Japanese Christians, and the diarist Clara Whitney, who gave an eyewitness account (WHITNEY 1979, 327–28). At first Uchimura expressed contentment (letter to Miyabe, 31 March 1884, UCHIMURA 1983, 108). However, it seems that Take did not wish to stay at home helping her mother-in-law. This was not surprising if the latter was still hostile towards her, as Uchimura later implied (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 25 April 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 231). In early May, about six weeks after the marriage, Uchimura went on a trip that lasted over a month—presumably leaving Take at home under the strict supervision of her mother-in-law. During that time, he wrote to Ōta (Nitobe) Inazō 太田 (新渡戸) 稲造 asking him to: "visit my home in thy leisure, and lecture to my wife about the practical Xty. Please to tell her that there are many who dare to 'work' for Christ by preaching and teaching Bible-classes, but to work by examples is as rare as it is important" (27 May 1884, UCHIMURA 1983, 110).

Hinaga Yasushi, Take and Uchimura's grandson, claims that Take wished to engage in Christian work because Yuasa Jirō 湯浅治郎 had financed her mission school education on condition that she took up such work after graduation (HINAGA 1987, 184). If this is the case, the meaning of Uchimura's request in this letter becomes clear. He wants Ōta to persuade Take to fulfill Yuasa's wishes not by engaging in Christian work outside the home, but by following a life of Christian self-sacrifice as a dutiful daughter-in-law within the Uchimura household. Then, on 27 October, just seven months after his marriage, Uchimura wrote to a friend in Sapporo:

For the past 8 months I was under a peculiar trouble, which none but my God knows. I sought for the cause of the trouble for a long time; but finding none I thought it to be my own fault. But recently matter so came out that the secret of the long disturbances of my family was disclosed; and alas! poor me, *she* whom I trusted to be my helper, my consolator, my coworker, was found to be

a rascal,—a wolf in sheep’s skin.... It required all of my energies to scrutinize the affair, and by the testimonies of 4 or 5, the matter was found out to be so. You can easily imagine my condition under such a severe blow. Prayers for a good wife have received answers just as contrary as can be. Father, what have I done to thee to receive such a severe punishment?... after deliberate considerations, asking my conscience and the Bible for the true solution of the problem, *I determined to give her up*. She is now in Annaka.

(letter to Miyabe Kingo, 27 October 1884,
UCHIMURA 1983, 114–15; italics in original)

It is not clear what Take had done. As SUZUKI Norihisa states (1998, 171–72), Uchimura’s view was that she had committed adultery, at least in her thoughts. The main evidence comes from a letter to Take’s brother in which Uchimura justifies his insistence on a divorce on the grounds of Matthew 5: 27–28:¹¹ “if you substitute ‘man’ for ‘woman’” (letter to Asada Nobuyoshi 浅田信芳, UCHIMURA 1983, 16 June, 1885, 170; my translation).¹² Suzuki Norihisa goes so far as to name two possible objects of Take’s feelings, the implication being that Uchimura’s suspicions were justified (SUZUKI 1998, 173–74; also MASAIKE 1977, 91–92).

There were other reasons for friction in the marriage. According to Nobu, Take later told her how Uchimura lost trust in her after discovering that the expensive costume that she wore at their wedding—and that his mother had been showing off to the neighbors—did not belong to her but had been borrowed.¹³ However, it is not clear whether Take had actually said that the costume belonged to her family, or had been too nervous to correct her hostile mother-in-law’s assumption. It also appears that Take had claimed to be younger than she actually was (SUZUKI Toshirō 1986, 422–23). According to Nobu’s son, Uchimura told Nobu that the final parting of the ways came after Take fell under suspicion of spending thirty yen—the equivalent of one month’s salary for Uchimura—that had gone missing. Indignant, Take threatened to leave the house, and when it proved impossible to placate her, Uchimura apparently declared that if she did so, there would be no coming back (HINAGA 1987, 186). In the letter to her brother referred to above, Uchimura actually mentions having made such a declaration, though he does not explain the circumstances. Take’s reply, he writes, was “Of course” 勿論 (16 June 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 169; my translation). In any case, the mar-

11. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

12. Of course, Uchimura’s interpretation of the Biblical text is questionable. The intention was surely to warn against self-righteousness and call the faithful to a higher standard of morality than the Ten Commandments, not to encourage them to condemn other people on the basis of what they might have been thinking.

13. Uchimura’s mother may have viewed the costume as a valuable part of Take’s dowry (FUSS 2004, 82). The discovery that it was not might have caused more damage to Take’s place in the Uchimura household than the simple fact that she had lied, or at least concealed the truth.

riage was over, and Uchimura later told Nobu that he had to face overwhelming criticism from Japanese church members (MASAIKE 1977, 93). His solution was to travel to the United States in order to study and reflect, leaving behind his parents in Tokyo, and Take in Annaka.

Not surprisingly, the letters that Uchimura wrote while abroad frequently touch on the “great failure” 大失策, and later “the Annaka matter” 安中事件 (letters to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 18 April, 1885 and 15 November, 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 151, 214). Until around mid 1885, the tone of his references is dark and remorseful: the marriage was a sinful act against God, his parents and even his friend and confidant, Ōta (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 22 December 1884; letter to Ōta, 19 January 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 122, 130). Had they postponed the ceremony as he had originally planned, God would have spared them from disaster because Take’s true nature would undoubtedly have become clear. In addition, he would have never had married if his mother had told him how upset she was at the thought of losing him to Take (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 25 April 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 230–31). Uchimura casts himself as the victim: responsibility for the break up is Take’s. She “wronged me to the greatest possible extent” (letter to Ōta, 19 January 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 130); she was “a moral imbecile” 道徳上ノマヌケ hardly different from the inmates of the asylum where he was working (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 8 March, 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 143; my translation), and later “the devil from Annaka” 安中ノ悪魔 (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 27 September 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 207; my translation). He refused any idea of a reconciliation, although Take seems to have written to him about this (letter to Ōta, 19 January 1885; also to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 6 June 1885; to Asada Nobuyoshi, 16 June 1885; UCHIMURA 1983, 130, 166 and 169–72), and to have approached Harris and Dr. Willis Whitney, foreigners close to Uchimura, much to his embarrassment (letter to Asada Nobuyoshi, 16 June 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 172). His view did not change even after he was informed that she was pregnant with his child—something that he initially suspected was a lie (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 6 June 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 165–66).

Apparently, Take had asked him for a divorce several times before the separation, but he had stopped her out of fear of the social consequences (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 25 April 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 230).¹⁴ Soon after the separation he appears to have consulted Whitney, and to have been prepared not to divorce if this was doctrinally impossible (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 22 December 1884, UCHIMURA 1983, 121–22). By June, however, he had changed his mind. Examination of the Bible led him to believe that divorce would not shame his conscience: “Am I to neglect my duty to God because of a woman?” (letter to

14. In fact, the rates of divorce and remarriage in Japan at this time were high, and there was apparently no great stigma involved for either men or women (FUESS 2004, 47–99). However, this would not have been the case in Christian circles.

Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 6 June 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 166; my translation) As was mentioned above, he explained to Take's brother that Take had committed adultery in her heart. People might say that Christians do not divorce, but his duty was to God not to Christians. Take should repent her conduct before God, but even if she did this, Uchimura could not take her back. She should hand their child over to his parents since legally it belonged to the father rather than the mother. He realized that to do so would upset her maternal feelings, but threatened legal action if she refused. At the same time, however, he tried to get her to agree to his wishes by emphasizing how much she was upsetting *his* feelings. He had dedicated himself to God's service, and was prepared to welcome suffering, at his wife's hands as well from others, but whenever he received a letter from her it caused him great spiritual distress. Why would she not take pity on him (letter to Asada Nobuyoshi, 16 June 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 170–72)?

Perhaps this letter to Take's brother had a purging effect. In any case from this point Uchimura, always conscious of God's personal attention, seems able to view the experience in a more positive way. Thus, in October 1885 he was able to inform a friend that the separation was God's will: "I thank God that He has taken away my wife from me. This made me so much more free and less cumbersome to my friends.... A wife and a comfortable home are now foreign to me.... Perhaps, God's wisest providence has withdrawn from me an idol that I may give my whole heart to Him" (letter to Fujita Kyūzaburō, 21 October 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 210). Continuing in this direction, in November, he told his father that legal action against Take would enable him to reveal that the Western opposition to divorce resulted from a misunderstanding of the New Testament. In fact, God's purpose in visiting this suffering upon him was to reveal this truth to the Christian Church in Japan (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, 15 November 1885, UCHIMURA 1983, 214). Three months later, he was able to admit that he too had "not been completely without sin" [我モ全ク罪無キ者ニアラズ] in the matter, but that the experience had purified him and he should therefore be thankful for it (letter to Uchimura Yoshiyuki, February 28 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 228).

In April 1886, he told his father not to worry about Take's continued desire for reconciliation. If she continued in this way, he would eventually show her his resolve by marrying again, though this time it would be to a wife prepared for him by God rather than one he had sought by himself (April 25 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 230). A month later (in his last substantial reference to the issue while in America), he was content to wait until God settled everything. He repeated that he was thankful that he had fallen into "the adulteress's trap" 奸婦ノ「ワナ」 because difficulties helped to forge the soul in preparation for the next life (23 May 1886, UCHIMURA 1983, 234).

According to Nobu's son, Take's last attempt at reconciliation came via Niijima soon after Uchimura's return to Japan, in August 1888. In early September, after contacting him on her behalf, Niijima informed Take that reconciliation

was impossible. Less than nine months later, on 11 May 1889, Take gave birth to a son, the father being Matsuoka Nobuyoshi (whom she later married). It was only after this that her name was removed from Uchimura's household register (HINAGA 1987, 195–96). Since it would have been difficult for Take, or Uchimura, to remarry until she had been released in this way (FUESS 2004, 96), this last attempt at reconciliation may have been an attempt to force Uchimura's hand.

After his return to Japan, Uchimura made no public reference to his relationship with Take, although writers have shown how the affair can be seen below the surface in works such as his commentary on the Book of Ruth, who stayed faithful to her mother-in-law even after her husband's death (ŌTA 1977, 45–55; HOWES 2005, 104–108). Although he had good relationships in later life with educated female Christians such as his daughter-in-law Miyoko 美代子 (UCHIMURA Yūshi 1973, 70–73) and Mitani Tamiko 三谷民子, headmistress of Joshi Gakuin 女子学院 (UCHIMURA Yūshi 1968, 382–83), for both his second and third wives he selected women that were as different from Take as it was possible to be. His second wife was “not a College-graduate, neither is she an intellectual heroine in any respect. Her specialities housekeeping, — sewing, cooking and making her husband comfortable” (letter to Alf. Struthers, Ed. Hardy and Miss Carie H. [Hardy], 20 August 1889, UCHIMURA Kanzō 1983, 317). Less than four years later, after welcoming the fact that his third wife “had no training or ‘manipulation’ by teachers other than her own mother,” he went on: “...a ‘home-spun’ Japanese girl is not an unlovable thing. With all her docility, gentleness and humanity, she always appears to me a heaven-sent ministering angel. Only Christianize men, and Japanese have such perfect homes. Their women are seldom contentious, litigious and lazy. Pardon me for so much panegyrics on my new acquisition” (to Bell, 11 January 1893, UCHIMURA 1983, 366–67).

The phrase “my new acquisition” strikes this writer as highly revealing. The marriage was peaceful, and Howes claims that Uchimura had “finally learned how to express affection for a woman, and how to show the respect toward a wife that happy life together requires” (HOWES 2005, 82). He further points out that Uchimura made efforts to live apart from his parents during the second marriage, and that the first three years of the third marriage were also spent separately (HOWES 2005, 83). However, the fact that the third, and probably second, wives were willing to tolerate Uchimura's self-centered behavior and tempestuous personality is likely to have been the key to his satisfaction.¹⁵

Analysis and Conclusion

Four issues were mentioned at the beginning of this examination: the extent of participation in gender interaction, the choice of partners, the development of

15. For the relationship between Uchimura and his third wife, see UCHIMURA Miyoko 1973, 199–202, 206–207 and UCHIMURA Yūshi 1968, 245–47; 1973, 18–20.

the partnerships, and the tensions that arose and what was done about them. There appear to be significant differences between the successful partnerships and the unsuccessful one. First, among all those we have examined, Uchimura had the least experience of gender interaction in a Christian community, less than a year. Second, Uchimura and Take probably only had a superficial acquaintance when they made their choice, since their decision to marry was taken less than two months after their first meeting. It is not clear who took the initiative. Ibuka and Sekiko, Uemura and Sueno, and Ebina and Miya seem to have had some form of prior acquaintance. Uemura took the initiative in approaching Sueno, and the same is probably true for Ibuka. Yokoi encouraged Ebina to consider Miya. Only Kozaki and Chiyo did not choose each other but were introduced by a third party, Tsuda Sen. However, Kozaki investigated Chiyo's reputation, and Tsuda Sen, who presumably saw himself as acting in Chiyo's best interests, already knew Kozaki. Ibuka, Uchimura, and possibly Sueno, had to overcome parental opposition to their choice.

With regard to the development of the partnerships, the best evidence comes from the letters of Ibuka and Uemura to their wives. Uemura's letters to Sueno before their marriage are hardly romantic, but they reveal the desire to develop an intellectual relationship. Ibuka and Uemura's letters from abroad indicate the desire to communicate both their ideas and their affection for their wives and other family members. Uchimura's highly emotional letters to his friends during his engagement focus on his struggle to decide between Take and his parents. They indicate the emotional stress being suffered by all involved, and his readiness on at least three occasions to end the relationship. The reader does not get the sense that the ties between Uchimura and Take are strengthening. On the contrary, it seems likely that Uchimura was not developing any deep knowledge of Take as a person. In fact, as late as February 1884, just before his parents finally gave their permission, he seems to have learned something about her that made him want to call a halt to everything (to Miyabe, 18 February 1884, UCHIMURA 1983, 100). For her part, Take probably did not have the opportunity prior to the marriage to discover how Uchimura behaved at home, in the presence of his mother, as opposed to how he behaved in public, among his Western-educated peers. We do not have any direct evidence of the way in which the Ebina/Miya and Kozaki/Chiyo relationships developed, but they were willing for their wives to participate in public life, for example in the WCTU. However, Uchimura wished Take to devote herself to his family—although this was against her will, and chose as his second and third wives people who were unlikely to be interested in outside activities. In fact, the phrase “my new acquisition,” which was picked out above, suggests that he wanted a wife who would obey him without question rather than someone with whom he could share his ideas.

It is clear that both the Uemura and Uchimura partnerships experienced tension. Uchimura and Take seem to have had several arguments that ended

with Take threatening to leave and Uchimura trying to avoid this because of the effect it might have on his reputation. Sueno seems to have responded to Uemura's insensitive behavior with understanding and patience, but both she and Take had confrontations with their mothers-in-law. This is not surprising in view of the different educational backgrounds of the former and the latter, which were probably linked to different expectations about the knowledge and behavior appropriate to daughters-in-law. What is important are the responses of Uemura and Uchimura as sons and husbands. Uemura experienced considerable stress, but seems to have supported Sueno rather than his mother. When Sueno returned to her original home after the argument over her cooking, Uemura fetched her back. Uchimura seems to have stood with his mother rather than Take, and he left for America rather than going to Annaka to work out a solution. Rather than responding positively to her repeated requests for a reconciliation, which might appear to be the "Christian" approach, he ignored them and instead sought for ways to justify the separation.

However, whatever the differences between Uchimura and the other four, there is a still greater contrast between all the male Protestants mentioned here and a group of contemporaries who had also been influenced by Western ideas. These were the members of the People's Rights Movement, who campaigned for the establishment of representative government in the 1870s and 1880s. There were some women who were active in the movement, but the leaders were all men. As ŌKI Motoko points out (2003, 28–30, 173, 174–80, 187), many of the most radical left their wives to look after the home while they concentrated on their loftier political activities, and satisfied their sexual desires by visiting prostitutes. In particular, Ōi Kentarō 大井憲太郎 had affairs with two female campaigners, Fukuda Hideko 福田英子 and Shimizu Toyoko 清水豊子. He refused to acknowledge the offspring of these relationships. In his diary for 5 September 1888, UEMURA Masahisa (1934b, 39) noted that such behavior contradicted their calls for human rights and equality.

The evidence given here is almost completely from the male side. However, it is clear that early Meiji Protestants who belonged to the Western-educated elite were conscious that there were important differences between traditional Japanese approaches to gender relationships, particularly marriage, and the Christian ideal, and that they tried to realize this ideal, particularly in the area of individual choice. It is also clear that there were differing degrees of conflict between the norms that they had learnt from their parents and those that they associated with Christianity. In the case of Uemura Masahisa and Yamauchi Sueno, the relationship was strong enough for them to overcome the problems that resulted. In the case of Uchimura Kanzō and Asada Take, this was not possible.

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