

“BOYS BE AMBITIOUS!”: THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF WILLIAM SMITH CLARK
AND THE CREATION OF THE SAPPORO BAND

By

Christy Anne Czerwien

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This thesis was presented

by

Christy Anne Czerwien

It was defended on

June 29, 2011

and approved by

Dr. Richard Smethurst, UCIS Research Professor, Department of History

Dr. William Crawford, Adjunct Associate Professor, EALL and Katz School of Business

Dr. Clark Chilson, Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies

Thesis Director: Dr. Richard Smethurst, UCIS Research Professor, Department of History

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Christy Anne Czerwien, M.A.

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In 1877, an American educator named William Smith Clark began his one year contract with the Meiji government to head a new agricultural college in Sapporo, Hokkaido. While there, he taught the basics of Christianity to his Japanese students under the guise of moral education. This paper seeks to understand the religious and moral philosophy that was absorbed by the students at Sapporo Agricultural College and how this laid the foundation for two prominent Japanese Christian intellectuals who came out of the “Sapporo Band”: Uchimura Kanzô and Nitobe Inazô. In order to accomplish this, this thesis first examines William Clark’s educational and religious views as influenced by his background, followed by a discussion of what Christian-related activities took place at Sapporo Agricultural College before and immediately after Clark’s departure. In the last chapter, the religious elements that were taken away by students like Nitobe and Uchimura from their Sapporo experience will be examined. Such an exercise will show that they and other graduates shared the basic elements of a Christianity run by laymen, with an emphasis on Bible study and a disregard for ecclesiasticism and denominationalism, as well as the addition of a spiritual lineage that they traced to William Smith Clark. Sapporo graduates also adopted a philosophical system that encouraged the development of self-cultivation and independence of thought not unlike that of certain Neo-Confucian schools.

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PREFACE

I could not have completed or finished this degree without the aid and support of many individuals. I would like to thank my parents, as well as other members of my family who encouraged and supported me throughout the years. This work is dedicated to them. I would also like to thank all of my professors from the history department at West Texas A&M University, who taught me to love and appreciate the study of history. I would in particular like to thank my former advisor, Dr. Paul Clark, as well as Dr. Elizabeth Clark and Dr. Bruce Brasington.

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A few notes on this work: Japanese names are presented in the traditional, Japanese style, with the family names first and the given names last.

I. Introduction

A group of young boys, ranging in ages from seventeen to twenty, crowded into the recitation hall of their small, rural college. While white Sapporo snow fell outside, the young Japanese boys, who were new converts to the Christian faith, came together on Christmas Eve to celebrate the upcoming Christmas feast. A large effigy of a red Daruma stood in the corner of the room. As the young friends watched, a pair of legs and arms suddenly shot out of the large doll. Before the party had begun, one of the upper classman had thought it would be quite the joke to roll himself into the Buddhist effigy. As he danced around to the delight of his friends, a second Daruma appeared. The second boy, also in on the joke, decided to pick a fight with the first “Daruma”. All of the boys laughed and cheered as an eighteen year old student named Uchimura Kanzō took it upon himself to referee the impromptu wrestling match. After the winner was concluded, Saitō Shosuke, the eldest and unofficial leader of the Christian boys at Sapporo Agricultural College, decided to dance for his fellows in nothing but a loincloth. After a long night of festivities, the group of friends, who also included Nitobe Inazō and Miyabe Kingo, woke the next morning on Christmas day. The then much more somber group of young men gathered together to pray and listen as one of their own lectured on the history of Christmas. Years later, an older and more mature Uchimura would wryly remark that “I heard up in New Orleans the Lent with its fastings and penance is preceded by carnivals of the wildest sort. Only we were not so indulgent as the Louisianians.”¹

Out of this enthusiastic group of young Christians would emerge two leaders of Japanese Christianity: Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō. Like most Protestant Christians in Meiji Japan, they were members of the well-educated elites of samurai descent. Members of what is now

¹ Uchimura Kanzo, How I Became a Christian: Out of My Diary, by a “Heathen Convert”, (Tokyo, Japan: Keiseisha, 1895; reprint 1968.)

known as the “Sapporo Band,” these two men were among several leading Japanese Christians who sought to define Christianity within the cultural framework of traditional Japanese ethics. During their time as boys coming of age in the relatively isolated town of Sapporo, Hokkaidō, they converted to the Christianity bequeathed them by William Smith Clark. Clark, one of the *oyatoi gaijin* who was hired by the Meiji government during its modernization efforts, came to Japan to head the new Sapporo Agricultural College in Hokkaidō (now the University of Hokkaidō). Although a layman, he taught Christianity to his students under the guise of “moral education”. After Clark returned to the United States, the students he left behind built on the foundation he’d laid for them. The first year class passed on the Christianity they’d learned to the following class of students. These students would go on to form the “Sapporo Band” upon graduation, one of three main branches of Protestant Christianity in Japan during the Meiji period.

The members of the Sapporo Band took the philosophy and Christianity of Clark and developed it in ways that were acceptable to them as Japanese. While doing so, they participated in the larger, national trend of adopting Western ideas and translating them into a more “Japanese” form. Like their countrymen, Japanese Christians struggled with how to maintain their Japanese identity even as they adopted foreign ideas. In the case of the Sapporo Band and other Christians, this struggle took place both internally and externally. As Japanese, they struggled internally as both individuals and as a Christian community to create an authentically “Japanese” Christianity that was distinct from Western Christianity. Externally, they were forced to respond to anti-Christian sentiment among their fellow Japanese, as well as denouncements from Japanese critics that Christians were unpatriotic. Several Japanese Christian leaders, such as Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō of the Sapporo Band and Uemura

Masahisa of the Yokohama Band, believed that Christianity was the fulfillment of the samurai ethical system known as “bushido.” Japanese Christianity, in their view, needed to be built upon bushido. Members of the “Sapporo Band” incorporated elements of the bushido ethic, as well as Confucian ideas of moral development, with the ideal of the Christian gentleman, as taught by Clark. The Christianity taught by William Smith Clark and then developed by the students of Sapporo Agricultural College in his absence, evolved into a Bible-centered Christianity that was run by laymen and espoused a disregard for ecclesiasticism and denominationalism.

Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō were two of the major Japanese Christian leaders that took part in the syncretism of Western Christianity and traditional Japanese ethics. In order to understand how they fused these two elements together, it is necessary to first understand William Smith Clark and the Christianity he taught to his students. By understanding this, we can better see how the Sapporo Band Christians maintained a spiritual lineage that they traced back to Clark even as they adapted his Christianity into forms that they believed to be more Japanese. In order to trace the evolution of the Sapporo Band’s Christianity, I will first review the major English sources on William Smith Clark and the Sapporo Band. In the second chapter I will briefly review the state of Japanese religion in 1877 for purposes of context, American moral education in the nineteenth century, and Clark’s personal history. The third chapter will focus on Sapporo Agricultural College, from its establishment, to Clark’s activities there, and Christianity as it was practiced at the college after his departure. Chapter four will focus on the Sapporo Band. I will briefly discuss the establishment of the Sapporo Independent Church by SAC graduates, and then examine the similarities that Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō shared in common in terms of practice and belief. I hope to show the philosophical debt that these two

men owed Clark, as well as how they further developed their Christianity to better reflect their national identities.

II: Western Historiography of William Smith Clark and the Sapporo Band

William Smith Clark (1826-1886), as has been pointed out in the existing English literature on him, is famous in Japan but is virtually unknown in the country of his birth. Born the son of a country doctor, Clark attended Williston Seminary as a child, and then Amherst College, and August Georgia University in Germany as a young adult. Teaching first at Amherst College as a professor and serving as an officer during the American Civil War, Clark became better known as the first president and administrator of Massachusetts Agricultural College and Sapporo Agricultural College. While in Japan, Clark began what would become known as the Sapporo Band.

Historical biographies of Clark have focused primarily on his activities in Japan, especially on his contribution the introduction of modern, American style agriculture into Hokkaidō as well as his secondary activities as a Christian missionary. Most of the existing scholarship on Clark up to this point has been in Japanese. What are examined below are the few important English language studies, with some notes on Yuzo Ota's Japanese biography. The four works to be reviewed here are John Maki's William Smith Clark: A Yankee in Hokkaidō, Fumiko Fujita's American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier: American Experts in Nineteenth-Century Japan, George Oshiro's "Nitobe Inazō and the Sapporo Band: Reflections on the Dawn of Protestant Christianity in Early Meiji Japan," and Hiroko Willcock's "Traditional Learning, Western Thought, and the Sapporo Agricultural College: A Case Study of Acculturation in Early Meiji Japan"

Prior to John Maki's biography of Clark, very little scholarship had been done on Clark outside of Japan. In the author's own words, he sought to fill a gap in both English and Japanese scholarship. For his biography, Maki used material in the possession of the University of

Hokkaidō, which had previously not been accessed by English speaking researchers, and a collection of letters written by Clark that were given to the University of Massachusetts in the 1970s by the widow of Clark's grandson. These letters, in turn, had been unavailable to Japanese researchers. Maki additionally sought to correct what he saw as the primarily hagiographical bent of Japanese research on William Smith Clark. In Maki's biography, Clark is a charismatic administrator and professor, but is also a man who struggled with financial matters and ended up broke at the end of his life after a failed attempt at entering the mining business.

A Yankee in Hokkaidō is the first English biography of Clark, and according to John Howes from the University of British Columbia, it is one of two seminal biographies that have been written on Clark.² The other, Yuzo Ota's Kuraaku no ichinen: Sapporo Nōgakkō shodai kyōtō no Nihon taiken (The Japanese Experience of William S. Clark, the First President of Sapporo Agricultural College), was published about the same time as Maki's initial manuscript. A Yankee in Hokkaidō was originally published by the University of Hokkaidō Press in 1978 (in Japanese) before the original English manuscript was published in 1996. Ota's biography was published in 1979.

Maki's biography covers the entirety of Clark's life, not just his years in Japan. The author seeks to understand the roots of Clark's missionary work in Japan. His conclusion is that other than a conversion experience he claimed to have had while a college student at Amherst, there was no indication that Clark was interested in missionary work more than any other typical New England Protestant man. Maki additionally makes a point of correcting an error made by previous Japanese researchers. It had been assumed that Clark had purchased fifty Bibles from Dr. Luther Gulick, an American missionary, with the intention of teaching Christianity to his

² John F. Howes, "Review" *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 3, (Chicago University Press: June 1980), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1855063>, 695.

students even before he arrived in Sapporo. Maki, as well as Yuzo Ota, both confirmed that Gulick had given thirty Bibles to Clark and had asked him to distribute them to his students in Hokkaidō. Contrary to the first view of Clark intending to preach Christianity from the very beginning, Gulick may have been the impetus to Clark becoming a missionary. John Howes also points out in his review of the two biographies that according to earlier hagiographies, Clark had forced Kuroda Kiyotaka to allow him to use the Bibles in the classroom. Maki (and Ota, according to Howes) dismiss this and argue that since Kuroda wanted ethics to be taught at the college anyway, he was amenable to Clark using the Bibles as a “secular” text after some persuasion. Maki seems more inclined to credit Clark’s initial desire to teach Christianity as a system of moral ethics to Gulick and Kuroda, as Clark didn’t leave any record of his possible plans to teach the religion at the college.

As extensive and well researched as the Maki biography is, it is in some ways limited by the fact that it is a biography. There is little information on the students who studied under Clark at Sapporo Agricultural College (SAC) and Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC) or on the three American professors who taught in Sapporo. These are not critiques of the book, as these factors lie outside of the parameters of the study. It is important to note that the author is concerned with Clark’s life and on the life experiences that shaped him. In the biography itself, Maki has done an excellent job of constructing a narrative of Clark’s formative years, whether as an impressionable young man at a college known for producing pastors, or as a graduate student in Germany. This especially provides possible insight into Clark’s educational and philosophical pedagogy.

Maki’s intention is to discover why Clark was an influential force on his students, but is limited by the fact that he only looks at Clark and not at whatever role the other American

professors may have had, or even at why the students themselves were receptive to a new, foreign religion that had so recently been banned by the government.³ Maki also does not discuss the activities of Clark in relation to the two other major branches of Protestant Christianity in Japan: the Yokohama and Kumamoto bands (the Sapporo band becoming the third) or the Christian activities that took place at SAC after he returned to the United States. These are important limitations to note when reading the biography, but again, one must not let this detract from the valuable resources that Maki has gathered together.

George Oshiro's article is not focused on SAC or Clark, but rather on the origins of Nitobe Inazō's Christian faith. Oshiro believes that even though Nitobe had some prior exposure to Christianity, it was the religious atmosphere of Sapporo Agricultural College that finally converted him to Christianity. Both Nitobe and his classmate Uchimura Kanzō, members of the second class of SAC, converted while at the college. Pressured by the first year class, the two young men and their friend Miyabe Kingo signed the "Covenant of Believers in Jesus." While Uchimura had resisted signing the document (and confessing in his memoirs to later becoming thankful for it), Oshiro notes that Nitobe's signature was at the top of the page of signatures. Prior to his entry into the college, Nitobe had already expressed some curiosity about Christianity. One example of this was when he used his portion of a monetary gift given to his family by the Meiji emperor to buy a Bible in 1876.⁴ The author theorizes that he probably didn't put up as much of a fight as Uchimura in becoming a Christian. Although this article doesn't focus much on Clark per se, it does provide more detailed information on the Christian activities of the students themselves. Oshiro utilizes Nitobe's writings from the Nitobe Inazō

³ For further information on the openness of former samurai to Christianity, Irwin Scheiner's study on the Kumamoto Band is informative. Irwin Scheiner, Christian Converts and Social Protest in Meiji Japan, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970).

⁴ George Oshiro, "Nitobe Inazo and the Sapporo Band: Reflections on the Dawn of Protestant Christianity in Early Meiji Japan," 108.

Zenshū, Uchimura's Out of My Diary, and Maki's biography, which provide much of the information on Nitobe's days as a college student in Sapporo.

In regards to why Clark decided to teach Christianity, Oshiro points to an incident that was not mentioned by Maki. Clark apparently stopped at Hawai'i on the way to Japan and met with his wife's biological father, William Richardson, who was part of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions's Christian missionary group to Hawai'i. Oshiro believes that Clark's encounter with his father-in-law may have motivated him to become a missionary in Japan. In addition to information on Clark, the author provides a brief background on the Yokohama and Kumamoto bands of Christianity and notes that in contrast to the two other groups, the Sapporo band had been relatively isolated from foreign missionaries, which had influenced the independent, non-denominational movement that developed there.

In American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier, Fujita is interested in the cultural interaction between the American *oyatoi gaijin* employed by the *Kaitakushi* in Hokkaidō and the Japanese as they worked to develop Japan's "frontier". In particular, she examines the key figures of Horace Capron, Benjamin Smith Lyman, Henry S. Munroe, Edwin Dun, William Smith Clark, and the three other American professors who taught at Sapporo Agricultural College. Kuroda Kiyotaka is also discussed at some length, as the author is just as interested in the Japanese response as the American one. In the preface, Fujita poses the following questions: "What kind of cultural values did they carry to Japan? What sort of experiences did they have there? What did they think about Japan, about their own country, and about the mission to transplant Western techniques and practices in an alien soil? What was the impact of their

Japanese experience upon them? And how were they viewed by the Japanese? “⁵ It is these questions that she attempts to address within the text. The author is careful to note that the experience and attitudes of the Americans were not the same, and varied based upon background and personality.

Fujita provides a basic historical background of the Meiji government’s modernization efforts, particularly in regards to Hokkaidō. Of great interest to the historian is the appendix she has added to the back, which contains the names, ages, educational background, and positions held of all the Americans that were employed by the *Kaitakushi* in Hokkaidō. The fifth chapter is devoted to William Smith Clark’s work at Sapporo. In regards to Clark’s biography, the author provides no new details that can’t be found in Maki’s biography, which she utilized as one of her sources. Fujita credits Clark’s success as a Christian missionary to his charismatic personality, his willingness to work with the indigenous culture, and the various strategies he utilized (for example, the Covenant of Believers in Jesus).

An element of this book that the other reviewed texts lack is that she also briefly reviews the careers of Clark’s assistants (and later presidents of SAC): William Wheeler, William Brooks, and David Pierce Penhallow. Fujita also provides a brief historiography of Japanese scholarship on Clark, including the memoir dictated by a former student of Clark’s named Oshima Masatake to his son. This historiography is hardly extensive, as only three pages were devoted to it. It does, however, provide the reader with some understanding of the Japanese sources that have usually been utilized by scholars.

⁵ Fumiko Fujita, *American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier: American Experts in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, (Wesport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), x.

In the final article, Hiroko Willcock looks not at Clark or any of the American professors, with the exception of William Wheeler, but rather at the Japanese side. According to the author, the Japanese during the Meiji period were receptive to new, Western ideas only to the extent that they found similarities within their own traditions. In order to examine this, Willcock uses SAC as a case study of the interactions between East and West during this time period. “A study of their interaction suggests that it was the affinities the Japanese found between Japanese syncretic, revisionist, thought development and values of different cultures that formed the foundation for successful assimilation of elements of Western culture, a process that also helped the Japanese to reinvestigate and remould their own cultural tradition.”⁶ Willcock uses a similar framework to the one that Mark Mullins uses in Christianity: Made in Japan, in which he examines the syncretism of Christianity and Japanese religious beliefs.

Willcock examines Clark’s educational philosophy of self-cultivation. She does not limit herself to examining only the explicit Christian aspects of Clark’s teachings. Clark, although informed by his Christian background, believed that the strength of a nation depended not upon the strength of its technology, but rather on the moral and mental qualities of its people. As an educator, Clark also believed that physical conditioning was necessary to condition the mind, which in turn would help to strengthen one’s moral qualities. As such, the curriculum of SAC included hours devoted to moral education, scientific expeditions, and military drill. This curriculum was maintained for a few years after his departure. For Clark, developing inner morality, intellect, and the body were all equally important. He stressed that his students behave like gentlemen and learn to self-regulate themselves, rather than be forced into correct behavior through a system of rules and punishments. According to the author, the students readily

⁶ Hiroko Willcock, “Traditional Learning, Western Thought, and the Sapporo Agricultural College: A Case Study of Acculturation in Early Meiji Japan,” *Modern Asian Studies* 34,4, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 993, (online database), Academic Search Complete, 977.

accepted Clark's philosophy because there were similarities between it and certain Japanese neo-Confucian schools. The rest of the article is then spent on establishing a link between Clark and the philosophy of John Locke, and between the students of Sapporo Agricultural College and the Confucian Yang Wangming and the Xu Zhi schools.

Willcock sees the interaction at Sapporo Agricultural College as syncretic in nature. The previous three studies of SAC and Clark had focused primarily on Clark's personality as the main factor of his success as an educator. As the author makes clear, the Japanese students weren't blank slates. They were impressionable, intelligent young men of primarily samurai background who had been raised in a Confucian education system. The Meiji Restoration, however, had abolished the samurai class and removed their institutional basis of power. Irwin Scheiner theorizes in his study on the Kumamoto Band that the alienation of the samurai class, particularly those on the losing side of the civil war, was one impetus for many of them to be open to Christianity. As dynamic as Clark was as an educator, a leader, and a missionary, the students were also receptive to him because of similarities they perceived between Christianity and Confucianism, as well as the changing societal and political climate that had erased the samurai class's traditional social structure.

Willcock also believes that not enough credit has been given to William Wheeler for carrying on Clark's educational philosophy while Wheeler was president of the college. She notes that even though the Japanese students didn't seem to have connected with Wheeler on a personal level as they had with Clark, Wheeler had his own beliefs regarding the importance of moral cultivation. Unlike Clark, who seems to have been rather open to indigenous beliefs, Wheeler had a negative view of Confucianism and believed that it had stunted the intellectual growth of the Japanese. "While the SAC was greatly indebted to Clark's extraordinary ability

and calibre, Wheeler's contribution was equally vital in instilling in his students the right to independent thought and hammering into them appropriate skills for the undiluted application of Western value systems, which he identified as the essential element for the true progress of the modern Japanese nation."⁷ In his view, the Western tradition of scientific inquiry and moral development was superior to Japanese traditions. Wheeler, who succeeded Clark as president of SAC from 1877-1879, continued Clark's original pedagogy with little changes during his term.

Although Ota's biography is the other important work done on Clark, it is surprising that none of the reviewed studies have used it as a source. It is understandable that Maki didn't utilize it, as he published his own biography a mere year before Ota published his. George Oshiro refers to a different study by Ota, Taiheiyō no hashi toshite no Nitobe Inazō, but not the biography. Of the four texts reviewed, only Hiroko Willcock attempts to put the development of the Sapporo band of Protestant Christianity into some context. She examines the philosophical heritage of John Locke in the United States and how that may have influenced Clark's own ideas. While Maki does conclude that the atmosphere of Amherst College and even Augusta Georgia University in Germany helped to shape Clark, there is little or no examination of contemporary American ideas concerning moral cultivation and how it might also have shaped Clark's own philosophy. Willcock also sees SAC as a part of a trend of interaction between the philosophical traditions of Japan and the West, rather than as a unique case that only took place in Sapporo.

⁷ Ibid 1010.

III: Background

Religion in 1877 Japan

When Clark arrived in Hakodate in 1877, Japan was in the midst of religious upheaval. Although proscription boards prohibiting Christianity had been taken down in 1873, the religion wouldn't officially become legal until the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. Anti-Christian sentiment was still common. Despite this, missionaries from Europe and North America flocked to Japan and established churches and schools. Christian missionaries were particularly important in establishing schools for women and young girls. Helen Ballhatchet notes, as Irwin Scheiner has, that because Christianity was identified with Western civilization, it was attractive to many Japanese, especially ex-samurai from domains that had been on the “wrong” side of the Meiji Restoration.⁸ Christianity opened up doors of opportunities to converts, of whom many were highly literate and concentrated in urban areas. Even though there was a rapid growth in the number of converts from the late 1870s to the early 1880s⁹, converts continued to face suspicion and opposition from non-Christians.

Buddhism had additionally been under attack for being an outdated, foreign religion that was an economic drain on the government; it was criticized for having no relevance to the new Japan.¹⁰ Buddhist attacks on Christianity perhaps came from a doctrinally based standpoint, but it also as a strategy to fight the perceptions of itself being against the interests of the Japan. Since the Tokugawa period, Shinto and Confucian scholars had decried Buddhism as a corrupt religion. Faced with growing opposition from other traditionally “Japanese” religious and philosophical traditions, rising Christian influence was deemed as a threat from an already

⁸ Helen Ballhatchet, “The Modern Missionary Movement in Japan: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox,” Handbook of Christianity in Japan, (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2003), 37.

⁹ Ballhatchet, 37.

¹⁰ For more information on the subject, James Ketelaar’s Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990) is an excellent source.

beleaguered Buddhism.¹¹ Under the state policy of *shinbutsu bunri* (the separation of buddhas and kami), the Meiji government forced apart the ‘two’ religions of Buddhism and Shinto that had become syncretized over the centuries. In an effort to defend themselves, Buddhists were forced to remake their religion to be modern and relevant to Japanese nationalism.

Confucianism was initially rejected during the Meiji period, but later experienced a revival as part of opposition to Westernization. During this time, the new government was carefully creating State Shinto, based primarily on the imperial family’s deities, as a nationalistic tool to unify the nation. Shinto was constructed as a “civil” institution rather than as a religion. This nationalistic tool came to be so pervasive that to not worship the kami was considered unpatriotic. When Uchimura Kanzō, a graduate of Sapporo Agricultural College and a founding member of the Sapporo Band, failed to adequately give honor to the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890, he was decried nationwide as an unpatriotic traitor. Although Uchimura considered himself a patriot, he struggled with the problem that many Japanese Christians faced: whether or not venerating the emperor or objects associated with him were against the teachings of Christianity.¹² Unsure, Uchimura decided to give a simple nod to the Rescript, rather than bow. His “lack of respect” sparked a fire storm of criticism.

It is notable that the tiny agricultural college in Sapporo was largely isolated from the atmosphere of religious conflict taking place further south. Kuroda Kiyotaka’s initial hesitancy to allow Clark to teach Christianity as a form of moral ethics, and his final acceptance of it, can perhaps be understood by both the geographical location of Sapporo, and the Meiji government’s involvement in dictating religion and its practice. As the college was in a remote area and

¹¹ Additional information can be found in Notto R. Thelle, Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987).

¹² John Howes, Japan’s Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo, 1861-1930, (Toronto: UBC Press, 2005), 73.

Christianity was no longer technically illegal, perhaps Kuroda concluded that there would be no official rebuke if the Bible was used as a secular text on ethics. More about Kuroda's and Clark's argument concerning the Bible will be discussed later.

As for Christian activities, Sapporo itself had only two active missionaries. An American Methodist missionary named M.C. (Merriman Colbert) Harris, who lived one hundred miles away in Hakodate, was responsible for baptizing many members of the Sapporo band. Only one other Western missionary lived near the college. Separated from the bulk of missionary activities taking place further south in Honshu, the boys of the Sapporo band had little connection with the intricacies of Western Christian practice and culture. Classmates Uchimura Kanzō and Miyabe Kingo only learned of such customs like praying before meals after they took a trip to Tokyo during a summer break. This had previously been unknown to the Christian students in Sapporo.

Moral Education in Nineteenth Century America

Moral education was an important concern for nineteenth century Americans, whether Protestant or Catholic. The purpose of it was to teach students, normally still children, virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for one another. It was deemed necessary for individuals to develop a strong moral code that would allow them to live good lives and become productive members of their communities. Many Americans during this time period believed that moral education was necessary to build a strong, cohesive society. This same sentiment would later be shared by the Meiji government as it struggled with the task of creating Japanese citizens and a modern nation-state. While there would be different approaches between the two countries regarding what kind of moral education to teach and how to teach it, there were also remarkably

similar views on the need to combat the perceived threat of moral decay and to create a united citizenry.

The societal desire to instill moral virtues into children can be seen in any society. However, desired moral virtues may change depending up the location one is geographically and temporally. Within the United States, there was a shift in moral education between the colonial period and the mid-to-late nineteenth century of William Clark's own time. Formal education during the colonial period had a strong religious element; however, moral education during this time period was more sectarian than that of the nineteenth century. Schools in the United States prior to and immediately after the Revolutionary War were tied to specific denominational churches and featured more doctrinally based moral instruction. As the decades passed after the Revolutionary War, moral education in public schools became progressively more interdenominational, at least in the Protestant sense. American Catholics created their own school system separate from that of the Protestant schools, partially due to anti-Catholic bias and partially to prevent their children from being led astray from the Catholic faith. Horace Mann, who became a leading spokesman for the establishment of a public school system, was convinced that moral education needed to be part of a common curriculum.

The Jacksonian period of American history experienced perceived social problems related to alcohol, crime, and poverty, which sparked social reform movements such as temperance crusades and anti-prostitution laws. There was also a large influx of immigrants during this time and reformers like Horace Mann envisioned the public school system as a social leveler, as students from different backgrounds would be in the same classroom. The classroom could be used to Americanize immigrant students. He also saw moral education as a way to

address the social ills of his time. Education could be used to create virtuous and patriotic citizens.

Historian Philip Greven has categorized the religious education during the colonial period into three groups: evangelical, genteel, and moderate. Of interest is the third group, which became the predominate group of thought that influenced educators like Clark.¹³ The moderate group believed in a compassionate God who recognized that all human beings had both good and evil within them. Rather than demand complete obedience to an authority figure, as the other two groups had, people in this category believed that the key to developing virtuous behavior was to establish internal controls such as reason, virtue, and piety. They believed in using affection, instruction, and discipline to teach children moral values and encouraged, rather than discouraged, their children to think and act independently. The learning style for moderates differed from the first group in that they believed that moral education was a life-long process that involved the community and extended kin. William Clark seems to have ascribed to this school of thought, as he also had encouraged his students to develop strong, internal controls.

Moral education between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, as well as after, became progressively more moderate. Societal changes gradually forced approaches to moral education to change and adjust to meet new challenges. Previously, familial and community institutions had taught children the morally correct ways to act through his or her life. However, economic changes, growth of commercial cities, and expansion into the western frontier led to changes in the social realm. Traditional social structures began to break down, which reduced societal control through traditional systems of extended kinships and sometimes even the nuclear family. Larger scale manufacturing began to replace smaller, family owned enterprises and

¹³ The secondary source that was utilized for nineteenth century American moral education was Edward McClellan, Schools and the Shaping of Character: Moral Education in America, 1607-Present, (Indiana University, Social Science Education and the Social Studies Development Center: ERIC-Clearinghouse for Social Studies, 1992).

people became more mobile than they had in prior years. Due to the likelihood that family members would live far away from their communities and by extension, the social institutions that had monitored moral behavior, steps needed to be taken to ensure that individuals would have a strong, internal value system. It came to be believed that the most crucial point in a person's life to develop good values and behavior was during childhood.

Because of this, it became necessary to use education to prepare children to live away from their families and home communities. In order to combat the lack of external restraints on social behavior, families and educators began to focus on developing strong internal controls. Families and schools came to be the most important educators of moral values. Whereas the task of monitoring a child's moral growth had fallen to the father, the mother came to be seen as the caretaker of morality and responsibility for educating her children fell to her instead of the father. Women were seen as naturally morally superior to men and it was thought that female teachers were preferential to male teachers for this reason. Protestant mothers and public schools paid less attention to theological doctrine and instead focused on teaching shared Christian values. Schools were to teach basic Christian values and not become involved in doctrinal disputes. Bible passages were read in schools; however there was a common practice not to comment upon it, so as not bring doctrine into the classroom. Public schools also encouraged prayer, hymn singing, and other religious exercises.

The instruction of doctrine was left to the denominational parochial school of each particular family. An interdenominational spirit infused moral education in Protestant public schools as well as in social reform movements. This allowed Protestant Americans to experience a level of social cohesion even as their doctrinal beliefs differed. Moral education was seen as important to developing diligent workers and responsible citizens of virtue. It was commonly

believed by many Americans in the nineteenth century that the key to having a good society was having virtuous citizens, rather than the government or political beliefs. In order to have a stable society, it was deemed necessary to teach American citizens Christian values. In her article on acculturation at Sapporo Agricultural College, Hiroko Willcock argued that Clark's educational philosophy was also influenced by John Locke (1632-1704). Locke, she notes, believed that experience was a necessary part of the educational process and was an effective means of imparting lessons. Therefore, models "of proper thought and behavior"¹⁴ were needed to teach students how to develop into cultivated men. Willcock adds, "Such a well-cultivated, virtuous gentleman would lead, and ensure the health of, society." That William Smith Clark would carry this idea with him to Japan and attempt to implement in the belief that Christianizing his Japanese students would lead to a better Japanese society is hardly surprising.

Elementary schools emphasized moral education to a greater extent than secondary schools and colleges, due to the belief that moral values had to be learned during childhood if they were to be retained. However, even institutions of higher education were influenced by Protestant moral values and were expected to supervise behavior of students and reinforce the moral lessons they had learned as children. Edward McClellan notes that American colleges during this time were often tied to specific religious denominations. Some, like Amherst College, were created primarily to train ministers and missionaries and thus had a strong emphasis on religious education. It was this particular college that would train the likes of William Smith Clark, Niijima Jō (also known as Joseph Nishima), founder of Dōshisha University in Japan, as well as other Japanese students such as Kanzō Uchimura. Clark, who would become a professor at Amherst College and later president of two colleges, took with him the Protestant idea of

¹⁴ Hiroko Willcock, 994.

developing a strong internal value system in his students and reinforcing it with religious activities. For him, moral education was inseparable from secular education.

Biography of William Smith Clark

William Smith Clark completed his higher education at Amherst College and Georgia Augusta University in Germany. He began his studies in Amherst in 1844 and apparently underwent an extremely deep religious experience in 1846.¹⁵ This experience was apparently noticed by the president of the college, who asked Clark's father in a letter if his son's new conviction in the faith was due to his parents' special prayers.¹⁶ Clark went on to graduate Phi Beta Kappa from Amherst College and pursued graduate studies at Georgia August University in Göttingen, Germany. Clark was the first Amherst graduate to "receive a doctorate in chemistry from a leading German university."¹⁷ Clark's time as a university student seem to have been greatly influential on his thoughts concerning secular and moral education.

Clark's education in Amherst and Göttingen were important for a number of reasons. Amherst College, which was founded by a Congregationalist, had a tradition of educating ministers and experienced "religious revivals" during Clark's days as a student. The college was "noted as being a mother of pastors"¹⁸ and the religious atmosphere was a routine part of college life. The curriculum also placed a strong emphasis on rhetoric and physical exercise, two things that William Clark excelled at. As a student, Clark became an excellent orator, developed an interest in science, and became convinced that physical exercise and military drilling were a necessary part of educating a truly learned person.

¹⁵ John M. Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaidō: The Life of William Smith Clark*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 22-23.

¹⁶ *ibid* 24.

¹⁷ Fumiko Fujita, *American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier: American Experts in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, (Wesport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 91.

¹⁸ Maki, 25.

It should be noted that in Congregationalism, churches are primarily autonomous, locally based congregations. It was only during Clark's lifetime that American Congregational churches began to establish themselves as a separate unified denomination, having avoided any such label prior to that point. The first national council was held in 1852 and afterwards the Congregational National Council was established as an official organization. Before this, churches hadn't been tied to an institution of any kind. Church members largely supported nondenominational Christian evangelical missions, rather than creating a sectarian one of their own.¹⁹

Ecclesiasticism, which is central to denominations such as the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, is deemphasized in Congregational practice. When Clark later set about teaching Christianity in Japan, he seems to have followed the form of religious practice he was familiar with.

When he was a graduate student, Clark became impressed by the high standard of German education. The young man was additionally impressed by the superior educational facilities present in German universities. However, despite his acknowledgement that German higher education surpassed that of American education, he believed that Germans were morally inferior to Americans. Clark, being a product of New England Protestantism, was shocked by how his German professors routinely did not observe the Sabbath. In the young man's view, these professors were "bad" Christians because they held dinners, made excursions, and studied on Sundays. "Clark was convinced that religion and learning should not be separated from each other."²⁰ The young man believed that the country which combined quality higher education and true spiritual learning would be the most advanced land. It perhaps doesn't need to be said that

¹⁹ Samuel C. Pearson, "From Church to Denomination: American Congregationalism in the Nineteenth Century," *Church History* 38, no. 1, (Cambridge University Press, March 1969), 67, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3160110>, accessed April 9, 2011.

²⁰ Fujita 91.

Clark believed this would happen first in America. Clark's belief in combining religious and secular education would have ramifications when he became a professor, and later a president of Massachusetts Agricultural College and Sapporo Agricultural College.

Clark's career prior to his presidency at SAC also deserves special mention, as it increasingly led him on the road to contact with the newly established Meiji government, as well as a close working relationship with Kuroda Kiyotaka (1840-1900). Following his graduation from Göttingen, Clark returned to teach chemistry at Amherst College. When the Civil War broke out, Clark enlisted and rose quickly in the ranks to become colonel. Impressed by his performance in the war, his superiors recommended him for the rank of Brigadier General, but Clark refused and chose instead to submit his resignation. For the rest of his life, Clark was known as Colonel Clark by his contemporaries and often delighted in entertaining both his American and Japanese students with war stories. His war experience also reinforced his belief that military training needed to be required of all university students. Clark would additionally develop an admiration of Kuroda as a self-made military man and the two men seemed to have connected on a personal level through their past military experience.

Following the Civil War, Clark resumed teaching at Amherst and at some point taught Joseph Hardy Nijima, the founder of Dōshisha University and (probably with the exception of Uchimura Kanzō) the most famous of Amherst's Japanese alumni. It is unknown precisely when Clark taught him, except that it was not long before he left to become the president of the newly established Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC) in 1867. Clark often referred to Nijima as his 'first Japanese student' and the two men maintained correspondence for a number of years. During Clark's stay in Japan, Nijima gave Clark a tour of Dōshisha University before he returned home. Clark presumably had stopped in Kyoto to renew contact with his former student

before leaving Japan. In the two men's ensuing correspondence, Clark encouraged Nijima's work with Dōshisha and promised to find books and other necessities for the school. In 1870, Nijima had also donated one hundred Japanese seeds to Massachusetts Agricultural College. The two men maintained a correspondence over the years, some of which can be found in the University of Massachusetts's *William Smith Clark* collection.

Several Japanese students additionally studied under Clark at the University of Massachusetts. One of these students was a young man named Naitō Seitarō, who would later serve as Clark's interpreter in Sapporo. In 1869, Mori Arinori had taken Naitō under his wing and began to supervise his education. Mori wanted to have his young protégé study at a quality educational institution and Horace Capron recommended MAC. Horace Capron (1804-1885), an agriculturalist, had been hired by the *Kaitakushi* prior to Clark to work as an advisor for the development of Hokkaidō. Naitō stayed at MAC nearly three years before returning home. Upon his return to Japan, he was adopted by the Hori family and became known as Hori Seitarō. Other Japanese students at MAC that started the same year as Naitō were Yuchi Giemon and Nomura Ichisuke, both from Kagoshima and Yamao Inataro from Edo. Japanese students that came to MAC the following year were Uesugi "Tall" Katsuyoshi of Edo and Nakashima Masanojo of Chōshū.

During Naitō's stay at Massachusetts Agricultural College, Mori Arinori visited him in 1872. Four years prior to leaving for Japan, Clark gave Mori a tour of the college campus. Mori was apparently impressed by the sight of students engaging in military drill. "Immediately struck by the scene, Mori turned to Clark, exclaiming 'That is the kind of institution Japan must, that is what we need, an institution that shall teach young men to feed themselves and to defend

themselves.”²¹ When the Japanese government began deliberating the establishment of a new agricultural college, it was Massachusetts Agricultural College that came to mind. Not only had Mori Arinori been favorably impressed by the combination of education in agricultural, industrial arts, and military tactics, but Clark would also be recommended by Horace Capron (1804-1885). Capron, a former Commissioner in the Department of Agriculture, was the chief foreign advisor to the *Kaitakushi*. During his employment under the Japanese government, Horace Capron advised the *Kaitakushi* and played a key role in the development of Hokkaidō.

The Road to Sapporo

The impetus for the establishment of an agricultural college in Sapporo was tied to the Meiji government’s interest in developing its northern most main island. Hokkaidō had a small Japanese population as of 1868, 58,000 Japanese according to Fujita, most of whom lived along the coast.²² There was also a population of about 15,000 Ainu living in Hokkaidō. The island itself had “officially” been under Japanese control since the Tokugawa period and was held as a fief by the Matsumae family. Then called Ezo, Hokkaidō only began to be developed during the Meiji period for both economic and strategic reasons: it was potentially good agriculture land, but was also threatened by the possibility of Russian occupation. Kuroda Kiyotaka, who headed the colonization office for Hokkadō (in Japanese, the *Kaitakushi*), suggested the establishment of a college to educate young men who could live in Hokkaidō to work for the *Kaitakushi*.

Clark signed a one year contract with Yoshida Kiyonari, the Japanese Minister to Washington, in March 1876 to head the new agricultural college. As president, he was given the annual salary of \$7,200 as part of his contract. Birdsey G. Northrop, the Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Education, worked as the go-between for Clark and the Japanese

²¹ Maki 124.

²² Fumiko Fujita, *American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier*, 1.

government. Northrup had his own ties with the Meiji government, as Mori Arinori had sometimes turned to him for advice. Northrup had also taken charge of six young Japanese girls who had been brought to the United States during the Iwakura Mission in order to receive a Western education. In addition to Clark, the *Kaitakushi* hired two American professors: William Wheeler and David Pearce Penhallow, who were recent graduates of MAC. A year later, shortly before Clark returned to the United States, a third MAC graduate, William Brooks, was hired as a professor; he would stay the longest of the American educators. After initially signing a three year contract with the Japanese government, Brooks would spend twelve years in Sapporo as the acting president of Sapporo Agricultural College, following Penhallow's departure as president.

Interestingly, Clark's contract hired him as the assistant director and a professor of the college. There was no equivalent word at the time in Japanese for college president, so Clark inserted the word "President" into his contract, which was initialed by Yoshida Kiyonari. A compromise had been worked out, as Clark wouldn't accept anything less than the presidency. However, the Meiji government wanted Clark answerable to a Japanese authority. Zusho (often spelled as Dzusho) Hirotake was given the title of director, with Clark as his assistant and Clark was allowed to keep the title of president. The energetic fifty-year old immediately set to working on the new college. "Clark, who understood his mission was essentially 'rebuilding M.A.C. with variations and possibly some improvements,' soon introduced a curriculum similar to that of M.A.C., including such unique programs as manual labor on the farm, scientific excursions, and military drill."²³ Clark additionally pushed the *Kaitakushi* to provide additional facilities for the college, such as a chemical laboratory and a barn.

However, neither Clark nor Kuroda Kiyotaka was satisfied with the lack of moral education. By the time Clark arrived in Japan, he was already convinced that education should

²³ Fujita 97.

combine moral and practical training. On the boat ride from Tokyo up to Hakodate, Kuroda had become angered at the sight of students cavorting with and chasing after women. John Howes gives a slightly different version of this encounter in his biography of Uchimura. According to Howes, Kuroda became angered after the boys complained that the female passengers had been given better berthing space.²⁴ Regardless of whatever impropriety that Kuroda had been convinced of, he nearly had the young men kicked out of the college even before they had entered. After persuasion from his aides, he apparently changed his mind. Kuroda became convinced that moral education had to be a part of the curriculum at Sapporo Agricultural College.

Clark and Kuroda disagreed about how the subject was to be taught. The American professor insisted that he needed to use the Bible in order to teach moral education. Clark left the following account in a letter home to his family:

I have succeeded in doing what I intended and introduced the Bible as a text-book, although it is forbidden in and excluded from all other government institutions. The missionaries and others said it could not be done, that Kuroda was very hostile to Christianity, &&&. During our trip up the Ishikari I talked with him and found his objections were not against Christianity at all but he feared the State religions, Church of England, France, Russian, and Greek Catholic, etc. I told him I was no priest, but believed the Bible the best of books and one certain to be freely read sometime in Japan. He said he could not allow its use by the students, but wished I would instruct them in all the principles of a sound morality. I replied that I supposed of course he desired that, but that as my ideas were largely drawn from the Bible, I could not teach without constant reference to it.²⁵

Kuroda, then, appears to have objected to Christianity more on the grounds that it was a possible threat to Japanese sovereignty, rather than any doctrinal or theological issues. In his letter, Clark also notes that he'd told Kuroda that he already had thirty Bibles and wanted permission to distribute them to his students. The American professor had argued that such a thing should be

²⁴ John Howes, *Japan's Modern Prophet*, 30.

²⁵ William Smith Clark to Family, September 1876, pg. 17, *William Smith Clark Papers*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

done in all schools, but Kuroda had continued to insist that it was forbidden by the Meiji government. The *Kaitakushi* Commissioner also seems to have been of the belief that as Japan already had Shinto and Confucianism, it was unnecessary to introduce a foreign religion into the classroom. After a few weeks, Kuroda finally relented and allowed Clark to use the Bible on the condition that it would be treated as a literary work and not a religious work. Although Clark agreed to it in theory, in practice the Bible was still used as a religious book in his teaching.

IV: Sapporo Agricultural College

It is after this that Clark began his unique role as a president and professor of an agricultural college, as well as a Christian missionary, in 1877. As part of his daily routine, a hymn was recited before lecture each morning. After the hymn, Clark would expound on a scripture reading and conclude with the Lord's prayer. According to one of his letters home, students were required to recite the first seventeen verses of Exodus XX from memory.²⁶ He also wrote that he was encouraged that there has been no opposition to his efforts from Japanese authorities. Clark also established afternoon Bible studies and church services on Sunday mornings.

It was Clark's belief, however, that Christianity could not be taught without adequate role models. As noted previously, Clark was influenced by the educational philosophy of New England, which stressed the inner cultivation of intellect and morality. He required that he and the other professors to at all times present themselves as models of Christian virtue and as Western "gentlemen." The college president additionally expected his students to behave as gentlemen. In stark contrast to the Japanese traditions of providing a list of regulations and punishments, Clark provided few. He believed that by teaching young men to be gentlemen, they would regulate themselves through self-discipline. True to the moral education he was brought up with, Clark believed that cultivating strong internal controls was more important than trying to enforce morality through external controls. "At the MAC, he had also made very few rules for the students and entrusted them with the duty to conduct themselves in the manner of

²⁶ William Smith Clark to Family, November 21, 1876, pg. 32, *William Smith Clark Papers*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

gentlemen.”²⁷ Clark additionally wrote a pledge that required that all signers abstain from alcohol, smoking, gambling, and profanity, as long as they were connected with the college. Students of the first and second year classes, as well as all faculty and staff, were required to sign this document.

Clark’s methods appear to have been successful, as all of his students not only signed the pledges, but also joined his “Covenant of Believers in Jesus.” Although the full text appears in the appendix, it can be summarized here in brief. The document states that the signers believe in the basic doctrine of Christianity, that the Bible is the Word of God, and also contains a modified version of the Ten Commandments. Why Clark decided to change the Commandments is unknown, but it appears that he had tried to make it more palatable to his Japanese students. Of specific interest is the commandment, “Thou shalt obey and honor thy parents and rulers.”²⁸ Clark stated that he had done some reading on Chinese and Japanese philosophy on the voyage to Hakodate. He presumably added ‘honor thy rulers’ as a way to tie in Confucian ideology. The first year students in turn pressured the second year class to sign the Covenant, at times against the wills of individual students. Both Nitobe Inazō and Uchimura Kanzō were members of the second year class that signed the document. However, Uchimura was one of the students who had initially refused to sign the document. He would later recall it as being his first major step on the road to Christianity and expressed his relief at having signed Clark’s “Covenant of Believers”.

²⁷ Hiroko Willcock, “Traditional Learning, Western Thought, and the Sapporo Agricultural College: A Case Study of Acculturation in Early Meiji Japan,” *Modern Asian Studies* 34,4, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 993, (online database), [Academic Search Complete](#), (accessed October 13, 2009).

²⁸ Hiroshi Miura, *The Life and Thought of Kanzo Uchimura, 1861-1930*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 19.

It is significant to note that while the “Covenant of Believers in Jesus” stated a belief in the infallibility of the Bible as “the direct revelation in language from God to man,”²⁹ it contains no reference to clergy or even typical Western Christian requirements such as baptism or confession. The form of Christian practice outlined in the document is the attendance of at least one meeting a week (not specifically a church service) and to read the Bible “or other religious books or papers, for conference and for social prayer...”³⁰ In addition to the church service that Clark provided and ran, he also often held Bible studies, or general religious discussions, in his private room for his students.

A question that remains, however, is why Clark’s Japanese students were so receptive to a Christian religious education. Given the ages of the young men and the rapid changes that Japan was going through in this period, perhaps they were led to be open to new, Western ideas. Clark himself was certainly a charismatic man with the gift of oratory. His method of presenting Christian teachings was also important. Although he encouraged his students to believe in God, he also taught them to be ambitious in their pursuit of secular education. Clark additionally seems to have been willing to incorporate traditional elements of Japanese philosophy into the Christianity he taught. Perhaps more important was the fact that he tried to be an example to his students. One of his students, Ōshima Masatake recalled that “...it was interesting [to us] because it was a practical religion, unlike that taught by ordinary missionaries. It was religion without the odor of religion.”³¹ It can perhaps be deduced then that because Clark was a layman,

²⁹ William Smith Clark, *Covenant of Believers in Jesus*, George Oshiro, “Nitobe Inazo and the Sapporo Band: Reflections on the Dawn of Protestant Christianity in Early Meiji Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34, no. 1, Christians in Japan (Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2007), 105, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30234177>, accessed February 2, 2011.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Maki 178.

he did not have to push a particular denominational interpretation of Christianity as professional missionaries did. This gave him a flexibility to adapt to the needs of his students.

John Maki concludes that it was Clark's skills as a teacher and an orator that drew his students to Christianity. While true, it seems evident that Clark was willing to work with his students and was not completely rigid in his proselytizing efforts. Two of his students recall in letters that Clark had instructed them not to "argue unnecessarily" with unbelievers about Christianity. S. Sato wrote that Clark told them to never offend anyone of another religious persuasion,³² while Uchida Kiyoshi wrote that rather than argue, Clark had instructed them to "...show the excellency and beauty of Christianity by heart and action."³³ This hearkens back to Clark's belief that Christians should present themselves as models of virtue as proof of the religion's efficacy.

Even though half of the first year class that had signed the pledge ended up dropping Christianity, a significant number of the first year and second year classes adopted the religion. The students of the first and second year classes were of samurai origins, and therefore had received a Confucian education. The SAC students found that elements of the Western idea of "gentlemen" and Clark's use of Christianity to teach moral education could be found in their own traditions. Certain Neo-Confucianism schools taught that the chief purpose of education was to cultivate a virtuous man. Ethical training was a required part of a samurai's Confucian education. Zhu Xi's "Mutual Correction of Faults" listed many violations of right conduct,

³² S. Sato to William Smith Clark, June 4, 1877, *William Smith Clark Papers*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

³³ Uchida Kiyoshi to William Smith Clark, May 25, 1881, *William Smith Clark Papers*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

including gambling, rudeness, and drunken quarreling.³⁴ Uchimura, the son of a Confucian scholar, would have been familiar with the traditional Confucian style of education.

Clark's pledge against partaking in social evils like drunkenness and gambling then did not contradict Confucian ideas, but instead complemented them. Hiroko Willcock points out that "Clark's gentleman was seen by them [his students] much in the mould of the concept of the cultivated man formulated for over two centuries by various schools of Japanese Confucian scholars."³⁵ One of these scholars, Yamaga Sokō, believed that cultivation of the mind and self-discipline could be attained through martial prowess. The combination of liberal arts education, moral education, and military drilling in addition to agricultural education must have been appealing to the young men who enrolled at Sapporo Agricultural College.

Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō: Who Were They?

Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) was a prolific writer and a social commentator during his lifetime, in addition to being perhaps the most well-known Christian leader among Japanese Protestants during the Meiji period. His writings, including his English language Out of My Diary, are primarily religious in nature and many of his works are commentaries of biblical scripture. As a young man, Uchimura had unintentionally raised concerns nationwide about Japanese Christians being unpatriotic when he failed to bow to the Imperial Rescript on Education. He also developed a Japanese Christian movement that he called "*Mukyōkai*" or "Nonchurch movement." The impetus for this movement was to create an indigenous Christianity distinct from that the Western denominations and free from the control of Western missionaries.

³⁴ Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., Sources of East Asian Tradition: Volume I, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 384.

³⁵ Willcock 995.

Uchimura's father had served Ōkōchi Teruna of the Ōkōchi –Matsudaira family in Takasaki-*han*, which was northwest of Edo. The Uchimura family ranking was *umamawari*, high enough that they were allowed to wear two swords and had a modest hereditary stipend. Uchimura's father, Yoshiyuki, was a Confucian scholar who had taken on higher responsibilities after the Meiji Restoration and for a short time was the provincial governor of Ishimaki before being recalled by his former feudal lord. Uchimura recalls that his father, who returned to the service of his daimyo, spent the rest of his childhood reading, playing go, and drinking sake. His mother and maternal grandmother appear to have played the largest parental role in his young life. Uchimura was sent to study at a foreign language school in Tokyo when he was thirteen. It was here that he met two of his closest friends: Miyabe Kingo and Nitobe Inazō. The three boys were later selected to enroll in SAC as members of the second year class. They entered the college in 1878. Uchimura would go on to graduate with a degree in fisheries science while Nitobe specialized in agricultural policy.

The most extensive English biography on Uchimura is John Howes's Japan's Modern Prophet. Howes's work is the product of fifty years of research and provides an excellent narrative of Uchimura's life from his childhood to his death in 1930. Uchimura's English autobiography, Out of My Diary, has also been an important source for Western scholars. It has been of particular use for this study, as the autobiography provides a glimpse into Uchimura's school years in Sapporo, his participation in the establishment of the Sapporo Independent Church, and his days as a foreign student in the United States. Two other sources that have been utilized are Hiroshi Mura's The Life and Thought of Kanzō Uchimura 1861-1930 and an article that Uchimura wrote about William Smith Clark, which appeared in *The Christian Union* shortly after Clark's death. A short analysis of this article will appear in the next chapter.

Nitobe Inazō (1862-1933), a convert to Quakerism, is famous for writing Bushido: The Soul of Japan and serving as a diplomatic figure, in particular as an undersecretary general for the League of Nations and as a colonial administrator in Taiwan. Nitobe's portrait was on the 5,000 yen banknote for twenty years (1984-2004). An educator himself, he was interested in international, educational, and Christian issues. While he worked for the League of Nations, he began the organization that would one day become UNESCO. Nitobe's writings have been collected into what is known as the Nitobe Inazō Zenshū and The Works of Nitobe Inazō, which provides a wealth of primary documents. The five volume Works of Nitobe Inazō are a compilation of Nitobe's English volumes that were published in the Zenshū series. Nitobe Inazō: Japan's Bridge Across the Pacific, an edited collection of articles that came out of the Nitobe-Ohira Memorial Conference at the University of British Columbia in 1984, was also utilized as a source.

Prior to his entry into Sapporo Agricultural College, Nitobe grew up in Morioka, the castle town of Nambu-*han*, which is in northern Honshu. His family rank was *karo* (a rank higher than that of the Uchimura family) and served the Morioka-Nanbu branch daimyo. His father died when he was five and Nitobe was raised primarily by his mother and grandfather. Nitobe, who was the youngest of three brothers, was adopted as a son by his uncle into the Ōta family. Twenty years later, he was brought back into the Nitobe family in order to continue the family lineage after both of his older brothers died. His mother Seki was the dominant matriarch of the family after his father's death and took on the duty of initiating her youngest son into the samurai traditions.

Religious Practice in the Absence of William Smith Clark

By the time Uchimura and Nitobe arrived at Sapporo, Clark had already left. However, the tradition of practice consisting of simple church services run by laymen, Bible study, and

group prayer had already been established. In his study on native developments of Japanese Christianity, Mark Mullins notes that this tradition of lay Christianity at Sapporo, as well as in the Kumamoto Band, led Christians such as Uchimura and Nitobe to have a general disregard for Western theology and ecclesiasticism. Before moving on to the development of Uchimura and Nitobe's religious thought, it is first useful to look at how they practiced Christianity at Sapporo.

According to Uchimura, the sophomore and junior classes held separate religious meetings, with the exception of a joint Bible study on Sunday evenings. This is also attested to in letters between Clark and his first year students. Students such as K. Ono and Y. Kuroiwa kept him abreast of Christian activities and informed him that the (first year) students continually met on Sundays at one o'clock and Wednesday afternoons to hold prayer meetings and Bible studies. Members of what were now the upperclassmen additionally informed him of new signers of the "Covenant of Believers of Jesus" and often expressed their sadness that Clark was no longer physically present to continue his religious instruction.

After the join Sunday meeting, the second year class briefly met for separate prayers before going to bed. Uchimura may perhaps have been a bit biased in favor of his group when he stated that "It was generally acceded, however, that the Sophomores were more earnest than the Juniors, and our meeting was often coveted by the more earnest among the latter."³⁶ As for the religious meetings themselves, the boys in his group took turns as a "pastor" and rotated the meetings among their college dorm rooms. Whoever was the minister for the week brought in an empty flour barrel to serve as a pulpit, which was draped in a blanket. Blankets were laid on the floor for the "congregation" while the appointed minister sat in the sole stool. The meetings themselves consisted of a short prayer, a Bible reading, and a sermon. Later, Nitobe suggested

³⁶ Uchimura 23.

the introduction of snacks and refreshments as a way to ensure the continued attendance of their friends.

Uchimura and Nitobe's group at one point decided to try a different way of studying Christianity by holding mock debates between two opposing views. The boys dubbed the two groups the "Christians" and "heathens".³⁷ The tiny group split into two sides, which were chosen by lots. Uchimura was chosen for the "Christian" side while Nitobe was chosen for the "heathen" side to present a skeptical counterargument to Christianity. The short lived experiment came to an end, however, after Nitobe and a fellow classmate had a blow up following one of the debates. The topic for the day had been "the existence of God." Nitobe, who seemed to have been struggling with his own doubts anyway, argued that "I grant that this Universe is a created Universe, that God is All-wise and Almighty, and that nothing is impossible with this God. But how can you prove to me that this God, after He created this Universe and set it in motion so that it can grow and develop by itself with the potential energy imparted by Him,-that this Creator hath not put an end to His own existence and annihilated Himself. If he can do *all* things, why cannot He commit suicide?"³⁸ The classmate, unable to come up with a satisfactory reply, ended the debate by telling Nitobe that he was a fool. Nitobe stormed out of the room and the debates were permanently ended when the small group realized that they had more doubts than they had answers for.

Despite holding separate religious activities, with the exception of Sunday Bible study and religious holidays (such as the opening Christmas scene in the introduction), the two groups of students came together officially after graduation. Judging from the sources, it appears that

³⁷ Uchimura several times referred to himself as a heathen in Out of My Diary, though it is questionable if he did so because he truly believed that non-Christians were heathens, or perhaps more likely, it was done so out of irony, as he was addressing a Western audience.

³⁸ Ibid 37.

the two classes made no attempt to forcibly convert the classes below them or have them sign the “Covenant of Believers in Jesus” document. Upon graduation, former SAC students set about to establish a Christian church that was unaffiliated with either of the Western denominations active in Sapporo. This church became known as the Sapporo Independent Church.

V: The Sapporo Band: Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō

Upon graduation from SAC, graduates began to evangelize among the community and managed to convert a small group of men and women. They sought to establish a place of worship to house the congregation that would be separate from the two denominations then active in Sapporo—the Methodist and Episcopalian churches. The “Covenant of Believers in Jesus” and the Apostle’s Creed were adopted as the basis for the church’s organization. However, the group ran into complications with the missionaries over the issue of establishing a nondenominational indigenous church that was headed not by foreign missionaries, but by Japanese laymen.

As for why these former students wished to have a separate congregation, there are three major explanations. One, as John Howes notes, is that the Sapporo graduates wished to be free of Western control, both in terms of finances and physical leadership. “As the Japanese nation feared foreign political domination,” he writes, “so the Japanese Christians feared domination in the faith.”³⁹ Members of the Sapporo Band had also become disillusioned with the denominational rivalry that they’d observed both in Tokyo and increasingly in Sapporo. Uchimura describes the growing sentiment among the group to combine the two Christian congregations active in Sapporo into one, united body.⁴⁰ A third reason, one that both Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō discussed, was a lack of connection with Western ecclesiastical customs. They both perceived a need for an indigenous Christianity with “Japanese” characteristics. In the following pages, it will be demonstrated that although these two men shared similar Christian

³⁹ John Howes, *Japan’s Modern Prophet*, 45.

⁴⁰ Uchimura Kanzō, *How I Became a Christian: Out of My Diary, By a “Heathen Convert”*, (Tokyo, Japan: Keiseisha, 1895; reprint 1968), 35-36.

thoughts due to their shared background from Sapporo Agricultural College, they found different modes of expression.

Upon graduation from Sapporo Agricultural College, both Uchimura and Nitobe went their separate ways, though they worked together with other graduates to establish the Sapporo Independent Church. Nitobe left for the United States a few months before Uchimura in 1884. Nitobe originally enrolled at Allegheny College in Western Pennsylvania, but through the help of a friend was accepted into Johns Hopkins University, where he studied from 1884-1887. While there, he converted to the Society of Friends (Quakers) and later received a doctorate in agricultural economics while in Germany (1887-1890). Uchimura, on the other hand, fled to the United States in 1884 after his first marriage ended in divorce. He found employment at a children's mental hospital in Elwyn, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. Uchimura later went on study for two years at Amherst College, the same college that had produced William Smith Clark and Nijima Jō, and received a degree in science. Upon completion of his graduate studies, he briefly enrolled at Hartford Theological Seminary before leaving due to a negative impression of the course material and his fellow students.

The Sapporo Independent Church: Searching for an "Authentic" Japanese Christianity

Uchimura's first major experience with Western denominationalism came in 1879 when he went home for the summer, accompanied by Miyabe Kingo. So isolated had the two young men been from Western missionaries, that they were taken aback by the differences and infighting among the different Western denominations. They also encountered the custom of saying grace before meals for the first time, which had been unknown in Sapporo. After visiting

different churches in the city, Uchimura concluded that he preferred the “rustic simplicities” of their tiny dorm-room church.⁴¹

The issue of denominationalism would be an issue close to both Uchimura and Nitobe’s hearts. Uchimura led the efforts to establish the Sapporo Independent Church as an independent congregation separate from the Episcopalian Church and the Methodist Church operating in Sapporo. While doing so, he and his fellow Christians ran afoul of the missionaries of both churches. The Methodist pastor, who had replaced the man who had baptized them, demanded the repayment of a \$400 loan when he realized that they intended to split off from the Methodist church. The unhappy Japanese congregation repaid the loan, using a \$100 donation from William Smith Clark to help pay it off. Uchimura defended the decision to establish a Japanese church free of Western control by remarking, “We never have construed Christianity as a hierarchy or ecclesiasticism of any sort. We take it essentially as the *people’s religion*, and our being ‘men of the world’ are of no obstacles whatever for our being preachers and missionaries. We believe, no more consecrated set of young-men ever left a hall of learning than we when we left our science college. Our aim was *spiritual*, though our training and destinations were *material*.”⁴² After battling with the Western missionaries over the establishment of their own Christian church, Uchimura became increasingly embittered toward missionaries. He believed that there needed to be an independent, sect-free Japanese Christianity that was free of Western financial and institutional control.

Despite reservations about missionaries, there is evidence that Clark was highly regarded by members of the second year class. Miyabe Kingo, who became a famed botanist, was a good

⁴¹ Uchimura 35-36.

⁴² Ibid 56.

friend of Nitobe and Uchimura (he was also Uchimura's roommate), as well as a founding member of the Sapporo Independent Church. He wrote a personal letter to Clark in 1880 to express his gratitude for Clark's Christian instruction, which Miyabe informs the former president, is still going strong at the college.⁴³ Further evidence that Uchimura himself acknowledged his debt to Clark is an article from *The Christian Union* that he wrote shortly after Clark's death. In this article, Uchimura describes Clark as an "able chemist and botanist, a skillful teacher, and a brave soldier," but more importantly, he was a Christian missionary even though as Uchimura writes, Clark never identified himself as one. The focus for the article is on Clark's missionary activities.

Within the article he wrote about Clark, Uchimura describes the encounter between Kuroda and Clark over the issue of the Bible, as he understood it. In his narrative, the two men, who share a common bond through their military experience, argue back and forth about whether or not Clark should be allowed to use the Bible for moral instruction. According to Uchimura, the argument was unresolved when they reached Sapporo. He describes Kuroda as "a man of strong individuality, which often turns to despotism," but who finally gave in to "the firmness of the Christian soldier".⁴⁴ Kuroda is said to have told Clark he could teach the Bible in secret. Uchimura also reports that Clark had fifty Bibles, when the actual number was thirty (though Gulick did give Clark thirty more Bibles just before his departure for the United States, which Clark had shipped to Sapporo). Uchimura also briefly describes the "Covenant of Believers in Jesus" and provides the complete text of the document, before noting that it has become the "discipline" of the Sapporo Church.

⁴³ Miyabe Kingo to William Smith Clark, July 11, 1880, *William Smith Clark Papers*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

⁴⁴ J.K. Uchimura, "The Missionary Work of William S. Clark, PH.D, LL D, Ex-President of Amherst Agricultural College," *The Christian Union*, April 22, 1886, 7, *William Smith Clark Papers*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

In the article, Uchimura additionally dwells on Clark's famous parting words, "Boys be ambitious." According to him, the Sapporo students took his words to heart and became "fiery preachers themselves."⁴⁵ He then goes on to describe the first year class as Clark's "first disciples." Uchimura briefly describes the Sapporo Independent Church and calls it the first church in Japan to be financially and ecclesiastically independent from Western churches. He goes on to write the following:

A peculiar feature has been the absence of any regular preacher or pastor, the circumstances forbidding any one of the 'boys' to become a leader of the others. But this want has more than compensated by calling all the members-men and women, old and young-to active work of evangelization. Upon no other church is the national character so strongly stamped as upon this; and if ever the Japanese Christian churches are to be consolidated into one organic form under one body, bearing a distinct national character (as there is a great tendency in this direction), upon no other model can it be effected than upon the one which the departed Colonel has left behind him.⁴⁶

We see within the text Uchimura's acknowledged debt to Clark as well as his identification of the Sapporo students as "disciples" of Clark, his desire for an independent Japanese Church from Western control and traditions, and that a 'national' church with Japanese characteristics can only be built upon William Clark's model of Christianity.

Hiroko Willcock also comments on the link between the establishment of the Sapporo Church, and the moral philosophy that SAC students learned from Presidents Clark and Wheeler. She argues that the liberal curriculum of SAC, which had put more of an emphasis on the humanities and science than on strictly agriculture, produced free thinkers who had internalized lessons of individualism and independence. Willcock adds, "By producing graduates prominent in fighting for humanity and the rights of individuals, it was inevitable that the college came to be considered the antithesis of the dominant political views. Uchimura was a vanguard of

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ J.K. Uchimura, 7.

liberalism and adopted the principle of independence and the pursuit of self-cultivation in order to extend the individual.”⁴⁷ In other words, there was a general spirit of independent intellectual inquiry and ambition to achieve both in the realms of the secular and the spiritual. Willcock believes that the creation of the Sapporo Church was a “physical manifestation” of the teachings of Clark and the other New England professors.

Mukyōkai: Uchimura’s Teachings and Practice

Uchimura was also a great admirer of bushido, about which both he and Nitobe wrote about in their writings. Both men, as well as Uemura Masahisa, believed that while bushido by itself wasn’t sufficient to satisfy Japan’s spiritual needs; it was a firm foundation from which to build a uniquely Japanese Christianity that was distinct from Western Christianity. Therefore, bushido needed to be merged with Christianity. Uchimura also saw the Apostle Paul as a true samurai who upheld such bushido and Christian ideals as independence, loyalty, and duty. Within his own movement, the *Mukyōkai* (Non-Church), Uchimura’s teachings took on the form of the Confucian *sensei-deshi*, or teacher-disciple, model. Bible studies were organized on a *juku* (school) form took the place of Western style church sermons. His primary mode for interacting with his growing number of students was through his *juku* and through the readers of his magazine. In 1905, he organized the *Kyōkūkai*, with fourteen branches and 119 members, as an association to link his followers together. Members had to agree to attend monthly meetings, to use Sundays contemplate the faith, and to abstain from liquor and tobacco.⁴⁸ This is very much reminiscent of the way Christianity was practiced at Sapporo. That Uchimura, the son of a Confucian scholar, would meld the two traditions is hardly surprising.

⁴⁷ Willcock 1012.

⁴⁸ Mullins 63.

The *Mukyōkai* movement developed in response to Uchimura's desire to dispense with what he saw as Western cultural baggage. Uchimura continued to believe that neither a clergy, nor the elaborate Christian rites of churches such as those of the Episcopalians and the Roman Catholic Church were necessary. Rather, he sought a return to the "apostolic" origins of Christianity as he saw it. He stressed salvation by faith with a Bible-centered religious practice, devoid of a clergy and rituals such as baptism and the Eucharist. Uchimura saw these as the last vestiges of the Roman Catholic Church that the Protestant Reformation had failed to eradicate.⁴⁹ He thus saw himself as the heir to the Reformation, completing in Japan what Luther had begun in Germany. However, this does not mean that Uchimura discounted the beliefs of other faiths or denominations. "He respected all persons who held sincere religious beliefs and recognized that such individuals constituted a very small percentage of the world's population."⁵⁰ Despite his earlier criticisms of Catholic rituals, Uchimura apparently once stated that if he was to officially join a denomination, it would be the Roman Catholic Church. According to John Howes, Uchimura felt that the Catholic tradition of spiritual authority having been passed down from the Apostle Peter to the present church fit best with his idea a spiritual *sensei-deshi* system.⁵¹ Howes remarks that Uchimura differed in his views of Buddhism and other Christian denominations from many Japanese Protestants, who "often had very little good to say about persuasions other than their own."⁵²

Nitobe Inazō

Nitobe, who had left for the United States a year before Uchimura, originally enrolled at Western Allegheny College. However, his friend Satō Shōsuke, a graduate of the first SAC class,

⁴⁹ Mullins 59.

⁵⁰ Howes 176.

⁵¹ Ibid 177.

⁵² Ibid 177.

was instrumental in getting Nitobe accepted into Johns Hopkins University. While at Johns Hopkins University, he switched his thesis from agrarian problems to US-Japan relations. Among his classmates were Woodrow Wilson, who was six years Nitobe's senior and a year ahead of him in school. Nitobe later studied in Germany before returning to Sapporo to take up a professorship at his alma mater. He also taught at Kyoto University and the University of Tokyo later in his life before becoming the principal of Ichikō, a preparatory school for the University of Tokyo, and the president of the New Tokyo Women's Christian College in 1918. He was appointed to the League of Nations in 1920.

While in Baltimore, Nitobe became acquainted with the Quakers, whom he would join while he was graduate student. He felt that the Quakers most fit his ideal of Christianity: simple, devoid of rituals or sacraments, and having no ordained clergy. Both Uchimura and Nitobe shared this same ideal, however found different expressions of it. While Uchimura developed his own 'Non-Church movement' based on the Confucian model, Nitobe felt that the Quakers fulfilled his need for a quiet, religious studies based worship that was similar to what he'd experienced in Sapporo. Although Nitobe felt that it was necessary to remove the "human wrappings" of sacramentalism, sacerdotalism, and sectarianism from Christianity, it was as of yet impossible to do so. Until a universal Christianity could be created he believed, Christianity should take on the indigenous forms of the society that worshipped it.⁵³

In 1897, Nitobe wrote an article entitled, "Why I Became a Friend," in response to questions about his decision to join the Quaker community. He begins his article with a brief description of Sapporo Agricultural College and the American professors:

⁵³ Mullins 24.

In a northern island of my country, there is a little town which is well known among the Christian circle of the land. Here, some eleven years ago, an Imperial College was founded and several American gentlemen were engaged as instructors. By the earnest and persevering efforts of one of them, now deceased, the Bible was introduced as appropriate work for the study of Ethics. So energetically and dexterously did this Professor work that within a year, a few of the students made a public profession of Christianity, and when a new class of Freshmen came in, these few worked zealously among them, the result being the harvest of some souls.⁵⁴

Nitobe went on to explain that the Christian practice at SAC following Clark's departure, which left the students with no leader, was forced to adapt to not having an ordained preacher. He additionally writes, "They had no creed, except a covenant among themselves, embodying just the fundamental belief of evangelical Christianity."⁵⁵ The students held prayer meetings and Bible studies, but had no music or sacraments such as baptism or the Eucharist. As this had been the form of Christian practice that he'd first become familiar with, Nitobe recalls being disappointed by fancier Christian churches, whether it was the elaborate display of rites, music, or personal dress. While Nitobe became acquainted with the Quakers, he found their religious practices to correspond most closely with his conception of Christianity.

While in the United States, Nitobe established close ties with the Philadelphia Quakers, particularly the Japanophile Wistar Morris and his family. Morris frequently invited visiting Japanese to the meeting houses of the Philadelphia Quakers, including both Nitobe and Uchimura. The two men provided information on Japan to the women's association of Quakers, who began to send missionaries to Japan in 1885. Uchimura often visited the Morrises while working at the children's mental hospital. Uchimura seemed to have had a favorable view of the Friends, taking on their pacifist beliefs later in his life. At one of the meetings, he had urged the

⁵⁴ Nitobe Inazo, "Why I Became a Friend," from 'Articles to the Interchange,' *Nitobe Inazo Zenshu*, v. 23, (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1987), 242-243.

⁵⁵ Ibid 243.

Quakers to send “their least ostentatious Christianity to Japan.”⁵⁶ Nitobe also believed that the Friends would fill a missionary void in Japan.

In another article to the *Friends' Review*, Nitobe describes how he believes that Quakerism is the form of Christianity most suited to the Japanese. He argues that Quaker missionaries should first focus on the upper classes. The reason that Nitobe provides for this is that because the majority of Japanese were Buddhist, they were more inclined toward the “symbolic Christianity” that was heavy in ceremony. “As far as the outward forms are concerned,” he wrote, “there is but one step from Buddhism to Romanism.”⁵⁷ Instead, he wrote that Quaker missionaries should focus on Japanese that meet the following criteria:

1. Those who have never believed in Buddhism or any other organized religious system.
2. Those who are against the use of rituals.
3. Those who are looking for spiritual guidance, but are “bewildered at the diversity of Christian bodies represented in the country.”⁵⁸

Nitobe believed that the people who met these criteria should be targeted by Quaker missionaries not only because they were most susceptible to their teachings, but also because they held the most influence in the country. If the elite of Japanese society could be converted, namely, former samurai, then others would follow. These were recommendations that he contributed while still a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University in 1885.

⁵⁶ Furuya Jun, “Graduate Student and Quaker,” 67.

⁵⁷ Nitobe Inazo, “Friends’ Mission in Japan,” from *Articles to the ‘Friends’ Review*, *Nitobe Inazo Zenshu*, v. 23, (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1987), 211.

⁵⁸ *Ibid* 212.

VI: Conclusion

Like other Japanese Christians at the time, Nitobe and Uchimura struggled to construct an identity as patriotic Japanese who also happened to be Christians. Irwin Scheiner argues that Christians of the Kumamoto Band, as well as others such as Uchimura, believed that Western superiority rested in its moral value system and not its technology. For them, Christianizing Japan was not only their religious duty as Christians, but their patriotic duty as Japanese citizens.⁵⁹ As Japanese, they faced the dilemma of how to incorporate Western religious ideas while maintaining their cultural and national identities as Japanese. For Nitobe and Uchimura, the answer lay in establishing a church that was independent ecclesiastically and financially from Western churches, in addition to being under the leadership of native Japanese instead of Western missionaries.

In Uchimura Kanzo's epitaph to William Smith Clark, he went further. Uchimura not only claimed that the Sapporo Independent Church was the first independent Japanese Church, he claimed that it was the most "Japanese" of all the Christian churches in Japan. Uchimura also argued that an authentically "Japanese" Church had to be built upon the legacy of William Smith Clark. Identifying the first year class of SAC as Clark's "first disciples", Uchimura seems to have viewed his own Christianity as part of a *sensei-deshi* system that he traced back to Clark. Nitobe, in his memoirs on his decision to join the Quakers, also acknowledges his debt to Clark. William Smith Clark seems to have been viewed as the father of the spiritual lineage of the Sapporo Band. Historically, lineage systems had been prized under Buddhism and Confucianism in Japan. It was important to be able to trace yourself and your "school" back to a religious founder. Judging from the writings of Nitobe and Uchimura that were reviewed here, it is logical

⁵⁹ Irwin Scheiner, 114-115.

that they viewed him as their “spiritual father or teacher.” By doing this, they incorporated Christianity and Clark into a preexisting Japanese cultural and religious framework.

Even as Uchimura and Nitobe accepted a “Western” religion and located themselves hierarchically to Clark as his “disciples,” they also rejected elements of Western Christianity and that they deemed to be either useless or a threat to the development and control of a native Christianity. Uchimura routinely had confrontations with missionaries over the issue of an independent Japanese church. Although Nitobe was perhaps less aggressive in this regard, he also believed that Christianity should take on the cultural forms of the practicing society. In the case of Japan, it should incorporate bushido and other traditional Japanese ethics into its Christianity.

While it was important for Nitobe and Uchimura that Clark taught Christianity, two other factors are equally important. The first is how Clark’s instruction and practice of Christianity differed from other missionaries. The second is how the Japanese students shaped the practice after his departure. Clark was an academic and an administrator and was employed by the *Kaitakushi* for that reason. Regardless of the impetus for him deciding to missionize, whether it was because of Luther Gulick or meeting with his wife’s biological father in Hawai’i, his missionary activities were carried out as a layman. Congregationalists traditionally took part in nondenominational missionary activities and Clark seems to have adhered to this in his own efforts. Although he established Sunday church services, they were run by himself in the absence of a pastor. Prayers and Bible passages were read at the beginning of the first class of each day and Bible studies were established. The “Covenant of Believers in Jesus” document, which became the foundation for the Sapporo Independent Church, promised fellowship for all signers. It did not require that students be baptized or engage in other traditional sacraments.

Instead, they were required to follow the basic Christian tenets and take part in weekly Bible studies and group prayer meetings.

In keeping with New England Protestant moral education and the philosophy of John Locke, Clark encouraged his students to engage in independent thinking and to be ambitious in all their endeavors. He believed firmly in self-cultivation and the development of inner morality, which in his case was tied to Christian ethics, and required that he and the other American professors present themselves as models of virtuous gentlemen. Clark, who believed that a combination of secular, moral, and military training was necessary to build a virtuous citizen, incorporated this into the curriculum of Sapporo Agricultural College.

The tiny Christian congregation that formed out of the students at Sapporo thrived even in the absence of Clark. The isolation of Sapporo from the rest of Japan ensured that SAC students didn't encounter heavy anti-Christian sentiment and were also outside of the Western missionary activities taking place in the urban areas further south. Students took over the Sunday church services in Clark's absence and continued with their simple group prayers and Bible studies. As students such as Uchimura Kanzō became more aware of differences among Western denominations, they became determined to establish a separate Christian tradition that was free of Western sectarianism and control.

Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō continued to practice a Christianity that was devoid of a clergy, ecclesiastic rites, and Western denominationalism; their practice was additionally Bible centered and was focused on the study of Christian texts rather than on Western style church services. Both also believed that Japanese Christianity should reflect indigenous traditions. Uchimura found expression for this type of Christianity by establishing the *Mukyōkai* movement.

In this movement, Uchimura patterned his style of worship after the Confucian *sensei-deshi* model and took on disciples. His Sunday Bible studies were patterned after the Sapporo experience and students were also required to refrain from alcohol and drugs, just as SAC students had been required. Nitobe, on the other hand, joined the Quakers, who he believed to most closely reflect the Sapporo Band's style of worship.

The question that perhaps remains is why all of this matters. After all, the Japanese Christian population from the Meiji period up to now has been a tiny fraction of the national population. Despite this, many Protestant Christians during the Meiji period were members of the former samurai class, who were once the elite and literati section of Japanese society. Even after its dissolution, former samurai continued to play important roles in trying to create a new, national identity that preserved some of their former status, as well as their value system. Uchimura and Nitobe were part of this trend. For them, Christianity was the answer to the problems that Japan faced as a society. However, they were also forced to create a Christian identity that was also recognizable as Japanese. Domination by Westerners was also a concern, both on the political level as well as the religious level. The Sapporo Band sought independence not only out of a desire to establish a Christian that was culturally distinct as "Japanese", but also out of concern of Western domination.

Because of the social prominence of several Japanese Christians, and the sudden growth of Christianity after the Meiji Restoration, Christians made their voices heard. In Japanese Converts and Social Protest in Meiji Japan, Scheiner points out that the leading political and social journal for about ten years (1880-1890) was *Rikugo Zasshi*, which was founded by Christians. Despite its Christian roots, it was read "by many members of the intelligentsia, non-

Christians as well as Christians.”⁶⁰ Christians also played an important role in establishing schools, especially for girls. Nitobe and Uchimura were among several prominent intellectuals who emerged from the Meiji Protestants. These leaders held influence outside of their Christian circles as well as inside. Uchimura Kanzō, who created what is now the largest indigenous Japanese Christian movement, was also a social critic. His friend Nitobe Inazō was a government official in Taiwan, an undersecretary of the League of Nations, and was a member of the House of Peers (1926-1933) later in his life. Within Japanese Christian circles, these two men loom large. Outside of those circles, they still wielded varying degrees of influence. Their writings were read even by non-Christian Japanese. Due to his respect for Buddhism, some of Uchimura’s readers included a Buddhist chaplain in the Russo-Japanese War and members of a Buddhist monastery.⁶¹ Nitobe’s Bushido was read by young Japanese soldiers and helped bring about a revival of bushido after the Russo-Japanese War.⁶²

Even though the number of Christians in Japan has remained small, Meiji Protestant Christians such as Uchimura Kanzo and Nitobe Inazo reached beyond their circle of Japanese Christians. A question that one might perhaps ask at this point is to what extent did Christianity influence religious and philosophical thought in Japan, even if the religion itself did not strongly take root? Although this question is not the topic for this essay, it is food for thought, especially when one considers why studying Christianity in Japan matters. Uchimura and Nitobe both felt that developing a Christianity that was suitable to a changing Japan was important enough to devote their lives to.

⁶⁰ Irwin Scheiner, 108.

⁶¹ John Howes, Japan’s Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo, 1861-1930, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 232.

⁶² Forward by George Oshiro, Nitobe Inazo, Bushido: The Soul of Japan (A Classic Essay on Samurai Ethics), (Philadelphia: The Leeds & Biddle Co., 1900; Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 2002, reprint), 15.

VII. Appendix A: The Covenant of Believers in Jesus

The undersigned member of S.A. College, desiring to confess Christ according to his command, and to perform with true fidelity every Christian duty in order to show our love and gratitude to that blessed Savior who has made atonement for our sins by his death on the cross; and earnestly wishing to advance his Kingdom among men for the promotion of his glory and the salvation of those for whom he died, do solemnly covenant with God and with each other from this time forth to be his faithful disciples, and to live in strict compliance with the letter and the spirit of his teachings; and whenever a suitable opportunity offers we promise to present ourselves for examination, baptism and admission to some evangelical church.

We believe the Bible to be the only direct revelation in language from God to man, and the only perfect and infallible guide to a glorious future life.

We believe in one everlasting God who is our Merciful Father, our just and sovereign Ruler, and who is to be our final Judge.

We believe that all who sincerely repent and by faith in the Son of God obtain the forgiveness of their sins, will be graciously guided through this life by the Holy Spirit and protected by the watchful providence of the Heavenly Father, and so at length prepared for the enjoyments and pursuits of the redeemed and holy ones; but that all who refuse to accept the invitation of the Gospel must perish in their sins, and be forever punished from the presence of the Lord.

They following commandments we promise to remember and obey through all the vicissitudes of our earthly lives.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

Thou shalt not worship any graven image or any likeness of any created being or thing.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, avoiding all unnecessary labor, and devoting it as far as possible to the study of the Bible and the preparation of thyself and others for a holy life.

Thou shalt obey and honor thy parents and rulers.

Thou shalt not commit murder, adultery, or other impurity, theft, or deception.

Thou shalt do no evil to thy neighbor.

Pray without ceasing.

For mutual assistance and encouragement we hereby constitute ourselves an association under the name "Believers in Jesus," and we promise faithfully to attend one or more meetings each week while living together, for the reading of the Bible or other religious books or papers, for conference and for social prayer; and we sincerely desire the manifest presence in our hearts of the Holy Spirit to quicken our love, to strengthen our faith, and to guide us into a saving knowledge of the truth.

Sapporo, March 5, 1877⁶³

⁶³ Mura 19-20.

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