

# To Build a School: Miss Kidder's School for Girls, 1870–1875

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Motivation, gentility, maturity, piety: all of these were important qualities for an aspiring woman missionary to Japan in the nineteenth century. But one additional factor was necessary: the women were going to be missionary teachers, and mission boards preferred candidates who, like Mary Eddy Kidder, had considerable experience in the classroom, for educational work would be the mainstay of women's missionary work in Japan for at least twenty years. Miss Kidder had volunteered to go to Japan on the first day of March, 1869, only sixteen days before the new Japanese government had issued an order that all children were to receive an elementary school education.<sup>1</sup> That order accorded well with Miss Kidder's offer to go to Japan to "teach those who have no teachers."<sup>2</sup> Over the next six years, a time of turbulence and turmoil in a rapidly changing Meiji Japan, Mary Kidder would work steadily towards the establishment of one of the first schools for Japanese women. The school which she founded, and had built in a choice position, high atop the Bluffs in Yokohama, would become the flagship of Woman's Work for Women of the Reformed Church in America. The Isaac Ferris Seminary, now Ferris Women's University, remains a well-known school for women in Japan today.

Miss Kidder was an experienced teacher. A daughter of a

Wardsboro, Vermont hill-farm family, she was an exemplar of the school-marm fostered by the antebellum educational reform efforts of women such as Emma Willard, Mary Lyon, and Catherine Beecher. These reformers had challenged the notion that teaching was a male-only institution, and had argued that women were “naturally” suited to classroom work. They argued that the very qualities that made women good mothers – tenderness, gentility, and patience–also made them good teachers of the young. Perhaps more important to their eventual acceptance by the public, or at least by local district school boards, they were cheaper. Women teachers tended to be paid only one-third the salary of men, who began to leave the teaching field for higher paying jobs in an industrializing country. By the 1870’s, the feminization of the teaching field, at least at the elementary level, or as it was called the “common school” level, was complete. Once women were allowed into the classroom, however, some had become dissatisfied with the numerous rules, restrictions and limitations placed upon school-teachers by their communities, and these began to search for more autonomous, fulfilling work. Some became frontier-teachers or domestic missionaries among the Native Americans. Others sought to join foreign missions.<sup>3</sup> Mary Kidder spent 15 years teaching in what was then the rural area of Brooklyn, New York, before setting out for Japan, at the age of 35.

After less than a year living with the Samuel R. Brown family in Niigata,<sup>4</sup> in 1870, Mary Kidder came with the Brown’s to Yokohama, determined to offer education to Japanese women and girls. She began with a small class of young people who had formerly been under the instruction of Clara Leete Hepburn, wife of the Presbyterian medical missionary, who was also working with S. R. Brown to produce a Bible in the Japanese language. Mrs. Hepburn was unable to continue her teaching duties and attend as well to her domestic tasks. Therefore,

Miss Kidder began meeting the students in the Hepburn dispensary.

Mrs. Hepburn had taught them at home, but Miss Kidder was unable to teach in the home she shared with the Browns', inasmuch as Dr. Brown had his own classes to conduct at home, and when he was not teaching, he required quiet for his translation work. The missionaries of various denominations, particularly in these early years, were generally on good terms with one another, and the Presbyterian and Reformed representatives, coming as they did from the same theological tradition were particularly close, although this did not preclude all tension and dissension. Nonetheless, the two missions cooperated, and their missionaries were often related by birth or marriage. Thus it was not at all unusual that Miss Kidder was able to conduct her classes in the Presbyterian dispensary for nearly two years, before she had to seek another location.

Although Miss Kidder was a product of the American educational reform movement, and although at heart she aimed to instill her own religious and cultural thoughts into her pupils, it must be admitted that her small class fit neatly into an already established Japanese tradition of *shijuku*, or private academies, which had sprung up to supplement the *terakoya* and governmental and *han* schools during the last years of the Tokugawa shogunate. *Shijuku*, a feature of the urban, treaty ports where foreign knowledge abounded, were centered upon the founder's personality, and were not bound, in these early years, to any one place.

Miss Kidder's class was most definitely centered around the person of Mary Kidder, and subject to whatever support she could personally garner among her friends and acquaintances in Yokohama. As at most *shijuku*, there was an open admissions policy, and her pupils came and went, with irregular attendance. The course of instruction, as in most *shijuku*, was highly individualized, according to the teacher's philosophy

and beliefs. As in most *shijuku*, the class members paid the expenses of the school, in return for their instruction. This latter feature particularly commended itself to the Reformed Mission Board, who denigrated the practice of some missionaries in China and India who offered monetary inducement to potential students to build up their school population. The Board, and its missionaries in Japan, were firm advocates of the policy of “self-support”, the theory of which was that tuition payments could pay for the operating expenses of a school, although generally not for its physical plant, or its upkeep, or for the salaries of its western teachers. It was a policy well-suited to the financial realities of the Reformed Board of the 1870’s. The Board was in debt, and would become more so as a result of the financial recession of 1874.

Miss Kidder began with seven students: four boys, who outnumbered the three girls. Coeducation was common in the Japanese *terakoya* classes, and the first governmental elementary schools for children during the Meiji era were also coeducational. Coeducation was also the usual state of affairs at the elementary level in rural America. Miss Kidder herself had attended a coeducational common school in her native village in Vermont. Furthermore, during the years of the Civil War, coeducation had become a growing feature of higher education in American life. However, like most women missionaries to Japan, from the outset Mary Kidder hoped to teach only girls. Her views stemmed from a strict interpretation of the fact that the Reformed Church Mission Board had commissioned her to do “Woman’s Work for Women”, although usually that term incorporated young boys under the additional phrase, “and children”. The age of the boys in her class is not known, but were they young men, instead of boys, perhaps she was mindful of Secretary Ferris’ strong support of the Pauline prohibitions against women “speaking” in mixed company. However, by 1870, this proscrip-

tion normally did not apply to teaching, and certainly not to the teaching of young boys – the task of many a Christian frontier schoolmarm, domestic missionary, or Sunday school teacher. Nonetheless, Mary Kidder was determined to dismiss the boys as soon as she had enough girls to form a regular class. By June, 1871, she had six girls, and sent the boys away.

Since her class was a continuation of one begun earlier, there is no indication that she was affected by the governmental ruling of February 13, 1871, which required teachers planning to *establish shijuku* to receive prior permission from a local government office. In an effort to gain some sort of centralized control over educational efforts, the regulation also required teachers to keep track of enrollment figures and background information on entering students.<sup>5</sup> Certainly Miss Kidder kept track of the number of her students, not so much for the Japanese government, however, as for her own Board. There is no indication that she was keeping close records on their background, although in her letters back to America, she frequently mentioned if the student were the daughter or young wife of a dignitary or important personage.

Mary Kidder taught her students in the only language she could: English. Unlike later women, who often had to plunge directly into teaching, she had had the opportunity of nearly a year of language study during her time in Niigata. Needless to say, however, after only a year, she was not proficient enough to teach in Japanese. Furthermore, it was English which was the drawing card for her classes. All over Japan, students were flocking to language classes, and the standard pedagogical practical of the earliest years of Meiji required that students first master English, and on then proceed to other subjects, utilizing English texts and sources. Language acquisition was the key to western knowledge, and to throwing off the hated “unequal treaties” Japan had

signed with the western powers. Miss Kidder, like most other teachers in Japan in the early 1870's, taught her students English, so that they might understand what she wanted to teach. What she wanted to teach was Christianity, although at the time, it was still legally proscribed. Furthermore, what she wanted to teach, and what her students wanted to learn was probably not always the same, but they had little choice than to accept what she offered. What they wanted was English lessons, and to a certain extent, that is what they were given.

Miss Kidder conducted her classes as any common school teacher in America might, with her students working their way through Marcius Wilson's graded readers, the series most used in America, and consequently in Japan in the first years of Meiji. Like their American counterparts in the fabled "little red schoolhouse", they worked on spelling and penmanship. She was particularly pleased with her Japanese pupils' rapid mastery of arithmetic. Using Arabic numerals, as opposed to the Japanese system of numerical orthography, the students whipped through addition and subtraction in only a few days. In addition, she thought her students were attentive, bright, kind, and neat. She was particularly impressed with their manners, which she felt would "put many a child at home to the blush."<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, English was not Miss Kidder's main objective. She had other plans. She did not plan to give them a complete, liberal education, nor did she plan to continue teaching English for very long. She rather optimistically hoped that once she had learned "enough" Japanese, she could discontinue her English lessons entirely, and teach only the Bible. As it was, she put as much religious instruction into her lessons as she could. Everyday, in English and in Japanese, her students repeated the Lord's Prayer. Then the class read, or rather recited phonetically, half a chapter from Matthew. Miss Kidder admitted that the

girls could not understand what they were pronouncing, but she wanted to set a precedent. It was a common early missionary tactic: in India, in 1859, students at what would become Chitoor Female Seminary recited the Heidelberg Catechism and read the Bible every day, without understanding the words.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, however, despite her delight in her pupils' manners and efforts, Miss Kidder was not pleased with her first year's progress. If student attendance could fluctuate at *shijuku*, so too could the teacher's. During June, 1871, for instance, she had met her class on average only one day out of three, a schedule that could not have been encouraging to her students. The struggle to maintain domestic duties (helping Mrs. Brown at their home), and to teach during the infamous Japanese rainy season apparently told on even the robust Miss Kidder, who reported that she felt unwell. In July, however, she joined the Brown's in the mountains, and seemed to recover both her equilibrium and her health.

Rejuvenated, she appears to have met her class of girls regularly throughout the rest of 1871, and by the fall of 1871 the class had doubled in size, to twelve students. The age of her students varied widely. Five were between the ages of 8 and 10, seven were between 14 and 17. The class continued to devote a great deal of time to religious studies. In fact, the classroom was as much a "daily" Sunday school as it was a common school. Often, her lessons were focused on the Sunday school book, in preparation for the following Sunday's class, since many of her students attended both her class and the Sunday school that she superintended.<sup>8</sup>

One other subject was added to the curriculum after the departure of the boys – singing. Music was an integral part of Mary Kidder's plan to educate these daughters of the middle class. American academies and seminaries for young women, some mere finishing schools, likewise

taught music as a suitable feminine accomplishment for a middle class girl. Ironically, Mary Kidder herself was unable to play either the piano or the melodeon. Therefore, she focused on training their voices in western musical modes by having them practice the hymns, in English, that they would sing in Sunday school. She reported that her students could sing “Jesus Loves Me”, as well as “Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Me”, and “Little Drops of Water”. Through these hymns, she hoped to turn the girls’ hearts towards Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Despite the educational basis of her work, Mary Kidder did not appeal to the girls’ intellect as a means to their conversion. Many accounts of the progress of Christianity in Japan stress the intellectual bias of its early days, and some fault the missionaries for an overly intellectual or rational approach to conversion. James Ballagh is generally viewed as the missionary who introduced a more emotional, empathetic and evangelical approach to Japanese Christianity, and indeed his participation in the revivals of 1872 in Yokohama, and later in 1883 and 1884 in Tokyo, did help establish the *reibaibu* as a popular method of evangelism in Japan. Before this, however, women missionaries such as Mary Kidder popularized an emotional approach to potential converts in their work with children, young girls, and women.

A consideration of the hymns the girls were taught raises an interesting question – with no discernable answer. What were the girls learning once they began to understand the words of the songs? Often deprecated by strong-minded, often male, critics in America, especially those who deplored what they believed to be the excessive feminization of American religion of the nineteenth century, the hymns the students learned were replete with sentimentality and a rhetoric of weakness:

Jesus loves me, this I know



For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to him belong,  
They are weak, but he is strong.

(Refrain)

Jesus loves me, loves me still,  
Though I'm very weak and ill.  
From his shining throne on high,  
Comes to watch me where I lie.

(Refrain)

While such words might prove a comfort to young women who did have to cope with illness, weakness, and diseases such as tuberculosis, it is also true that they seem to impart an ambivalent message of dependence and frailty to these young pioneering women students of Meiji Japan. Certainly, the words did not seem to apply to their energetic teacher.

In 1871, the government had also begun taking tentative steps to address the issues of women's education, which for the most part, appeared peripheral to the more pressing problems facing the coalition government, intent on dissolving the Tokugawa system. One of these tentative moves would affect Miss Kidder's former student and language exchange partner in Niigata, Ueda Sadako (Teiko).<sup>10</sup> This, of course, was the decision of the deputy head of the Hokkaido Colonization Board, Kuroda Kiyotaka, to suggest to his government that they send a group of school-age girls to be educated in America, so that they could return, educate their peers, and thus illustrate to the world that Japan was as "civilized" in its attitude towards women as was the west.<sup>11</sup>

Mori Arinori, the leader of the Japanese legation to the United States, and a future Minister of Education, agreed with Kuroda's sug-

gestion, although not with full enthusiasm. Plans were already afoot to send large numbers of young men abroad to study. Surely young girls could go as well, Kuroda argued. They could be educated as teachers, and run schools for girls upon their return. These schools could produce knowledgeable, educated mothers, who would in turn, produce strong, capable sons for a new Japan. This educated mother argument would be echoed by the new educational advisor, David Murray of Rutgers (a Reformed Church college), who also stressed the importance of educating women as the “guardians of the future men and women of a nation.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, just as in America, the first arguments for the education of women tied their education to their maternal function, although the first women sent overseas were to become professional teachers, not mothers, and other women would later also be needed to teach in the schools. Therefore, in September, 1871, Yoshimasu Ryoko, Ueda Sadako, Yamakawa Sutematsu, Nagai Shigeko, and Tsuda Ume found themselves leaving for America. They were supposed to stay in America for ten years, and received a free education, travel, room, board, and eight hundred dollars in pocket money. The Empress herself had urged them to study for the good of Japanese women.<sup>13</sup>

As the mission was preparing, and the girls were leaving, and in October 1871, as Mary Kidder was beginning a new academic year, the Meiji Emperor himself publicly addressed his concern over the lack of women’s education in Japan, and urged those going abroad on the Iwakura Mission to take their “wives and sisters” with them. These women, married to the future leaders of the new Japan, were to learn the “essentials of civilization and methods of child-rearing” in the West. Again, the cause of education for women found support only inasmuch as it was linked to women’s maternal functions. Nonetheless, it was a start.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the more than seventy men of the Iwakura Mission, however, did not heed their Emperor's request. Their wives and sisters were left at home. Some of the Emperor's listeners, however, decided that while they were gone, the women could attend classes in Japan.

By February, 1872, Mary Kidder had over twenty students, and at least two were the wives of men attached "in some way" to the Iwakura Mission.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, throughout most of 1872, Mrs. Elizabeth Brown, with whom she lived, would be ill, and Miss Kidder also took charge of much of the housekeeping at the Brown's home.<sup>16</sup>

In January, 1872, when her numbers had grown to nineteen, she began to think of larger possibilities. The Woman's Union Missionary Society, the interdenominational society supported by women from various churches, including those from the Reformed Church in America, had just erected a "beautiful school building," and Mary Kidder began to envision such an institution for the Reformed Board missionaries. She had been encouraged in her plan by the receipt of an unsolicited gift of \$83, in Mexican dollars, from an unnamed Mission Band, connected with a Women's Missionary Society, as early as June or July of 1871. She noted that she did not know the ladies, and did not know how they had become interested in her work, but that she would invest it for a future school house.<sup>17</sup> The subject of gifts to individual missionaries was a sore point with the Board. In the interest of centralized control, the Board frowned on such gifts, preferring all money to be remitted to their treasury, and then dispensed as they deemed necessary. Nonetheless, in 1872, they had little way of directing such an offering from a Sunday school class, or women's prayer group. Autonomous, church-based women's missionary societies were springing up throughout the Synods, and while many apparently did send their funds to the Woman's Union, some directed them to missionary women of their own denomination. It

was the cognizance of the number of such transactions that would lead the church fathers to admit the possibility of organizing a woman's board within the Reformed Church in America, which could be under their control.<sup>18</sup>

The spurt of interest in women's education begun by Kuroda's memorandum and by the Emperor's message also led to several job offers for Mary Kidder herself, some of which she seriously considered accepting. In 1872, the Meiji government established a national school system, under the centralized control of the Ministry of Education in Tokyo. It would take time, however, for this system to become fully operative. Meanwhile, as they had done throughout the *bakumatsu* period, domains (*han*) and private individuals set up their own classes and schools, at their own expense. A few of these were for girls. Between the fall of 1871 and the following spring, Mary Kidder was approached by various influential men with offers to establish and head private schools. All of the offers were financially attractive, and tempting, especially given the financial exigencies her own Board was facing. For instance, in October, 1871, she had been asked to go to Tosa prefecture, on the island of Shikoku, which had been one of the coalition which had brought about the downfall of the Shogunate.<sup>19</sup> Tosa wanted her to establish a domain school for girls, similar to those which already existed for boys throughout Japan. By the time of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, historians estimate that there were approximately three hundred *han* academies, with their finances underwritten by *daimyo*, and designed to educate the male members of the samurai class. Tosa had already sent to America for three "ladies" to teach in the school, but feared that too much time was passing as the women traveled to Japan, and even more time would have to pass before they would be ready to teach upon their arrival. Therefore, they looked around Japan for avail-

able teachers, and learned about Mary Kidder. They immediately approached her and offered her the position.<sup>20</sup> Another offer, smaller in scope, came to teach the wife and daughter of the “Chief of Public Works”. Miss Kidder found this offer attractive, since she thought he was a “man of great influence” in Tokyo. A third opportunity was relayed to her through a student’s grandfather, who was a physician to the nobility in Tokyo. It was an offer to teach some half-dozen “princes” living in Tokyo. This third offer was particularly attractive, since it would have paid seventy dollars a month, with a house provided.<sup>21</sup> As an oyatoi salary, this was low.<sup>22</sup> William Eliot Griffis had been offered thirty six hundred dollars a year to teach in Fukui, and he reported that one missionary wife had been offered twelve hundred dollars a year for another position in Tokyo. For Miss Kidder, however, the offer was one hundred and forty dollars more than her by now six hundred dollars from the Board, half of which she had to pay out for room and board. Despite this fact, however, she quickly rejected the offer, adhering to her resolve to teach only girls, even though it meant rejecting an entree into that segment of society the missionaries found hardest to penetrate: the nobility.<sup>23</sup>

In February, 1872, yet another offer arrived, through the fellow Reformed Church representative, Guido Verbeck. She was asked to come to Tokyo to teach in a private school, that would be operated at the expense of several of the former *daimyo*, and would be designed to educate their families.<sup>24</sup> She thought this offer over carefully. The missionaries, as a whole, were growing more interested in the new capital, rightfully realizing that it would be the real seat of power and influence in the country. Furthermore in Tokyo, or “Yedo” as many of them still called it, their students would be more isolated from what the missionaries viewed as the pernicious influence of the foreign merchants and

sailors of the treaty ports.

Mary Kidder's acceptance of any of these offers would have placed her among the ranks of the *oyatoi*, the hired foreign experts. She would have enjoyed higher pay and a relatively high status, especially for a woman. Acceptance, however, would put her in a somewhat anomalous position vis-à-vis missionary work, since primary object would, in theory, be the school, not the conversion of souls to Christianity. A number of missionaries and pious laymen accepted such positions during the early days of Meiji, determined to both teach and convert, and to deal effectively with the dual commands of their employers and their religious imperatives. Verbeck was the most adroit at the dual role, but even he faced charges from some quarters that he had forsaken his charge as a missionary of the gospel for the prestige of becoming an advisor to the government.

There were other difficulties as well, chief of which was the fact that the school would have been coeducational. It would also have meant leaving the young women she was teaching in Yokohama, and that would have been difficult, since she had established close emotional ties with several of the students. Nonetheless, she believed that if duty truly called her to work in Tokyo, she would have to go. Empathy, emotion and personalism were the foundation of Woman's Work for Women, in Japan and around the world. Miss Kidder had considered that one way around her predicament would be to take some of her pupils with her:

Dr. Brown and Dr. Hepburn both think I might take a home and live pleasantly and comfortably without any other foreigners with me. Then I would take from here the three older girls whom I have taught all through the year to live in the home with me.

My other pupils would come for lessons and go home afterwards, and my home would always be opened to the Japanese.<sup>25</sup>

Other aspects of the job, which might have caused some women to demur, did not seem to bother Miss Kidder. Working independently, for the Japanese, some of whom she had already met because of their relationship to her students, was not a problem. Despite her knowledge of Dr. Brown's difficulties with a private employer in Niigata, she was favorably impressed with Japanese officials, especially those in Yokohama. Nor was she frightened by the business transactions would accompany such a position. She was "quite willing" to negotiate her salary, she told Dr. Ferris, although that was something she had neglected to do with the Reformed Board itself two years earlier.<sup>26</sup>

The main difficulty, at least in the minds of some of her peers, lay in her living arrangements. Although as she mentioned, Drs. Brown and Hepburn both supported the idea of her living alone in Tokyo, others objected to her leaving the rest of the foreign community, based in the treaty port of Yokohama, and living by herself in Tokyo:

...there seems to be an objection in the minds of some of my friends here to my living by myself as I should do if I go to Yedo, and these objections may not be groundless tho [*sic*] in whatever circumstances I find myself I shall try hard not to dishonor the name I serve.<sup>27</sup>

In 1872, it was inconceivable to many that an unmarried woman would or should live by herself in a foreign city. Despite her assurances that she could live alone, however, not as a member of a married male missionary's household, she had earlier suggested that if she did go with

her students to Tokyo, that she would like to “bring out in some way” another assistant to live with me, and suggested a friend of hers from New York, whom she would see if she could “induce the government her to send” for.<sup>28</sup>

In the end, Mary Kidder turned down the offer, although not without journeying up to Tokyo to investigate the situation. Her reason for declining the position had nothing to do with living independently, and in fact, was based on a different aspect of the principle of independence: she refused the offer because she “much prefer[red] no trammels of government, and care[d] nothing about their fine salaries.”<sup>29</sup> Rather than work as a *yatoi* teacher, she wanted the autonomy to direct the school in her own fashion. It was the choice that most women missionaries would take in Japan, and missionary girls’ schools would remain relatively independent from the public educational system until the 1890’s, when accreditation disputes would arise with the by-then powerful Ministry of Education. It was, in hindsight, an astute decision on her part, for the initial governmental interest in women’s education was neither deep nor sustained, and support would fluctuate over the intervening years as disputes arose over the purpose of women’s education and women’s place in society.

Meanwhile, governmental attempts to assert control over private schools continued. Between April and May, 1872, the Ministry of Education directed local governmental officials to inspect all private academies, and to examine their curricula and teachers.<sup>30</sup> Shortly after this announcement, Miss Kidder’s school was visited by the “Vice-Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture”, the Tosa-born, Oe Taku. Later that year, this man would gain fame, or notoriety depending on one’s point of view, among the foreign community, for his stance in the *Maria Luz* incident. In that incident, he refused to countenance the involvement of



Japan in the coolie labor trade, and over the protests of Peru, a court presided over by Oe ordered the release of 230 Chinese laborers aboard the Peruvian ship docked in Yokohama Harbour. Later, he would help raise an army for the Satsuma Rebellion, and serve seven years in prison as a result, before becoming a member of the first Diet as a Liberal Party member, and later making a fortune in railways in colonial Korea. In the final years of his life, he would speak out for the *burakumin*. In much of this activity, he acted from self-interest, and ironically, late in his life he would ruthlessly purge any interest in the female and feminine. However, in 1872, Oe was a powerful and influential ally, given to direct action.<sup>31</sup> He was favorably impressed with Miss Kidder, and became her firm supporter. He also placed his wife, and another woman, who was the wife of an official on the Iwakura Mission, in Miss Kidder's class.<sup>32</sup>

By the late spring of 1872, then, Mary Kidder had decided to remain in Yokohama. She had over twenty students, and felt that her class finally deserved the name of a school.<sup>33</sup> She began to voice hopes of having a building for a day school. The students remained diverse in age and marital status, although approximately three-quarters of the class were now over fourteen. Several were married, and one shared the schoolroom with her young daughter. While their ages may have varied, Miss Kidder believed that they were all from what the missionaries called the "better class" – the wives, daughters, sisters, and nieces of the new governmental officials, most of whom were from former samurai or wealthy merchant families.<sup>34</sup> While the missionaries did recognize the often precarious financial position of the former, that believed that the samurai as a whole remained influential and powerful.

Miss Kidder looked to these women of the "better class" to exert their projected Christian influence into the rest of Japanese society.

Once the women were converted, the Japanese believed, they would effect the conversion of their male kin, and more especially, see to the proper Christian upbringing of their children. Although they frequently called attention to the denigration of Japanese women, and to their low status in society, nonetheless, they continued to believe that Japanese women could have the same power within the family as they believed that western women had. Missionaries believed that social reform movements in America and Great Britain had arisen out of the middle and commercial classes, led by women such as Sarah Doremus of the Woman's Union Missionary Society. They looked for the same influence among the commercial and samurai families of Japan.

In 1872, however, even Mary Kidder had to admit that most of her students were not Christians. Nonetheless, the missionaries believed that her students' presence in her school could lead to opportunities to evangelize the men of their families. It did happen occasionally. In January, 1872, Mary Kidder was buoyed by the fact that the husband and father of two of her pupils asked her to his house to tell him about Christianity, although the prohibitions against the religion were still in effect, and would continue to be so until the following month. She went, however, and spent the afternoon talking with him.<sup>35</sup> Strictly speaking, however, the Board frowned on women teaching men, even informally. Therefore, Mary Kidder suggested to the Japanese man that he have a further talk with James Ballagh. The man, a wealthy merchant, seems to have had a fairly low opinion of the foreign men he had dealt with at work, and insisted on talking only with Miss Kidder. Miss Kidder assured him, however, that Mr. Ballagh was a "true man", and he relented and eventually joined the Ballagh Bible class.<sup>36</sup> As time went on, many of the missionary women would find this more direct form of evangelistic work and visitation more congenial to their tastes than

teaching. Some years would have to pass, however, before the Board would countenance the challenge to the doctrine of separate spheres embodied in the idea of women “preaching” to men, even to advance the cause of Christianity. Even as late as 1875, Miss Kidder (or Mrs. Miller as she was by then), wrote Dr. Ferris over his concerns that she and her students might have been “preaching” or praying in mixed gatherings. She assured him that his views on women doing so “exactly coincided” with her own, and she was sure that “none of my pupils have done anything that would disapprove.” What they had done was accompany her on a trip north to help her talk with the “natives, mostly men.” It was, she assured him, nothing like preaching. First, they had all sat down, and then the men asked questions. The sitting seemed to imply that preaching took place with the “preacher” standing. The women sat and answered the men’s questions, sometimes talking for hours in that way, but not giving prepared sermons. The only other situation that might have raised concern was when her student’s sister had recovered from a fever, and the student had risen in a mixed-sex social gathering at Mrs. Pruyn’s Women’s Union school, and had thanked the gathered assembly for their prayers. It was the only time a pupil had spoken in a mixed meeting, and the missionary hastened to assure Dr. Ferris that the speech was “simply Japanese etiquette and the only way she could reach them all”. Not until the mid-1880’s, after Ferris had retired from the Board, would women missionaries finally begin to speak in mixed meetings.<sup>37</sup>

However, let us return to the earlier days, and Miss Kidder’s school. The success of her day classes was encouraging, and in 1872, she began to consider renting a foreign-style building for her own use.<sup>38</sup> She again mentioned the beautiful school building of the Woman’s Union’s Sarah Doremus American Home Mission School, now known as *Kyoritsu*

*Jogakuen*. Dr. Brown, a firm advocate of all educational efforts in Japan, added his pleas to those of Miss Kidder: "...the school is a success. If now Miss Kidder could have a proper school house rented for her use, it would be possible to extend the benefits of the school much more than in practicable at present."<sup>39</sup>

If Ferris was not spurred by his dislike of the Woman's Union, perhaps the missionaries could appeal to his denominational pride: "...and besides, it does not look quite respectable for the Mission of the Reformed Church to be dependent upon that of the Presbyterian Church for its school house."<sup>40</sup>

A further spur was the arrival of non-Protestant competition, for on June 28, 1872, a delegation of five French Catholic sisters of the *Soeurs de l'Enfant-Jesus*, or *Dames de Saint-Maur*, arrived in Japan, and looking to start classes almost immediately, and to purchase land to build a school and a convent, which they would do by 1874.<sup>41</sup>

Mary Kidder's hopes became bolder, and she began to think of constructing her own building, especially after that unsolicited \$50 gift. By the fall of 1872, buildings were even more upon her mind. Dr. Hepburn, who had been in Shanghai visiting publishers for his Bible translation, had returned, and needed his dispensary for his medical practice. She searched for a suitable room, but could not find one. In desperation, she decided to appeal to the powerful Oe Taku. He went with her to look for a room, and when nothing was found, he offered her a building on his property in Nogeyama. She accepted his offer, pleased because it removed her from the foreign settlement, and made it easier for her students to attend. It also placed her, for at least part of the day, in the midst of an area of town where many influential government officials lived.<sup>42</sup>

Her classes were held in a Japanese house, but she endeavored to fashion her room into a New England classroom. A blackboard was mounted on the wall, and she brought in a world map to hang on the wall as well. Since her pupils were not charity cases, and since her own Board was having financial struggles, she left it to the students to furnish their classroom with whatever was not provided by Oe. Soon they had two tables, and backless benches. Her students, or their families, also provided the wood for the stove which would keep them warm that winter. "We look like a real school," she was pleased to report.<sup>43</sup>

Soon there were over forty students, and Oe turned over another building to them for class space. Miss Kidder thought that "the Governor begins to feel that the school is his for he comes in often and brings his friends to hear the girls sing."<sup>44</sup> Instruction continued to be at a basic level, although the academic work expanded as the school did, and as pupils advanced. Regular instruction was given, using western textbooks, in history, arithmetic, composition, reading, spelling, and writing. Miss Kidder's students provided their own materials. She was beginning to move away from English: everything was translated into Japanese, so that the students could understand it.<sup>45</sup>

Nor did Mary Kidder neglect her students' domestic training. Classes in sewing or fancy work, the latter a particular accomplishment of 19<sup>th</sup> century middle-class women, were offered twice a week. Furthermore, her emphasis on encouraging students from the "better classes", and the policy of "self-support" meant that her students could learn other practical domestic lessons as well, such as those connected with domestic and household finances. Her students paid for Miss Kidder's "jinricksha" coolies. Oe Taku had presented her with the vehicle because her own home was so far from the school. The students also administered the business expenses of the school, paying the rent, the

women who cleaned the rooms, and for the stove and its fuel.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the autumn of 1872, and on through 1873, in the more tolerable climate engendered by the absence of the signboards proscribing Christianity, Mary Kidder continued to place a large emphasis on religious education. She held lessons about the Bible, and from the Sunday school reader, *Peep of Day*. Students were taught the catechism. The class now met during the mornings, and they began by reading the translated Gospel of Mark every morning before formal classes commenced. Other Japanese medium of instruction work included learning the Ten Commandments and the Apostles Creed. Singing lessons continued, concentrating on hymns in preparation for Sunday school, which was attended by approximately half of her students, as well as by over fifty of the foreign children living in Yokohama.<sup>47</sup> The Sunday school, which Mary Kidder superintended, grew out of the Union (*Kaigan*) Church, whose nucleus had been the converts of a thriving class of young men taught by teachers of the Woman's Union.<sup>48</sup>

In her correspondence with Secretary Ferris during this period, Miss Kidder fielded many enquiries of his about the work of the Woman's Union. Ferris' distaste for the autonomy and independence of the Woman's Union grew throughout the years. Increasingly he worried about the loss of funds being donated by the women of his denomination to the Union. Mary Kidder had repeatedly reassured the vexed Secretary that the Woman's Union school, which had attracted students from the poor and children of "mixed" marriages, did not interfere with her class.<sup>49</sup>

Nonetheless, as her class grew ever larger, and inspired and goaded by the imposing edifice of the Woman's Union Sarah Doremus School (*Kyoritsu*), Mary Eddy Kidder began to have larger dreams of her own. She began to envision a school in which she could both house teachers

and students together in an all-encompassing structure, with classrooms, sleeping rooms, assembly hall and chapel, and teacher's living quarters all under one roof. Such a structure would enable her to impose the discipline and regulation that could more readily bring about the moral reformation and conversion of her students, most of whom were now under fifteen and unmarried. This plan, of course, emulated the antebellum "seminary" plan developed earlier in America by women such as Emma Willard and Mary Lyon.

Under the seminary plan, great stress was placed upon teacher-student relationships, which were to be close, empathetic, and personalized. Kidder later explained her theory in an address on the "Education of Women" at the Osaka Conference of Missionaries in 1883:

Whichever teacher gets down the deepest into the sympathies[sic] and inner life of her pupils, will accomplish the most good among them, and so reach the sympathies and excite the interest of their parents and save the most souls, which I trust is the one great desire of every missionary teacher in Japan.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, teaching help had arrived in the form of an assistant teacher, Stella K.M. Hequembourg, who arrived in December, 1872. Miss Hequembourg was from Miss Kidder's former church in Owasco Outlet, New York. She boarded with the James Ballagh family, and assisted in the Miss Kidder's day classes. More importantly, in that same month, Oe Taku had urged Miss Kidder to apply to the city government for a lot upon which to build a school, even though she did not yet have enough money to purchase it. It was long since time, she believed, to build a boarding school for girls in Yokohama.<sup>51</sup>

That December, Miss Kidder acceded to Oe's suggestions, and made

a formal application for the land for a school building. Oe told her he believed she would be granted the land almost immediately if she agreed to pay a yearly rental fee all foreigners were required to pay. Miss Kidder, however, thought in larger terms, and asked for the land rent-free for as long as it was used for a girls' school. Perhaps this unusual request stalled the paperwork, for the land was not immediately forthcoming. Oe believed the government would insist upon rent, but he offered to pay for it, with his friends, if she could come up with the money for a building. Such an offer was unprecedented, but not totally altruistic. Such a move could also give Oe, who had already exhibited a proprietary interest in the school on his lands, a fair amount of influence, and perhaps control, over the school.<sup>52</sup> Certainly it meant that a representative of the Japanese government would be aware of what was happening in Miss Kidder's school.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education continued in its efforts to assert control over the various schools in Japan. On September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1872, before Miss Kidder had reconvened her classes after summer vacation, all schools had been closed, and reopened the following day, then subject to the provisions of a new and ambitious Fundamental Code of Education (*Gakusei*). Under its provisions, nearly 54,000 elementary schools, 256 middle schools, and eight colleges were to be established in the country. The plan was far too ambitious for immediate achievement: not all of these schools were established, and overall, the national attendance rate at schools was only 30%, and lower for girls. The Ministry also tried to set guidelines for texts and curricula, echoing those found in the American schoolroom. The arrival, in 1873, of Professor David Murray of Rutgers, already well-known to many missionaries, would intensify this identification with American educational norms. As yet, the missionaries, then, had nothing to fear from the announcements



from the Ministry of Education.<sup>53</sup>

The *Gakusei* did stimulate the arrival of a great number of foreign teachers, many of them missionaries, into Japan. Miss Kidder's newest supporter was Miss Hequembourg, to whom Kidder delegated some of the onerous letter-writing tasks which took so much of her time. The Hequembourg letters were prosaic, reporting increases in the number of students, and relaying various requests from Miss Kidder. Miss Hequembourg wrote home that if the Reformed Board did not build a "better home" for Miss Kidder's students, they would lose them to other schools. Cannily nudging a sore spot in Secretary Ferris' character, Miss Hequembourg went on to state that "Mrs. Pruyn [of the WUMS] has just completed a beautiful school, and we cannot retain our reputation and pupils unless we have one just as good. They also have an organ – and we have nothing."<sup>54</sup> Miss Hequembourg also echoed another argument of the missionaries in Japan: nothing 'second-rate' would do, since the "Japanese are attracted by everything foreign if attractive and comfortable."<sup>55</sup> She further informs Secretary Ferris that "Japanese of culture and position have great confidence in Miss Kidder as an instructress and thorough lady"<sup>56</sup>

By January, 1873, the two Reformed women had nearly fifty students, and the government had surprised Oe: Miss Hequembourg reported that Miss Kidder had been offered land free from "ground-rent", for as long as it was used for a girls' school,<sup>57</sup> although initially the government had told them through the American consul that no foreigners had been allowed to occupy land rent-free, and that the government was not willing to do so. Nonetheless, she was free to choose any lot she wished. This she had done almost immediately, taking with her Dr. Brown, Consul DeLong, and Oe Taku. She chose a beautiful lot on the Bluff. After her visit to the Bluff, and another "quiet talk with the Gov-

ernor [*Oe*], a true friend”, she had written another letter directly to Oe, which he took personally to the government in Tokyo.<sup>58</sup> In the end, she got her wish, and the proviso that the lot be used for women’s education would save the school in later years, when the Mission thought of turning the imposing physical plant that Miss Kidder eventually created, into a boys’ theological school.

In addition to the governmental lot, Miss Kidder was also offered land by a private Japanese patron, “Mr. Takeshima, a liberal minded and wealthy Japanese”, who had no children, but sent three nieces to her school. He owned all of Nogyama, included the lots of Dr. Brown and John Ballagh.<sup>59</sup> The Reformed Board told her to accept that offer, but they were too late. By the time they made their decision, Takeshima had taken the more lucrative step of allowing the government to buy his land to build foreign residences, which were in great demand as foreigners flooded into Yokohama.<sup>60</sup> Miss Kidder was thrown back on the government’s offer, and in the meantime, had changed her mind about the lot she wanted. She hoped now to take the lot that had been promised to the American government for a naval hospital.<sup>61</sup>

By this time, another problem faced the incipient boarding school: the question of Board ownership, for “Miss Kidder” was no longer “Miss Kidder”. In February, 1873, confounding the Board’s expectations that at her advanced age (39!), she would remain single, Mary Kidder had become engaged to the E. Rothesay Miller, a Presbyterian missionary ten years younger than herself, who had arrived in Japan the previous summer. She asked Secretary Ferris to send a replacement for her, but promised to stay on as long as she could. In fact, she hoped that she would be able to remain a Reformed Board missionary, while Mr. Miller remained with the Presbyterians, a highly irregular state of affairs.<sup>62</sup>

They married in July, 1873, at the private home of a close friend,

Mrs. R. B. Baker, whose husband was the manager of the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China in Yokohama. Marriage out of a private home was a custom among Protestants at this time in America.<sup>63</sup> What was unusual was that the ceremony was not at the Brown's, Miss Kidder's home for three years, but Elizabeth Brown was often ill, and their unmarried daughter, Harriet, was deemed to be too busy teaching in her father's school to oversee the preparations. Dr. Brown did preside over the ceremony, to which few foreigners were invited – only those to whom she felt indebted for kindnesses shown her during her years in Yokohama. Instead, the real guests of honor were Mary Kidder's students, whom she had invited with the didactic purpose that they be able to see a Christian wedding. Nearly all of them attended. The Miller's went to the mountains for a three-week honeymoon, and then, in early August, returned to live with the Hepburns, while awaiting the building of their own four-room bungalow on the Bluff.<sup>64</sup> James Ballagh wrote that they were well-mated, "both very quiet, precise, and gently effective", and further noted that Mr. Miller was acting as Mrs. Miller's assistant in the school, and was "very liberal and ...will not seek to divert her labors."<sup>65</sup> Throughout August, her students came to her house on Saturdays and Sundays for lessons, until the weather became cooler. She then planned to open her school, as usual, in the fall term.<sup>66</sup>

The problem was that at this point, the Presbyterian Board had every right to assume that Mrs. Miller's class would now come under *their* control, since she was now the wife of a Presbyterian missionary. They also pointed out that the nucleus of the school had come from the Presbyterian Mrs. Hepburn's classes, and that the class had been conducted for several years out of the Presbyterian dispensary. Mrs. Miller, on the other hand, had received a salary as a Reformed missionary, and

did not have the “slightest intention of changing [her] relations with the Board.”<sup>67</sup> The squabble between the two Boards went on for several months, even as the women of the Reformed Church, with no missionary board of auxiliary of their own, began to raise money for Mrs. Miller’s school building. In the end, Mr. Miller took the highly unprecedented step of resigning from the Presbyterian Board, and joined the Reformed Board, in July, 1874. He continued to act as Mrs. Miller’s assistant, and was even more important to the school efforts once it transpired that Miss Hequembourg had developed tuberculosis, and in the spring of 1874, returned to her father, an Army chaplain stationed in Oregon.

Meanwhile, the first one thousand dollars had been provided for the school building, and eventually, the women of the Reformed Church raised five thousand dollars in the form of a memorial to Isaac Ferris, father of Missionary Secretary John Ferris. This monetary victory then presented Mrs. Miller with a gender-based challenge from another quarter: the men of her own mission. James Ballagh, less educationally inclined than Dr. Brown, but still in hopes of starting a theological school for boys, and also trying to build a church for new Japanese Christians, was the first to write, questioning why the decision had been made to apply the money to a girls’ school. He had been under the impression that the Board had been firmly against the outright ownership of buildings: “I have not asked for funds for the church or other purposes, since I learned years ago how difficult it was to get funds for any building purposes...”. Furthermore, he was appalled that the women of the church had such power, and by whose authority they had received it, since he believed that the brethren of the home church “I know, would not tolerate a woman’s mission in this connection with which they were never consulted and can have no voice in its affairs.”<sup>68</sup> None-

theless, a month later, when faced with the attempt of the Presbyterian Board to assume control of the girls' school, Ballagh did an about face, and came down firmly on Mrs. Miller's side,<sup>69</sup> although generally he was a proponent of union efforts on the field, working particularly closely with both the Presbyterian and Woman's Union representatives in Yokohama, often to Secretary Ferris' fury.

In February, 1874, Mrs. Miller began planning the actual school. According to a fund-raising letter she wrote to Sunday school supporters in America, her plans were initially fairly modest. The girls would remain on a Japanese diet of rice, fish, beans, vegetables, seaweed and fruit, with meat occasionally. She asked for donations for a large stove, "to cook for so many hungry children", and for towels ("the Japanese are great bathers"), and for tablecloths, napkins, dishes, lamps, and desks. Apparently, the students would eat Japanese food off of western tableware. In early 1874, she planned for one school room, 24 by 24 feet square, with tatami floors, although the students would sit on chairs and use tables.<sup>70</sup>

In March, she was still awaiting the decision from the American government about her lot, and unfortunately, her strongest support, Oe Taku, had been replaced in the government, although she hoped that the new official would be as friendly. Delay was costing her pupils: one of her favorites, Ko Okada, a convert to Christianity, had to move with her family to Tokyo, after spending eighteen months at the school. Eventually, Mrs. Miller was able to secure her return: she would be able to live with an American family, in return for assisting with the afternoon sewing. The American mother was reportedly pleased, because she could "trust" Ko "alone with the children".<sup>71</sup> It is doubtful, however, that Ko, of an old but poor samurai family, was interested in attaining a hard-won education in order to become a nursemaid to foreign children.

The delay in building was leading Ballagh to once again voice his concerns, confidentially, to Ferris: “Would it not be better to appropriate the funds you are raising for a girls’ school in Japan to a Ferris Memorial in the shape of a Theological Seminary for young men preparing for the ministry?”<sup>72</sup> He went on to claim that although he could see Ferris’ “horror at such a suggestion”, he felt that he had to advance his case. First, he averred that Mrs. Miller had told him privately that she intended leaving the school once it was firmly established.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, this does seem to be the case, for in nearly identical words, in September, 1874, she had written to Dr. Ferris anticipating the arrival of a new teacher, Miss Emma Witbeck, hoping that “I may soon see the school so firmly established that I shall not be needed.”<sup>74</sup> Second, Ballagh told Ferris that he was not confident Mrs. Miller would really get the lot, which was desired by a variety of foreigners, to whom the “vacillating” Japanese might grant the land. Third, Mrs. Miller could reach the same (official) class of young women she was now teaching through the new normal school that the government was establishing in Tokyo, and it was possible that she might even be given headship of that school. There she could have the “fullest measure of influence and have no responsibility for the supply of pupils or the expense of an institution.” Finally, her poorer pupils would not be abandoned under such a plan, for they could go to the Woman’s Union school. He claimed to have approached Mrs. Miller with his ideas, and “she [did] not seem averse to them.” In the end, however, he “trusted to Providence.” He would let the decision on getting the land settle the matter, and back-tracking from his earlier words, he said that actually, she might indeed actually have a good chance, since she had the support of David Murray.<sup>75</sup>

James Ballagh described the Japanese as “vacillating”, but until the fall of 1874, Mary Miller had nothing but good to say about her host

country. By September of that year, however, after five years in country, she was beginning to become frustrated, and vented her frustrations in a letter averring that governmental officials could not be trusted, and that before they became Christians, “Japanese like to lie sometimes.” The cause of her venom was the fact that before the 1874 summer vacation, she had received a verbal promise of the land for ten years, but was told there could be no official notification or paperwork until the autumn. Then, on September 3, she had gone to see the necessary officials, and had been told that she could indeed have the land, but only on the condition that she “give it up at six months’ notice”, which, since she planned to put a building on it, she found “simply ridiculous.”<sup>76</sup>

As always, her first recourse was to the Governor, who, of course, was no longer her patron, Oe. The new official told her that if she objected to the condition, she would have to write another letter. Furthermore, she believed that the tone of the conversation was not “so cordial as formerly”. Mr. Miller, who had accompanied her, told the official that they had as yet received nothing written to which to reply. The Governor seemed confused, she thought, and she began to think that “matters seemed a little crooked”, and that possibly the “six months business originated” in Yokohama, not in Tokyo. The lot was a desirable one, and with the rising demand in Yokohama for land, Mrs. Miller believed that the official had realized he could get from \$2500 to \$3000 dollars for the lot at auction, plus the usual annual ground-rent fee. In any event, Mrs. Miller decided to wait a few days, and then planned to go to the American consul, and if necessary, up to Tokyo again.<sup>77</sup>

It was an astute decision, for whatever the cause for the delay, by January, 1875, one of the best lots in Yokohama was hers. On January 8, 1875, she wrote Ferris that the school building had commenced.<sup>78</sup> Finally, only one other matter stood in the way of her goal of five years:

the estimates for the building. The Ferris Memorial Fund stood at \$5000, and the estimates she had for the work she wanted ran ten percent higher. Dr. Brown and Mr. Ballagh, perhaps with ulterior motives, had advised her to wait to begin until the Board approved the extra expenditure, but Mrs. Miller felt differently: “we have waited so long...the patience of the pupils and myself [is] stretched too far.”<sup>79</sup> There was a fund of \$1000 set aside for furnishing the school, and if necessary, they would take the money from there. So, “after duly consulting with Mr. Miller”<sup>80</sup> she decided to go ahead and build. If necessary, the Millers themselves would provide the extra \$500 if the Board declined to approve their plans. Fortunately, by return mail in February, Ferris approved her expenditures, and she “gave vent to a mental, and then verbal, hurray.”<sup>81</sup>

One last hurdle remained in her dealings with the Board over the school, and it was raised in the very letter requesting the extra expenditures. In one of the letters back and forth, Secretary John Ferris must have voiced his concern that Mrs. Miller might possibly be too dominant a figure in the marriage, for in the same January 1875 letter informing him that the Millers would themselves provide the extra money if necessary, Mrs. Miller noted that “we had quite a laugh over your little speech to us in regard to our marital relations. I exactly agree with you that the husband is head of the wife not only in theory but in practice...” but fortunately, for Mary Miller (actually, her husband referred to her by her middle name, Eddy) and the Reformed Board, the Millers found that they were “exactly agreed in all our plans for missionary work.”<sup>82</sup>

And, fortunately for the women and girls of Yokohama, those plans were to build the Isaac Ferris Seminary, which officially opened its doors six months later, on the first day of June, 1875. Only five years earlier, Miss Kidder had a tiny class of 4 boys and 3 girls, meeting when



they could in a borrowed room. Now, she, her husband, Miss Witbeck, and her more than 50 students, lived together, with room still available for one more, unmarried. teacher. The building Mrs. Miller had worked so long for was an imposing grey-brick western structure, seventy-five feet by forty-feet. It stood in its prominent position on the Bluff, visible from the business district of Yokohama. In Meiji Japan, public western-style school buildings would assume important positions as public buildings in the community, and Ferris Seminary assumed a similar role in the foreign Christian community of Yokohama. In June, 1875, Mrs. Miller had the building, and an educational plan to put into effect within its substantial walls. “Miss Kidder’s School” was finally a reality.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Richard Rubinger, “Education: From One room to One System”, in *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*, Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozen, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 205–206

<sup>2</sup> Mary Kidder to Dr. Ferris, 1 March, 1869, Letters and Correspondence of the North Japan Mission, Reformed Church in America, collected in the Yokohama Archives of History

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 30–34. On the subject of the exodus of young women from the hill-farms of New England, in particular, Vermont, see Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985)

<sup>4</sup> Pamela Lee Novick, “So long dependent upon myself: Mary E. Kidder and the Beginnings of Unmarried Women’s Missionary Work in Japan”, *Kiyo*, vol. 30, 1997, Keisen Jogakuen, pp. 77–100

<sup>5</sup> Rubinger, *op cit.*, pp. 204–205

<sup>6</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, October 21, 1871

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> In the Candidate Files of the Gardner–Sage Archives, there is a letter from Mary Kidder to John Ferris, dated January 5, 1870, which mentions that the girl, Teiko, from Niigata, is to go to America with the Iwakura Mission, and that Miss Kidder had known her and exchanged language lessons with her in Niigata.

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Rose, *Tsuda Umeko and Women’s Education in Japan*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> S. R. Brown to J. M. Ferris, February, 1872

<sup>16</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, January 22, 1872

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Pamela Lee Novick, “So long dependent upon myself: Mary E. Kidder and the Beginnings of Unmarried Women’s Missionary Work in Japan”, *Kiyo*, vol. 30, 1997, Keisen Jogakuen, pp. 82–85

<sup>19</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, February 26, 1872

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Daniel A. Metraux, “Lay Proselytization in Japan in the Meiji Period: The Career of E. Warren Clark”, in *Undercurrents: The Japan Scene Past and Present*, no. 12, August, 1985, pp. 33–48.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, February 26, 1872

- <sup>24</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, May 23, 1872
- <sup>25</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, October 21, 1871
- <sup>26</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, February 26, 1872
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, October 21, 1871
- <sup>29</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, May 23, 1872
- <sup>30</sup> Rubinger, *op.cit.*, p. 205
- <sup>31</sup> Daniel V. Botsman, “Serving the Emperor, Saving the Buraku, and Purging the Feminine: Creating the Public Life of Oe Taku”, paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Japan Sessions, April 6–9, 2006
- <sup>32</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, May 23, 1872
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, January 22, 1872
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Mary Kidder Miller to J. M. Ferris, January 8, 1875
- <sup>38</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, January 22 and May 23, 1872
- <sup>39</sup> S. R. Brown to J. M. Ferris, February, 1872, YAH, p. 42
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> Ann M. Harrington, “The first women religious in Japan: Mother Saint Mathilde Raclot and the French connection”, *The Catholic Historical Review*, Oct 2001, vol. 87, issue 4, pp. 603–607
- <sup>42</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, September 30, 1872
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, December 4, 1873
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, January 22, 1872

<sup>50</sup> *Proceedings of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of Japan Held at Osaka, Japan, April 1883*, (Yokohama: R. Meiklejohn & Co., 1883) See more discussion about this topic in Pamela Lee Novick, “Visions of Missionary School Education for Women: Ferris Seminary, 1870–1890”, a paper presented at the 44th Annual Symposium of Society of Historical Study of Christianity in Japan, September 18, 1993.

<sup>51</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, December 7, 1872

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*

<sup>53</sup> Rubinger, pp. 205–207

<sup>54</sup> Stella K. Hequembourg to J. M. Ferris, December 1872, YAH, vol. 43, pp. 124–126

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*

<sup>57</sup> Stella K. Hequembourg to J. M. Ferris, January 1873

<sup>58</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, February 22, 1873

<sup>59</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, April 19, 1873

<sup>60</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, November 1, 1873

<sup>61</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, January 1874

<sup>62</sup> Mary Kidder to J. M. Ferris, April 19, 1873

<sup>63</sup> Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840–1900*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1994), pp. 97–99

<sup>64</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, August 22, 1873

<sup>65</sup> James Ballagh to J. M. Ferris, December 3, 1873

<sup>66</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, August 22, 1873

<sup>67</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, December 4, 1873

<sup>68</sup> James M. Ballagh to J. M. Ferris, November 1, 1873

<sup>69</sup> James M. Ballagh to J. M. Ferris, December 3, 1873

<sup>70</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, February 11, 1874

<sup>71</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, March 1874

<sup>72</sup> James M. Ballagh to J. M. Ferris, May 1874

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, September, 1874

<sup>75</sup> James M. Ballagh to J. M. Ferris, May 1874

<sup>76</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, September, 1874

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, January 8, 1875

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, February 10, 1875

<sup>82</sup> Mary Miller to J. M. Ferris, January 8, 1875

## **To Build a School: Miss Kidder's School for Girls, 1870–1875**

Pamela Lee Novick

This paper discusses the development of one school during the early Meiji period. It traces the evolution of the class of Mary Eddy Kidder, later Miller, which was the nucleus of the Isaac Ferris Seminary, which first opened its doors on the first of June, 1875. For the previous five years, however, Kidder had taken advantage of the changing attitudes toward women's education, and of the demand for English instruction, to press on from a small class conducted in a borrowed medical dispensary until she had nearly fifty students, eager for more education. To accomplish this, Miss Kidder both adroitly cultivated patronage among influential Japanese officials, and fended off challenges to her gender-based work from both other Missions, when she married E. Rothesay Miller of the Presbyterian Board, and from her own Board when her work educating girls proved to generate more economic support from American women than did the men's work of educating boys theologically. In the end, Mary Kidder Miller created a substantial women's seminary, on land which was granted to her, without precedent, rent-free by the Japanese government, so long as it remained dedicated to the education of Japanese women. On that land she had built an imposing Western monument dedicated to the education of Japanese young women, high on the Bluffs of Yokohama, visible throughout much of the Treaty port.