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Loving Couples for a Modern Nation: A New Family Model in Late Nineteenth Century Japan¹

Jean-Michel BUTEL

This paper will examine the debates surrounding the married couple and conjugal love which took place in the periodical *Jogaku zasshi* throughout the last third of the nineteenth century. Run by Iwamoto Yoshiharu (1863–1942), this magazine appears to have been the place of reflection on the specificities of Western love, the poor nature of the pre-modern types of love, and the need to transpose this particular kind of love—the only one befitting a civilized nation—to Japan. At stake here was the establishment of an ideal model for the modern couple. Iwamoto was not seeking a revolution. Yet in fighting for a new family model based on equality between husband and wife, he laid the groundwork for the changes that Japan would undergo throughout the twentieth century. His modernity competed with the modernity of the editors of the first Civil Code, over which it would triumph a century later.

Keywords: love, couple, marriage, Iwamoto Yoshiharu/Zenji, *jogaku*, *Jogaku zasshi*, women education, press

Introduction

During the extensive efforts to build a new Japan, which took place during the last third of the nineteenth century, certain thinkers and politicians made educating the Japanese woman one of the conditions for establishing a modern nation. The aim was to transform supposedly weak, submissive creatures into “good wives and wise mothers” (*ryōsai kenbo* 良妻賢母).² The site of this attempted transformation was above all the woman herself, seen as a body to

1 I would like to express my gratitude to Nichibunken, and especially to Professors Komatsu Kazuhiko and Matthias Hayek, who welcomed me twice and allowed me to consult the precious data of the Nichibunken library. This research is part of a French academic program on the discourses and the debates around the Japanese family during the Meiji era. An initial French version of this paper was published in a collective work, edited by Christian Galan and Emmanuel Lozerand (Galan and Lozerand 2011). I would like to thank the two editors of that volume for their stimulating remarks. My sincere thanks go now to the editor and referees of *Japan Review* whose help was essential in further enriching this work.

2 This term, the first known written use of which was in *Omoide no ki* 思出の記 (1900–1901) by Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (1863–1957), was popular since the beginning of the Meiji period; but its popularity has been perhaps even greater among more recent commentators on the history of women in Japan, for describing Meiji ideology in relation to female education (Patessio 2011, pp. 27–30).

be strengthened, a mind to be elevated, a wife whose status was to be defined. Yet some intellectuals shifted the focus from the woman onto the male–female relationship. Unafraid to place responsibility for women’s weakness at the feet of the “Japanese man,” these intellectuals fought to establish a new and genuinely modern type of marital relationship. They argued it should be based on a new Western concept, which they struggled to translate—a concept which was mainly understood through the English term “love.”

This paper will examine the debates surrounding the couple and conjugal love which took place in the periodical *Jogaku zasshi* 女学雑誌 throughout the last third of the nineteenth century.³ This magazine, run by Iwamoto Yoshiharu (Zenji) 巖本善治 (1863–1942), appears to have been the place of reflection on the specificities of Western love, the poor nature of the pre-modern types of love and the need to transpose this particular kind of love—the only one befitting a civilized nation—to Japan. At stake here was the establishment of an ideal model for the couple, the foundations of which would in reality be the subject of debate throughout the twentieth century.

1. *Jogaku zasshi*

Jogaku zasshi was Japan’s first periodical designed for women. Born in the midst of the tumult which characterized the world of publishing, and in particular the press, in the second half of the nineteenth century, it enjoyed regular publication from July 1885 through February 1904. *Jogaku zasshi* thus accompanied this second phase of the Meiji period, which was characterized by a progressive withdrawing into an increasingly exclusive nationalist ideology, after the political opening of the first years.⁴ The number of pages of the magazine was limited; it rarely exceeded thirty pages. Neither this nor the relatively limited circulation, though, is insignificant.⁵ The frequent changes in format reveal the extent to which *Jogaku zasshi* served as a kind of laboratory for the Japanese language and press, as well as for women’s education and the concrete application of its editors’ ideals. Despite some evident friction, *Jogaku zasshi* appears to have maintained the same editorial line throughout: to be a “magazine” (*zasshi*) providing “women” (*jo*) with learning (*gaku*) and a broader reflection than had previously been available to them, using subject matter that was both theoretical (the female condition) and practical (cooking, health, education).⁶

3 Regarding the English translation of the title of the magazine, see below, note 6.

4 For a general history of the Japanese press, see Séguin 1993. The leading general-interest magazine of the time, *Taiyō* 太陽, was founded in 1895 and modeled on Western, and in particular Anglo-American magazines such as *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1817) and *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* (1850). *Jogaku zasshi* quickly made its mark. The number of issues in a given year varied between 11 (1885) and 53 (1892), and totaled 526; Morton 1999, pp. 293–333. See also Patessio 2011, pp. 33–70.

5 Circulation apparently averaged between 2,000 and 3,000 copies, though Ribalet (2005, pp. 313–25) suggests the figure of 10,000 for 1890. As a comparison, *Taiyō*, which had almost 250 pages, had a circulation of 98,000 copies right from its early years, and *Kokumin no tomo* 国民之友 had a circulation of approximately 10,000; Morton 1999, pp. 294 and 320.

6 The term *jogaku* 女学 has already caused much ink to flow (Inoue 1968, Iwatori 1999, Molony 2005). Does it refer to “the education of women” or to “female learning”? Iwamoto made several attempts to explain himself, such as in the editorial in issue 111 on 26 May 1888. Such statements of intent notwithstanding, the term appears to have been used in a fairly loose sense. Although *Jogaku zasshi* seems to be most commonly translated as “Women’s Educational Journal” by scholars today, the publication’s official English title, *The Woman’s Magazine*, gives a pretty clear sense of what it was intended to be.

The style, while varying noticeably from article to article, was intentionally simple. Phonetic readings (*furigana*) accompanied Chinese characters, allowing them to be understood by a little-educated readership (in other words, women). Yet *Jogaku zasshi* was also the site of the creation of those words that were seemingly essential to the nascent nation.⁷ The diverse subject matter was designed to appeal to the widest audience, with topics including “domestic science,” health in the home and child rearing.⁸ In addition to frequent discussions of the moral standards and virtues that a young woman was duty bound to nurture, the journal also contained a society column that carried notices about Red Cross parties, Japan Temperance Union meetings and aristocracy’s balls and receptions, for example. Prominence was given to literature—both Japanese and foreign works in translation—which the journal’s founders saw as the best means of elevating the feeble minds of young women.⁹

Jogaku zasshi was targeted at several groups of readers: well educated women and young girls who were both fascinated by the female characters presented in the literary texts and keen to keep a modern home; progressive men, educators and friends of the editors; and certain younger women, mission-school students, who were interested in reading the essays on social reforms, women’s rights and education.¹⁰ This tension between practical advice for a wide audience and reflections for an elite group is interesting in its linking of political debate (strengthening the Japanese nation, women’s emancipation) and scientific reflections (health, psychology) within an educational project (the education of women) that was firmly focused on everyday life (saucepans).¹¹ Although not specific to the journal, the tension which seems to reflect a somewhat positivist attitude, must have been difficult to resolve. In 1892, after conducting a survey of his female readers, Iwamoto decided to split the journal



An example of the elegant cover of the magazine *Jogaku zasshi* 148, Meiji 22 (1889), February 9. (*Jogaku zasshi*, 16 volume facsimile. Rinsen Shoten, 1984.)

7 The early issues of the magazine have been digitalized by the Kokuritsu Gengo Kenkyūjo 国立言語研究所.

8 It seems that the English word *domestic science* was first translated as *kanai rigaku* 家内理学, and subsequently, after 1890, as *kaseigaku* 家政学 (Iwahori 1999, pp. 401–406). One of the first Japanese guides to home economics (*kasei keizai* 家政経済) was published by the magazine’s editors under the title *Nihon no jogaku* 日本の女学: “Japanese Women’s Education” or “Japanese Women’s Learning” from 23 August 1887 to 30 November 1889. The editors also offered practical classes, asserting that everyday life was the primary venue for the advancement (I hesitate to say “emancipation,” even though this was the authors’ intention) of women.

9 Writers Kitamura Tōkoku 北村透谷 (1868–1894) and Shimazaki Tōson 島崎藤村 (1872–1943), and literary critics Ishibashi Ningetsu 石橋忍月 (1865–1926) and Uchida Roan 内田魯庵 (1868–1929) made their debuts in the magazine’s pages. *Jogaku zasshi* gave birth to the leading literary journal *Bungakukai* 文学界 (Brownstein 1980). It was also notably responsible for the translation of Frances Burnett’s *Little Lord Fauntleroy* by Wakamatsu Shizuko 若松賤子 (1864–1896), the wife of Iwamoto.

10 The fact that most discourses about women in early and mid-Meiji Japan were made by men or through men has been pointed out by Sievers 1983 and Kornicki et al. 2010. See also Patessio 2011, pp. 1–32.

11 For the linkage of education with respect for women and with women’s rights, see Molony 2005.

into two separate issues to be published on alternate weeks: the white cover, devoted to social reforms and literature; and the red cover (run by Iwamoto himself), focusing on the home.¹² By alternating white and red covers *Jogaku zasshi* continued to play an essential role in building popular opinion, all the while reflecting the ideas of its time.¹³

2. Iwamoto Yoshiharu

The widely ranging subject matter covered by the journal seems to stem from the encyclopedic energy and ambition of its editor. Iwamoto Yoshiharu was one of those men with extraordinary backgrounds and incredible vigor who made the Japan of the Meiji period (1868–1912).¹⁴ The adopted son of a samurai from Tajima province (in present day Hyōgo prefecture), he was trained in the Chinese classics, without becoming an eminent specialist in the field. After studying under Nakamura Masanao 中村正直 (1832–1891) and graduating from his school (Dōjinsha 同人社) in 1880, he attended the agricultural college (Gakunōsha 学農社) of another important Christian of the time, Tsuda Sen 津田仙 (1837–1908), graduating in 1884. Iwamoto was then baptized in 1885 by Kimura Kumaji 木村熊二 (1845–1927), who had recently returned to Japan from the United States.¹⁵



Iwamoto Yoshiharu (1863–1942)
(http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yoshiharu_Iwamoto.jpg).

A few months earlier in June 1884 he had helped launch the *Jogaku shinshi* 女学新誌, a project which, though not very successful (the journal ceased publication within a year), prepared Iwamoto to create his own magazine in July 1885.¹⁶ In October 1885, shortly after *Jogaku zasshi* was launched, Kimura Kumaji founded the Meiji Girls School (Meiji Jogakkō 明治女学校).¹⁷ Iwamoto was a member of the school's founding committee and

12 Iwamoto continued to write for both colors (particularly the editorials), but left the running of the more “intellectual” journal to Hoshino Tenchi 星野天知 (1862–1950). The importance of *Jogaku zasshi* in the literary field waned with the creation of the journal *Bungakukai* 文学界.

13 This explains the large amount of research devoted to the journal in English and Japanese as well as the existence of a collaborative research project at the International Research Centre for Japanese Studies in Kyoto; See Morton 1999.

14 Karasawa 1984, pp. 797–98 and 925–30. See also in German Kischka-Wellhäußer 2004.

15 A Confucian scholar, Christian reformer and great expert in Western sciences, Nakamura Masanao was one of the central thinkers and politicians of the first third of the Meiji period. A translator of both Smiles and Mill at the beginning of the 1870s, a teacher (he founded his own school upon his return from England and was also a professor at Tokyo University) and a member of Meirokusha 明六社, Nakamura represented the liberal wing among the leading figures who inspired the Meiji government. Kimura Kumaji also baptized Shimazaki Tōson, who took part in Iwamoto's publishing adventure.

16 He was the editor and often the main writer, under various pseudonyms, from May 1886 to November 1903.

17 The schools run by Christian missionaries offered young Japanese girls a rare opportunity for higher education during the 1870s and 1880s (Patessio 2011, pp. 33–105). The Meiji Girls School, which operated between 1882 and 1909, was a breeding ground for women intellectuals, students and teachers who, through their spirit and their writing, put their mark on the women's liberation movements that followed. Among them were the journalists and essayists Hani Motoko 羽仁もと子 (1873–1957) and Shimizu Shikin 清水紫琴 (1867–1933), the writers Nogami Yaeko 野上弥生子 (1885–1985), Miyake Kaho 三宅花圃 (1868–1943), Wakamatsu Shizuko, Ōtsuka Kusuoko 大塚楠緒子 (1875–1910), Aoyagi Yūmi 青柳有美 (1873–1945), Tsuda Umeko 津田梅子 (1864–1929), and the first female doctor in Japan Ogino Ginko 荻野吟子 (1851–1913).

an instructor there, becoming headmaster in August 1886 following the death of Kimura's wife, the school's first headmistress. Editing the journal and running the school made Iwamoto the "leading spokesman for women's education in the Meiji period," and one of the most influential Christian reformers of his time.¹⁸ Indeed, he was a reformer rather than a revolutionary. As Iwamoto himself stated in the first issue of his journal, his aim was not to destroy all Japanese values but to endow Japanese women with a new status—a "Victorian respectability"—based on the model suggested to him by Anglo-American Protestant moralists:

We aim to provide a model of ideal womanhood that combines both the Western concept of women's rights and the traditional virtues of our own country.¹⁹

3. Debates on the Family: The Couple

Iwamoto Yoshiharu endeavored to provide a "practical education and moral guidance" to young women through his teaching and the views he expressed in various newspapers and his journal. However, he did not focus his efforts entirely on women. He believed it was the family system—the very bedrock of society—that needed to be reformed. In a way, just like anthropologists a few years later, Iwamoto considered the social structure to be based on the way marriages were arranged, with the type of marriage strictly defining the wife's status in her new family. In his eyes, women were thus both the necessary beneficiaries of, and the principal driving force behind, the modernization process he was looking for. Many of his editorials called for a change from the *ie* 家, the "traditional" domestic group—I will return to the modernity of this concept later—to the *hōmu* ホーム (home) or the *kazoku* 家族, a family unit characterized by a strong emotional attachment between husband and wife.²⁰ He was, therefore, opposed to marriages arranged by parents, and promoted the ideal of a marriage freely consented to and prompted by mutual love.

Iwamoto was not the first to advocate these ideas. In fact, he was continuing a movement begun approximately ten years earlier by Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847–1889) in his writings on the family system and the status of wives. Mori sought to promote monogamy (*ippu ippu sei* 一夫一婦制), the idea of "marriage as a contract" (*keiyaku kekkon* 契約結婚) between two individuals, the need for love (*ai* 愛) between a husband and wife, and equal status (though not equal rights) between the couple. He railed against a concept summed up by the axiom: "respect men, despise women" (*danson jōhi* 男尊女卑).²¹

18 Brownstein 1980, p. 320.

19 "Hakkō no shushi" 発行の主旨, *Jogaku zasshi* 1, 20.7.1875, pp. 3–4.

20 By using, particularly in his early texts, the neologism *hōmu*, a *katakana* transliteration of the English word, Iwamoto clearly indicated the novelty of the social institution he was championing and the location of the model. Regarding the distinctive meanings of the terms *ie*, *katei*, and *kazoku*, see Konuma 2011a, and Galan et al., "Dire la famille dans le Japon moderne et contemporain: *ie*, *katei*, *kazoku*, repères et hypothèses" in Galan and Lozerand 2011, pp. 585–627.

21 Mori's *Saishō ron* 妻妾論, published in *Meiroku zasshi* 明六雜誌 between May 1874 and February 1875, painted a clearly Christian portrait of marriage. Morton (1999, p. 299), quoting a hypothesis put forward by Hall (1973, p. 249), mentions the influence on Mori of John Stuart Mill's work *The Subjection of Women* (1869), an essay that mounted a scathing attack on the inequality of the sexes during the same period in the West. The West that shaped the moralists of the Meiji period was above all the West that Western moralists yearned for. To this extent, Japan and the West already shared the same ideal.

Love marriages based on personal choice, monogamy, the status of concubines (*mekake* 妾), prostitution, equal rights, adultery and chastity: the Meiji-era press reflected the prominence that these issues had acquired in a rapidly changing society. Debates on the family system and the nature of the husband and wife bond raged throughout the 1870s and 1880s. The first draft Civil Code, presented by Gustave Boissonade in 1888, may be seen as something of a climax.²² The end of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s undoubtedly marked a turning point in attitudes towards love and the couple. Here, Iwamoto played a dual role: he developed a rhetoric that enabled him to explain and disseminate the ideas of Nakamura and Mori to a wider audience; and he actively participated in public debate, taking great pleasure in fanning the flames of controversy.

Controversy was sparked in June 1887 by Tokutomi Sohō in *Kokumin no tomo*, a magazine he had been running since February that same year.²³ In his reflections on the ideal Japanese wife, Sohō seems to have been driven by the same desire as Iwamoto for the emancipation of women, the destruction of the former family system and a free understanding between husband and wife, all the while adopting a Christian-influenced rhetoric that closely resembled the one employed by Iwamoto in his theoretical texts.²⁴ Although he also put forward a Western ideal of the couple consisting of two individuals who enjoyed walking hand in hand and discussing together—Sohō spoke of the necessity of developing a relationship that was not merely physical but also “spiritual” (*seishinteki na kōsai* 精神的な交際)—he carefully avoided speaking of love.²⁵

Iwamoto took up the topic in a text published in April 1888, but adopted a different view of the status of women. In his eyes, the subject of discussion should not be the wife (and thus the woman as defined by her bond with a man) but the well-educated woman, the one he dreamed of for a modern nation—the “beautiful lady,” to borrow the title of his article.²⁶ In this article he extolled the virtues of “real love” (*makoto no ai* 真正の愛), which is conjugal and requires mutual respect, in contrast to venal love. The context here was acrimonious debates raging over the status of concubines.²⁷

Sohō then waded back into the fray by attempting to assess the nature of love in his essay “*Ai no tokushitsu o toite wagakuni no shōsetsuka ni nozomu*” 愛の特質を説て我邦の小説家に望む.²⁸ Yamaji Aizan 山路愛山 (1864–1917), who wrote for the magazines of both Sohō and Iwamoto, continued the discussion in November 1890 in *Jogaku zasshi* with his “*Ren'ai*

22 The abandonment of the Boissonade code in November 1892 can be seen as the rejection, by the jurists, of the concept of the family built on the couple (Seizelet 2011, pp. 96–99).

23 An initial inventory of these debates has been drawn up by Morton (1999, pp. 299–301).

24 Tokutomi Sohō, “*Nihon fujin ron*” 日本婦人論, *Kokumin no tomo*, no. 5, 15.6.1887. “New wine is not put into old wineskins” (*atarashiki sake o furuki kawabukuro ni moru mono wa arazu*), said Sohō, repeating a parable attributed to Christ (Mark 2:22). Sohō had trained in Western studies, first at the School of Western Studies in Kumamoto, then at the mission school Dōshisha Eigakkō 同志社英学校 in Kyoto.

25 When he cannot do otherwise, he emphasizes rather the notions of “intimacy” (*jōkō* 情好, a quite rare word), “inclination,” or “mutual interest” (*iki* 意気). *Ai* is used only in the verb form *ai suru* “to love with respect,” and its object is more specifically an abstracted notion (i.e. humanity, progress, the truth, or virtue).

26 “*Risō no kajin*” 理想の佳人 (*The Ideal Beautiful lady*, as the original Japanese version has it), which was featured in Sasabuchi 1973, p. 13 *et seq.* Just as Sohō was apt to use Christian images, Iwamoto delved into classical culture: *kajin* refers to a poem by the famous literatus of the Song dynasty, Su Shi. When choosing how to write the word, Iwamoto carefully avoided the Chinese characters for a Japanese homonym that defines the woman as “the home person” (*kajin* 家人).

27 Mihalopoulos 2009 and 2011, Konuma 2011b.

28 *Kokumin no tomo* 1889; quoted by Morton 1999, p. 300.

no tetsugaku” 恋愛の哲学. Sohō retaliated in July 1891 with his provocatively titled piece “*Hiren'ai*” 非恋愛, in which he established a clear distinction between respectful love (*ai* 愛) and Western love (*ren'ai* 恋愛), the term chosen by Yamaji.²⁹ He set out his doubts as to the morality of this type of love, and questioned whether it conformed to the official ideology of the Meiji State. At a time when the nation was taking shape, the foundations of the marital relationship were seen as an issue of national importance.

Iwamoto promptly responded in August 1891 with “*Hiren'ai o hi to su*” 悲恋愛を非とす. This article laid the groundwork for the February 1892 publication in *Jogaku zasshi* of a text which, through its extreme idealization of love, had the greatest impact on reflections on Western love and Japanese customs throughout the twentieth century: “*Ensei shika to josei*” 厭世詩家と女性 by Kitamura Tōkoku (1868–1894).³⁰

The period from 1889 to 1892 was thus a kind of golden age for reflections on love, both for *Jogaku zasshi* and more generally for the Meiji era press.³¹ It was in this context that Iwamoto published in his journal “*Kon'in ron*” 婚姻論 (1891), an article that expounded his view of the couple, as well as he expounded his rhetoric.³²

4. “*Kon'in ron*”

“*Kon'in ron*” (given in English as “On Marriage”) comprised two installments, which are as different stylistically as they are in their perspective. The first installment, which was published on 11 July 1891, carries the intriguing subtitle “*Ikon hyakunen*” 遺恨百年 (“Two Pathetic Stories”).³³ In it Iwamoto tells the “true” stories of two “real” girls fighting against the arranged marriages set up by their parents.

The first girl belongs to a wealthy upper-class family from the country. Confined to her home, her only friend is *Jogaku zasshi*, thanks to which “she creates an image of the ideal gentleman and the ideal lady (*risō no shinshi*, *risō no kajin o omoi* 理想の紳士、理想の佳人を思ひ)” and “soon discovers the reasons for the coldness between the members of the Japanese family (“*Nihon no kazoku no reireitaru yuen o satori*” 「日本の家族」



English and Japanese contents of *Jogaku zasshi* 273, Meiji 24 (1891), July 11. (*Jogaku zasshi*, 16 volume facsimile. Rinsen Shoten, 1984.)

29 Regarding the building of this new concept of love, see Butel 2011; Suzuki 2010, pp. 8–10; Saeki 1999.
 30 I have discussed this text in Butel 2011. See also Moriyama 1986, pp. 201–226.
 31 Among the 189 issues of *Taiyō* published between 1895 and 1905, seventy six articles which discuss the topic of “love” (Morton 1999, pp. 294–95 and 325). It seems, however, that the most important were written between 1895 and 1897, and merely popularized the debates for which *Jogaku zasshi* was the crucible. The questioning initiated in journals and the press at the turn of the 1890s subsequently continued in other places and in other forms, notably in novels.
 32 *Kon'in ron* is one of the texts featured in *Meiji bungaku zenshū*; Sasabuchi 1973, pp. 31–39. A short analysis has been given by Suzuki 2005, pp. 363–65.
 33 *Jogaku zasshi* 273, pp. 1–6.

の冷々たる所以を舉り). (p. 1) One day, her elder sister's husband returns home in a state of excitement, and begins to confer with his wife and their mother. The setting is one of a happy and united family.

Each of them, the mother and the wife included, laughed and rejoiced. What new joy had landed on the roof of this already prosperous home? The mother called her youngest daughter over, sat her down in an unusually gentle manner and, unable to hide her smile, announced: "My girl, you are already approaching twenty eight years of age, it is high time you married and your mother, as she waited for the old man who unites lovers under the moon to appear, has been fretting and wondering what she was to do. But thank heavens, my prayer has been heard and a wonderful marriage proposal has come to us." (p. 1)

Through the voice of the mother, Iwamoto then enumerates the criteria for a good marriage according to the generation of the old Japan. Inevitably, the mother's arguments reveal a "family group" (*ie*) mentality.

Just listen: the wealth of that house (*sono ie* 其家) is in no way inferior to ours (*waga ie* 吾が家) and in fact exceeds it. The members of the family (*kazoku*) are not so many, the mother is not difficult and the son, a handsome man, will be twenty-five this year. He is said to be intelligent and modern. For our family (*waga ie*), concluding this marriage would mean being able to say that the riches of this country belong to the relatives [...]. Oh, how happy you will be! (pp. 1–2)

The happiness promised to the young girl is that of the entire household. Her parents, in particular her mother, are held responsible for it and, in their desire to do the best for their child, they stipulate the terms of her happiness. Unfortunately, the young girl already belongs to a new Japan inspired by Iwamoto and his journal. She is unable to accept the old way of doing things. Sad and at a loss, she confides in her older sister who reacts furiously, reminding her of the importance of the family precepts (*kakun* 家訓) that have been instilled in her from a young age and thanks to which the family, and with it the whole of society, is able to maintain order.³⁴

You must understand your limits! A woman must be capable of enduring. To think that on this earth a woman can be anything she likes simply by following her desires is terrifying! This is precisely what we learn as children from the family precepts, which teach us to limit our selfish desires. (p. 2)

Yet in the face of old world values a new voice rings out, both saddening and resolving the girl to choose a better path, one of an "ideal that shines like a dazzling light," at the expense of family considerations,

³⁴ For a discussion of the term *kakun*, see Galan et al., "Dire la 'famille' dans le Japon moderne et contemporain," in Galan and Lozerand 2011, pp. 589–627.

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.³⁵ Must one then destroy the order of the home (*ie o midasu* 家を乱す) in order to follow one’s own way? (p. 2)

The reasons for the girl’s refusal are two-fold. Before the family group now comes “society,” for whose benefit individuals have to work. To forget this change of scale from *ie* to *yo* 世 or *shakai* 社会 would be unacceptable.

The man from the family of which you speak (*ka no ie* 彼の家) leads a life of debauchery and likes to drink. He does not seek to offer his strength to the world (*yo no tame ni* 世の為に) but lives for his own affairs, and that for me is the first source of incompatibility. (p. 3)

However, in this new society, which focuses primarily on individuals and sweeps away the principles of that intermediary body between citizen and government that is the family, a new marital relationship must be established, one that commands mutual knowledge, love and respect.

Besides, I don’t know him and he has never laid eyes on me. Instead of considering a marriage in terms of the wealth of each family (*ie*), why not just take both fortunes and marry them! I want to serve someone I can love and respect (*keiai* 敬愛) [...]. And I want to meet someone who loves me (*ai*), insignificant as I am, but to marry me without having met me simply because of our families’ fortunes is not loving me. This cannot be the man I am waiting for. (p. 3)

The conflict between the two worlds, the old and the new, has begun: the girl runs away, is caught and refuses to touch her food until finally the marriage negotiations are broken off with tears and shame. For, as far as the family is concerned, “allowing a young woman to do as she pleases is a disgrace to ancestors and relatives (*shinseki* 親戚) alike.” (p. 3) It is interesting to note in the above translation that, although the girl desires “mutual love,” the words she chooses to express it convey an asymmetry in the relationship. More specifically, the nature of this love differs depending on the sex of the person. The woman has a “respectful love” (*keiai*) for her husband, who in turn cherishes and takes care of her (*ai*). This use of words could be seen as a continuation of an ancient usage and perfectly in line with the presumed mentality of a young woman of good breeding.³⁶ However, in Iwamoto’s case it is possible to see this fairly commonplace asymmetry as corresponding very specifically to Paul’s teaching that “each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must

35 These are the words Jesus used to describe his mission (Matthew 10:34–36 or Luke 12:51–53), quoting Micah (7:6) who fustigated the perversion of the members of a society in which struggles the just man. (Translation from the King James Version of the Bible.)

36 In fact, in fifteenth century Japan, the term *ai* applied only to the man’s relationship to the woman and indicated the protection by a “superior” of an “inferior.” See Butel 2007, pp. 107–119.

respect her husband.”³⁷ We will see that the author expresses his thoughts differently in the more theoretical part of his text.

To this first tale “which has already deeply moved many readers,” Iwamoto adds “a second true story.” (p. 4) This time the protagonist is a young servant and country girl who is “adorably simple and sincere,” a maid “in the home of one of the members of our magazine. [...] Her greatest pleasure consisted in listening to the family members discuss the right path.” Thus, “little by little the pure pearl began to shine, gradually she opened her ears to the noblest ideals and transformed herself.” (p. 4)

After a year of good service, the pearl receives a visit from her father, who Iwamoto describes as an honest man respected “by the villagers.” The father’s words are reported in a prose that, with evident pleasure, adopts a local flavor.

You are already eighteen, and once the tea has been poured it must be drunk or it will lose its flavor. In other words, the time has come for you to marry. In a neighboring village to ours is a remarkable man who previously worked as the village head. His son, Mr. So-and-so, is sharp and intelligent; he is very knowledgeable and may even go on to become the district head. “Having thought about it frankly, I believe one of your daughters might be suitable,” he told me, and he immediately asked for you. Will you not go and see him? (pp. 4–5)

To which the young servant replies, without the least regard for her father’s authority:

Father, I have listened to you carefully and I understand how important marriage is. This man has never met me, nor does he know what is on my mind. Why then does he want to take me as his wife? With a man who takes marriage so lightly the union would have little chance of lasting! (p. 5)

Iwamoto never directly criticizes patriarchal principles. Parents are not shown as authoritarian monsters who deny their children’s individuality. (The kindly peasant “left for the capital, his face gloomy, saying that really women were not easy creatures.” [p. 5]) Instead, Iwamoto points out the incompatibility between what sincere and responsible parents feel is their duty to do for their offspring and the principles on which young women, who belong to a modern nation and have studied the “right path,” are attempting to build their lives.

5. The Family and the Universe

Iwamoto goes on to describe his conception of the modern family in a second installment published two weeks after the first, on 25 July 1891. “*Kon’inron* (II)” carried the Japanese subtitle “*Tenchi shikai, fūfu, fubo*” 天地四海、夫婦、父母.³⁸ The tone of this text, which differs markedly from the previous one, reflects the theoretical and mystical viewpoint that is conveyed from the very first paragraph, which is devoted to a kind of “theory of the universe” and of the family at its center.

³⁷ Ephesians 5:21–33, for example.

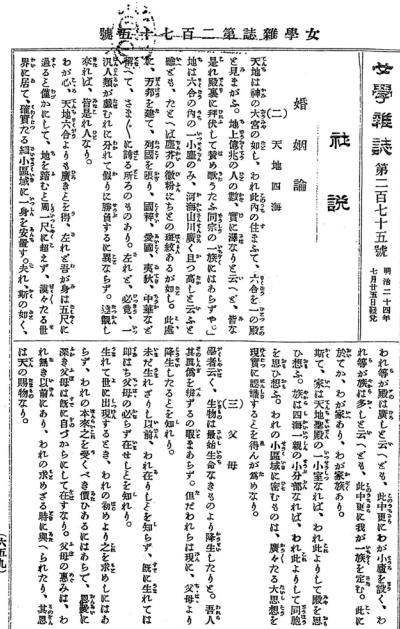
³⁸ The English title is given as “On Marriage (II).” *Jogaku zasshi* 275, pp. 1–5.

Heaven, earth and the four seas: the universe.

Heaven and earth are like the divine palace; I live there and the entire universe appears to me like a single temple. On the earth's surface there are many men but do they not form a single people, united by the same religion, singing praises as they bow down at the foot of the temple? [...] Yes, the palace is large but inside it I have built my little hut; there are many people but I have my kindred. At its heart are my household (*ie*) and the members of my family (*kazoku*). (p. 1)

Iwamoto then defines the relationship between a human being and their various relatives, beginning with their relationship with a mother and father, “sources of my life,” “preconditions of my existence.” The term chosen by Iwamoto to sum up the nature of this relationship is *on'ai* 恩愛, a “love” (*ai*) characterized by “gratitude” (*on*) for benefits received (p. 1). Next, he examines a man’s relationship with his siblings—brothers and sisters divided into older and younger. The crucial factor for Iwamoto is not gender, but the “hierarchical” relationship established by age: “The older siblings guide me, the younger ones copy me, they love (*ai*) me with respect by showing me their tenderness (*nasake* 情け).” (p. 2) Fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters are collectively thought of as “loved ones” (*aijin* 愛人) in accordance with a traditional understanding of the word which differs from recent Japanese usage.³⁹ Iwamoto also talks of “family” or “brotherly” love (*shin'ai* 親愛). It should be noted, and this will be very important later, that family members are said to be linked by strong bonds; but bonds for which they are not responsible. Their relationship is the result of destiny, or more precisely, heaven’s will.

Father, mother, brothers and sisters were brought together, unbeknownst to them, by heaven; they have their place in the vast universe, live in the same household and maintain that bond that is so very difficult to sever, so very difficult to destroy: the family bond of shared blood. [...] This is the household (*ie*). I was born of this group composed of parents and siblings, I am not distinct from it, I am part of it and together we form one body. (p. 2)



First page of “Kon'inron 2”: Heaven, Earth and the Four Seas, the Couple and Parents ; *Jogaku zasshi* 275, Meiji 24 (1891), July 25. (*Jogaku zasshi*, 16 volume facsimile. Rinsen Shoten, 1984.)

39 In contrast to Chinese, in which the word generally refers to the wife, *aijin* in Japanese usually indicates an unofficial relationship (the “lover”). On this, see Butel 2007.

This grand theory of the universe and the family lays the groundwork for the third part of the argument, which is entirely devoted to the married couple (*fūfu*). The unique nature of their bond is expressed in unambiguous terms: whereas parents are a “gift from heaven,” the spouse is the result of a choice for which no one but the individual himself is responsible.

The “spouse” (*tsuma* 「つま」) is a person I chose myself, in the beginning there was no connection between us.⁴⁰ I may be far from her or close to her but I hope that our spirits will join; my soul loves her in a rightful way and I am tied to her. This is the person my heart has chosen; though heaven permits it, the choice is mine, responsibility lies with me. (pp. 2–3)

For Iwamoto, the couple is thus an original creation that is not determined by destiny. This is an unusual stance to say the least.⁴¹ Yet it is rendered necessary by the importance he gives to the notion of responsibility. The relationship with the spouse is based on personal choice, freely consented to, reinforced by a profound feeling of being as one, and concluded with an oath.⁴² The term “responsibility” (*sekinin* 責任) is fundamental to Iwamoto’s highly dynamic conception of the modern couple. Shared between husband and wife, who are both equally responsible for their choice, it erases any differences between the sexes in terms of their standing. In fact, this concept of responsibility creates an equality that is unique in the social context. In Iwamoto’s eyes, marriage represents the only truly equal relationship.

There are absolutely no equals on earth. We respect our parents; our older brothers and sisters are our superiors; our younger brothers and sisters are smaller than us; we serve our lord; our vassals serve us. True friends are equal and this equality gives rise for the first time to a feeling of love that is not mingled with fear. That is why we want to be equal to our friends. [But this very desire proves that] there are truly no equals on this earth.

In these circumstances there are only married couples: husbands and wives are the only equals on earth and in heaven; marriage is the only place where it is possible to taste, for the first time, the true friendship (*makoto no yūjō* 真の友情) that is befitting between equals.⁴³

40 Iwamoto uses here *tsuma* (in hiragana), a word that generally referred to the wife, but could also even apply to the husband, or the lover, regardless of their gender. Since the writer is a male, I have chosen to translate it by she/her, but the Japanese original is ambiguous on purpose.

41 When Iwamoto declares (p. 3) that “the ‘spouse’ is a person to whom I am not bound in origin (*‘Tsuma’ wa moto to en naki no hito nari* 「つま」は元と縁なきの人なり, he goes against the general conception at that time of lovers being in fact bound together by destiny, often throughout several worlds. See Butel 2004.

42 *Ware mizukara erabite, kore to ishin ittai taramaku yakusoku seri* われ自ら撰びて、之と一身一体たらまく約束せり。

43 *Jogaku zasshi* 275, p. 3. A few lines later, explaining that shared thoughts are also based on shared belongings, in a view of the family that is strictly limited to the married couple itself, Iwamoto writes: “The only place where real communism (*kyōsan shugi* 共産主義) is practiced is the couple; only the husband and wife have a truly shared profit, only the husband and wife, and they alone, share profits and losses equally.” While studying love marriages in France, Maurice Daumas (2004, p. 99) noticed this emphasis placed on friendship in marriages from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Quoting Jean de Marconville (“There is no friendship in this world like marital friendship,” 1564), he comments: “‘Love-friendship’ is that sensible, temperate and moderate love that is recommended in a marriage. The entire culture of the early modern period—its taste for the middle ground, distrust of women, idolization of friendship and its lack of respect for marriage—runs along the same lines [...].”

This relationship makes marriage the most important and comprehensive of social ties. Here lies a second distinctive feature of relations between spouses:

Houses (*ie*) in which a spouse lives are the reflection of the human family (*jinrui no kazoku* 人類の家族). It is here that universal love (*hakuai* 博愛) is experienced.⁴⁴

The married couple is the primary venue for learning about true love in all its dimensions.

It is through our spouse that we are able to discover several aspects of Man's true destiny. We have love (*ai*) and we want to give it to her. We have strength (*chikara* 力) and we want it to serve her. We have a soul (*tamashii* 魂) and we want it to be in harmony with hers. (p. 4)

This parallel association reveals a progression from the sentimental side of love to the conduct it induces (self-giving), and then to its spiritual dimension (the soul). Here, Iwamoto is putting forward a fairly novel version of the first commandment of the canonical gospels (“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength”; Luke 10:27–28; Matthew 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–31), which he applies to the couple to describe the perfect “loving” relationship. The couple thus takes on an unrivalled importance: being part of a couple united by love is the prerequisite for attaining a higher state of humanity and becoming, as Iwamoto asserts in the final lines of this passage, a “fully-fledged member of society (*mattaki o etaru shakaijin* 完きを得たる社会人).”⁴⁵

Just as a bud fanned by the spring breeze opens, just as a fragrance warmed by the sultry air releases its scent, one day, by taking a husband or wife, we give birth to a feeling without limits and achieve our highest spiritual quality. Then, as we look at the world around us, we understand that it is not something devoid of warmth [as we previously feared] but that each man possesses the same sincerity [that we have experienced with our spouse]. Later we succeed in nurturing a feeling of universal and reciprocal love with the other people in this world, just like the husband with his wife and the wife with her husband. [...] The husband and wife are the only true friends, the only family (*kazoku*), the only fully-fledged members of society. It is through the marital bond that we can perceive the status, destiny and ideal of humanity.

6. Family and Love: Two Conflicting Modernities

Written at the height of discussions on the family, less than ten years before the legal debates were effectively brought to a temporary close by the promulgation of the 1898 Civil Code, “*Kon'in ron*” is a text that aims, through anecdote and theory, to put across the importance of creating a new template for the married couple in modern Japan. Two different social

⁴⁴ *Jogaku zasshi* 275, p. 4. Here Iwamoto uses a term taken from *The Classic of Filial Piety* (one of the Chinese classics attributed to Zeng Yi, a disciple of Confucius) which refers to a vast and egalitarian love—a “universal” love (<http://chinese.dsturgeon.net/text.pl?node=20992&if=en&en=on>, accessed in May 2010). An example of the modern use of the term *hakuai* is given in Kawana 2011, pp. 204–205.

⁴⁵ As testified at least by the two editions of *Minji kanrei ruishū* 民事慣例類集, 1877 and 1880, early known in English with the translation of John Henry Wigmore as *Law and Justice in Tokugawa Japan*. See Galan and Lozerand 2011, pp. 585–90.

environments are presented—a middle-class family in a provincial town and a family of prominent farmers. There are two different social groups in which the same family model is at work: that of the extended family (*ie*) characterized by the parental “arranging” of marriages. We know, however, that a wide variety of family types existed before the Meiji period.⁴⁶ Iwamoto reminds us that this variety seen in reality does not prevent the existence of an implicit model that wealthy families tended to adopt in their search for respectability. The best example of this model is undoubtedly the warrior family—the *ie*—which would serve as an idealized reference for advocates of the new Civil Code. Adopting a tone of regret rather than accusation, Iwamoto revealed the distress that can stem from the *ie* mentality. In doing so he was not fighting against a “traditional” and “bourgeois” ideal, contrary to appearances, but rather a model that the men in power were establishing *at that very moment*. His struggle was not that of a modernist against tradition, but rather of a moralist against certain features of impending modernity.

The crux of the problem, and what was unacceptable for Iwamoto, was the status accorded to free will and personal responsibility. Marriage and the creation of a new family must be a personal decision. Iwamoto was guided by his desire to establish equality, the most perfect example of which he claimed could only occur between the married couple. Freedom, and equality: Iwamoto belonged to that group of men fighting for a new social project just as the modern nation was equipping itself with the most efficient ever means of population control.⁴⁷ His utopia was built on one conviction: one must love and be loved.

However, the importance of love was such that it required a clear definition. Iwamoto took advantage of the extraordinarily rich vocabulary enjoyed by Meiji intellectuals to define each social relation, each human relationship by a specific type of love. There was respectful love for benefits received (*on'ai* 恩愛), which characterized the relationship between direct parents; and family love (*shin'ai* 親愛) and tenderness (*nasake* 情け) towards brothers and sisters. There was also the universal love (*bakuai* 博愛) of the married couple.

With this last term Iwamoto wanted to emphasize a non-hierarchical relationship. He thus carefully avoided more common words, actually used by one of the characters/figures in his text, which imply an asymmetrical vision of the husband-wife relation: *keiai* 敬愛, the respectful love felt by a wife for her husband, and *ai* which expresses, in its strictest sense, the protective love of a husband for his wife. This vocabulary, whose nuances of meaning are so difficult to grasp, speaks volumes: although Iwamoto’s viewpoint was clearly a Christian one, his conceptual tools were derived from Chinese thought. In reality, he employed a conceptual blend of Protestantism and Neo-Confucianism that was common to many thinkers during his time.⁴⁸ And there is no denying that a certain harmony exists between the two systems when it comes to morality and the rules of social interaction. In fact, it was undoubtedly on this point that the confirmed secularists of the Meiji period were able to acknowledge that “religion” had a not-insignificant role to play.

46 As testified at least by the two editions of *Minji kanrei ruishū* 民事慣例類集, 1877 and 1880, early known in English with the translation of John Henry Wigmore as *Law and Justice in Tokugawa Japan*. See Galan and Lozerand 2011, pp. 585–90.

47 That is, a register office system listing births, marriages and deaths, conscription, national education, office of statistics. Regarding health education and family hygiene, see Chemouilly 2011.

48 See Molony 2005. The translations of the specific Christian concepts made during the late Edo and Meiji period drew from the entire outfit of Sinicized vocabulary, even if one can note a progressive preference for words emanating from the Buddhist pot.

Iwamoto's viewpoint was Christian in that he demonstrated a profound understanding of what traditionally defined the Christian marriage: a special sacrament entailing consent between two protagonists, without the indispensable presence of an authority—even a religious one; a contract based on the four principles expressed in the following questions: Do you love each other? Is it of your own free will? Is it for life? Do you agree that your marital union will be a fertile one?⁴⁹ It is interesting to note at this point that while Iwamoto incorporated the first two questions into his reflection, and in fact the third one implicitly, he never touched upon the last question. This could be considered a characteristic of the debates of the new era. The couple so completely occupies the stage that little room is left to discuss the subject of children.⁵⁰

Iwamoto was not seeking a revolution. Perhaps his respect for social order was too great for that. Yet in fighting for a new family model based on equality between husband and wife, he laid the groundwork for the changes that Japan would undergo throughout the entire twentieth century. The debates that galvanized his journal would remain topical for many years: the “modern” family model established during the second half of the Meiji period with the Civil Code would later come to be seen as “traditional,” in particular after the Second World War, when the *ie* institution, which had been part of the imperial ideology, was banned from the Japanese constitution for being excessively “feudalistic.”⁵¹ Yet, it left little room for love, which was considered to be an exogenous factor difficult to understand. Iwamoto and those close to him represented another pole in the debate on the family. Their modernity competed with another, over which it would triumph a century later.

49 This has attracted much academic attention in France under the impetus of Georges Duby. It is assumed that the twelfth century marks a decisive change with the establishment of marriage as a relationship of consent between two people free of constraints, especially those of family.

50 Whenever the parent-child relationship was broached, Iwamoto always found himself taking the side of the child and not of the father. Such was the stance, perhaps, of these young men at the dawning of the modern era: sons undermining the authority of their fathers and still reluctant to consider their posterity.

51 Galan and Lozerand 2011, pp. 598–602.

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