

## IX

### MARITAL LOVE

IF the Japanese are a conspicuously emotional race, as is commonly believed, we should naturally expect this characteristic to manifest itself in a marked degree in the relation of the sexes. Curiously enough, however, such does not seem to be the case. So slight a place does the emotion of sexual love have in Japanese family life that some have gone to the extreme of denying it altogether. In his brilliant but fallacious volume, entitled "The Soul of the Far East," Mr. Percival Lowell states that the Japanese do not "fall in love." The correctness of this statement we shall consider in connection with the argument for Japanese impersonality. That "falling in love" is not a recognized part of the family system, and that marriage is arranged regardless not only of love, but even of mutual acquaintance, are indisputable facts.

Let us confine our attention here to Japanese post-marital emotional characteristics. Do Japanese husbands love their wives and wives their husbands? We have already seen that in the text-book for Japanese women, the "Onna Daigaku," not one word is said about love. It may be stated at once that love between husband and wife is almost as conspicuously lacking in practice as in precept. In no regard, perhaps, is the contrast between the East and the West more striking than the respective ideas concerning woman and marriage. The one counts woman the equal, if not the superior of man; the other looks down upon her as man's inferior in every respect; the one considers profound love as the only true condition of marriage; the other thinks of love as essentially impure, beneath the dignity of a true man, and not to be taken into consideration

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when marriage is contemplated; in the one, the two persons most interested have most to say in the matter; in the other, they have the least to say; in the one, a long and intimate previous acquaintance is deemed important; in the other, the need for such an acquaintance does not receive a second thought; in the one, the wife at once takes her place as the queen of the home; in the other, she enters as the domestic for her husband and his parents; in the one, the children are hers as well as his; in the other, they are his rather than hers, and remain with him in case of divorce; in the one, divorce is rare and condemned; in the other, it is common in the extreme; in the one, it is as often the woman as the man who seeks the divorce; in the other, until most recent times, it is the man alone who divorces the wife; in the one, the reasons for divorce are grave; in the other, they are often trivial; in the one, the wife is the "help-mate"; in the other, she is the man's "plaything"; or, at most, the means for continuing the family lineage; in the one, the man is the "husband"; in the other, he is the "danna san" or "teishu" (the lord or master); in the ideal home of the one, the wife is the object of the husband's constant affection and solicitous care; in the ideal home of the other, she ever waits upon her lord, serves his food for him, and faithfully sits up for him at night, however late his return may be; in the one, the wife is justified in resenting any unfaithfulness or immorality on the part of her husband; in the other, she is commanded to accept with patience whatever he may do, however many concubines he may have in his home or elsewhere; and however immoral he may be, she must not be jealous. The following characterization of the women of Japan is presumably by one who would do them no injustice, having himself married a Japanese wife (the editor of the *Japan Mail*).

"The woman of Japan is a charming personage in many ways—gracious, refined, womanly before everything, sweet-tempered, unselfish, virtuous, a splendid mother, and an ideal wife from the point of view of the master. But she is virtually excluded from the whole

intellectual life of the nation. Politics, art, literature, science, are closed books to her. She cannot think logically about any of these subjects, express herself clearly with reference to them, or take an intellectual part in conversations relating to them. She is, in fact, totally disqualified to be her husband's intellectual companion, and the inevitable result is that he despises her."\*

In face of all these facts, it is evident that the emotional element of character which plays so large a part in the relation of the sexes in the West has little, if any, counterpart in the Far East. Where the emotional element does come in, it is under social condemnation. There are doubtless many happy marriages in Japan, if the wife is faithful in her place and fills it well; and if the master is honorable according to the accepted standards, steady in his business, not given to wine or women. But even then the affection must be different from that which prevails in the West. No Japanese wife ever dreams of receiving the loving care from her husband which is freely accorded her Western sister by her husband.†

I wish, however, to add at once that this is a topic about which it is dangerous to dogmatize, for the customs of Japan demand that all expressions of affection between husband and wife shall be sedulously concealed from the outer world. I can easily believe that there is no little true affection existing between husband and wife. A Japanese friend with whom I have talked on this subject expresses his belief that the statement made above, to the effect that no Japanese wife dreams of receiving the loving care which is expected by her West-

\* *Japan Mail*, June 4, 1898, p. 586.

† If all that has been said above as to the relative lack of affection between husband and wife is true, it will help to make more credible, because more intelligible, the preceding chapter as to the relative lack of love for children. Where the relation between husband and wife is what we have depicted it, where the children are systematically taught to feel for their father respect rather than love, the relation between the father and the children, or the mother and the children, cannot be the same as in lands where all these customs are reversed.

ern sister, is doubtless true of Old Japan, but that there has been a great change in this respect in recent decades; and especially among the Christian community. That Christians excel the others with whom I have come in contact, has been evident to me. But that even they are still very different from Occidentals in this respect, is also clear. Whatever be the affection lavished on the wife in the privacy of the home, she does not receive in public the constant evidence of special regard and high esteem which the Western wife expects as her right.

How much affection can be expressed by low formal bows? The fact is that Japanese civilization has striven to crush out all signs of emotion; this stoicism is exemplified to a large degree even in the home, and under circumstances when we should think it impossible. Kissing was an unknown art in Japan, and it is still unknown, except by name, to the great majority of the people. Even mothers seldom kiss their infant children, and when they do, it is only while the children are very young.

The question, however, which particularly interests us, is as to the explanation for these facts. Is the lack of demonstrative affection between husband and wife due to the inherent nature of the Japanese, or is it not due rather to the prevailing social order? If a Japanese goes to America or England, for a few years, does he maintain his cold attitude toward all women, and never show the slightest tendency to fall in love, or exhibit demonstrative affection? These questions almost answer themselves, and with them the main question for whose solution we are seeking.

A few concrete instances may help to illustrate the generalization that these are not fixed because racial characteristics, but variable ones dependent on the social order. Many years ago when the late Dr. Neesima, the founder, with Dr. Davis, of the Doshisha, was on the point of departure for the United States on account of his health, he made an address to the students. In the course of his remarks he stated that there were three principal considerations that made him regret the necessity for his departure at that time; the first was

that the Doshisha was in a most critical position; it was but starting on its larger work, and he felt that all its friends should be on hand to help on the great undertaking. The second was that he was compelled to leave his aged parents, whom he might not find living on his return to Japan. The third was his sorrow at leaving his beloved wife. This public reference to his wife, and especially to his love for her, was so extraordinary that it created no little comment, not to say scandal; especially obnoxious was it to many, because he mentioned her after having mentioned his parents. In the reports of this speech given by his friends to the public press no reference was made to this expression of love for his wife. And a few months after his death, when Dr. Davis prepared a short biography of Dr. Neesima, he was severely criticised by some of the Japanese for reproducing the speech as Dr. Neesima gave it.

Shortly after my first arrival in Japan, I was walking home from church one day with an English-speaking Japanese, who had had a good deal to do with foreigners. Suddenly, without any introduction, he remarked that he did not comprehend how the men of the West could endure such tyranny as was exercised over them by their wives. I, of course, asked what he meant. He then said that he had seen me buttoning my wife's shoes. I should explain that on calling on the Japanese, in their homes, it is necessary that we leave our shoes at the door, as the Japanese invariably do; this is, of course, awkward for foreigners who wear shoes; especially so is the necessity of putting them on again. The difficulty is materially increased by the invariably high step at the front door. It is hard enough for a man to kneel down on the step and reach for his shoes and then put them on; much more so is it for a woman. And after the shoes are on, there is no suitable place on which to rest the foot for buttoning and tying. I used, therefore, very gladly to help my wife with hers. Yet, so contrary to Japanese precedent was this act of mine that this well-educated gentleman and Christian, who had had much intercourse with foreigners, could not see in it anything except the imperious command of the wife

and the slavish obedience of the husband. His conception of the relation between the Occidental husband and wife is best described as tyranny on the part of the wife.

One of the early shocks I received on this general subject was due to the discovery that whenever my wife took my arm as we walked the street to and from church, or elsewhere, the people looked at us in surprised displeasure. Such public manifestation of intimacy was to be expected from libertines alone, and from these only when they were more or less under the influence of drink. Whenever a Japanese man walks out with his wife, which, by the way, is seldom, he invariably steps on ahead, leaving her to follow, carrying the parcels, if there are any. A child, especially a son, may walk at his side, but not his wife.

Let me give a few more illustrations to show how the present family life of the Japanese checks the full and free development of the affections. In one of our out-stations I but recently found a young woman in a distressing condition. Her parents had no sons, and consequently, according to the custom of the land, they had adopted a son, who became the husband of their eldest daughter; the man proved a rascal, and the family was glad when he decided that he did not care to be their son any longer. Shortly after his departure a child was born to the daughter; but, according to the law, she had no husband, and consequently the child must either be registered as illegitimate, or be fraudulently registered as the child of the mother's father. There is much fraudulent registration, the children of concubines are not recognized as legitimate; yet it is common to register such children as those of the regular wife, especially if she has few or none of her own.

An evangelist who worked long in Kyushu was always in great financial trouble because of the fact that he had to support two mothers, besides giving aid to his father, who had married a third wife. The first was his own mother, who had been divorced, but, as she had no home, the son took her to his. When the father

divorced his second wife, the son was induced to take care of her also. Another evangelist, with whom I had much to do, was the adopted son of a scheming old man; it seems that in the earlier part of the present era the eldest son of a family was exempt from military draft. It often happened, therefore, that families who had no sons could obtain large sums of money from those who had younger sons whom they wished to have adopted for the purpose of escaping the draft. This evangelist, while still a boy, was adopted into such a family, and a certain sum was fixed upon to be paid at some time in the future. But the adopted son proved so pleasing to the adopting father that he did not ask for the money; by some piece of legerdemain, however, he succeeded in adopting a second son, who paid him the desired money. After some years the first adopted son became a Christian, and then an evangelist, both steps being taken against the wishes of the adopting father. The father finally said that he would forego all relations to the son, and give him back his original name, provided the son would pay the original sum that had been agreed on, plus the interest, which altogether would, at that time, amount to several hundred yen. This was, of course, impossible. The negotiations dragged on for three or four years. Meanwhile, the young man fell in love with a young girl, whom he finally married; as he was still the son of his adopting father, he could not have his wife registered as his wife, for the old man had another girl in view for him and would not consent to this arrangement. And so the matter dragged for several months more. Unless the matter could be arranged, any children born to them must be registered as illegitimate. At this point I was consulted and, for the first time, learned the details of the case. Further consultations resulted in an agreement as to the sum to be paid; the adopted son was released, and re-registered under his newly acquired name and for the first time his marriage became legal. The confusion and suffering brought into the family by this practice of adoption and of separation are almost endless. The number of cases in which beautiful and accom-

plished young women have been divorced by brutal and licentious husbands is appalling. I know several such. What wonder that Christians and others are constantly laying emphasis, in public lectures and sermons and private talks, on the crying need of reform in marriage and in the home?

Throughout the land the newspapers are discussing the pros and cons of monogamy and polygamy. In January of 1898 the *Jiji Shimpō*, one of the leading daily papers of Tokyo, had a series of articles on the subject from the pen of one of the most illustrious educators of New Japan, Mr. Fukuzawa. His school, the "Keio Gijiku," has educated more thousands of young men than any other, notwithstanding the fact that it is a private institution. Though not a Christian himself, nor making any professions of advocating Christianity, yet Mr. Fukuzawa has come out strongly in favor of monogamy. His description of the existing social and family life is striking, not to say sickening. If I mistake not, it is he who tells of a certain noble lady who shed tears at the news of the promotion of her husband in official rank; and when questioned on the matter she confessed that, with added salary, he would add to the number of his concubines and to the frequency of his intercourse with famous dancing and singing girls.

The distressing state of family life may also be gathered from the large numbers of public and secret prostitutes that are to be found in all the large cities, and the singing girls of nearly every town. According to popular opinion, their number is rapidly increasing. Though this general subject trenches on morality rather than on the topic immediately before us, yet it throws a lurid light on this question also. It lets us see, perhaps, more clearly than we could in any other way, how deficient is the average home life of the people. A professing Christian, a man of wide experience and social standing, not long since seriously argued at a meeting of a Young Men's Christian Association that dancing and singing girls are a necessary part of Japanese civilization to-day. He argued that they supply the men with that female element in social life which the ordi-

nary woman cannot provide; were the average wives and daughters sufficiently accomplished to share in the social life of the men as they are in the West, dancing and singing girls, being needless, would soon cease to be.

One further question in this connection merits our attention. How are we to account for an order of society that allows so little scope for the natural affections of the heart, unless by saying that that order is the true expression of their nature? Must we not say that the element of affection in the present social order is deficient because the Japanese themselves are naturally deficient? The question seems more difficult than it really is.

In the first place, the affectionate relation existing between husbands and wives and between parents and children, in Western lands, is a product of relatively recent times. In his exhaustive work on "The History of Human Marriage," Westermarck makes this very plain. Wherever the woman is counted a slave, is bought and sold, is considered as merely a means of bearing children to the family, or in any essential way is looked down upon, there high forms of affection are by the nature of the case impossible, though some affection doubtless exists; it necessarily attains only a rudimentary development. Now it is conspicuous that the conception of the nature and purpose of woman, as held in the Orient, has always been debasing to her. Though individual women might rise above their assigned position the whole social order, as established by the leaders of thought, was against her. The statement that there was a primitive condition of society in Japan in which the affectionate relations between husband and wife now known in the West prevailed, is, I think, a mistake.

We must remember, in the second place, what careful students of human evolution have pointed out, that those tribes and races in which the family was most completely consolidated, that is to say, those in which the power of the father was absolute, were the ones to gain the victory over their competitors. The reason for this is too obvious to require even a statement. Every

conquering race has accordingly developed the "patria potestas" to a greater or less degree. Now one general peculiarity of the Orient is that that stage of development has remained to this day; it has not experienced those modifications and restrictions which have arisen in the West. The national government dealt with families and clans, not with individuals, as the final social unit. In the West, however, the individual has become the civil unit; the "patria potestas" has thus been all but lost. This, added to religious and ethical considerations, has given women and children an ever higher place both in society and in the home. Had this loss of authority by the father been accompanied with a weakening of the nation, it would have been an injury; but, in the West, his authority has been transferred to the nation. These considerations serve to render more intelligible and convincing the main proposition of these chapters, that the distinctive emotional characteristics of the Japanese are not inherent; they are the results of the social and industrial order; as this order changes, they too will surely change. The entire civilization of a land takes its leading, if not its dominant, color from the estimate set by the people as a whole on the value of human life. The relatively late development of the tender affections, even in the West, is due doubtless to the extreme slowness with which the idea of the inherent value of a human being, as such, has taken root, even though it was clearly taught by Christ. But the leaven of His teaching has been at work for these hundreds of years, and now at last we are beginning to see its real meaning and its vital relation to the entire progress of man. It may be questioned whether Christ gave any more important impetus to the development of civilization than by His teaching in regard to the inestimable worth of man, grounding it, as He did, on man's divine sonship. Those nations which insist on valuing human life only by the utilitarian standard, and which consequently keep woman in a degraded place, insisting on concubinage and all that it implies, are sure to wane before those nations which loyally adopt and practice the higher ideals of human worth. The weakness

of heathen lands arises in no slight degree from their cheap estimate of human life.

In Japan, until the Meiji era, human life was cheap. For criminals of the military classes, suicide was the honorable method of leaving this world; the lower orders of society suffered loss of life at the hands of the military class without redress. The whole nation accepted the low standards of human value; woman was valued chiefly, if not entirely, on a utilitarian basis, that, namely, of bearing children, doing house and farm work, and giving men pleasure. So far as I know, not among all the teachings of Confucius or Buddha was the supreme value of human life, as such, once suggested, much less any adequate conception of the worth and nature of woman. The entire social order was constructed without these two important truths.

By a great effort, however, Japan has introduced a new social order, with unprecedented rapidity. By one revolution it has established a set of laws in which the equality of all men before the law is recognized at least; for the first time in Oriental history, woman is given the right to seek divorce. The experiment is now being made on a great scale as to whether the new social order adopted by the rulers can induce those ideas among the people at large which will insure its performance. Can the mere legal enactments which embody the principles of human equality and the value of human life, regardless of sex, beget those fundamental conceptions on which alone a steady and lasting government can rest? Can Japan really step into the circle of Western nations, without abandoning her pagan religions and pushing onward into Christian monotheism with all its corollaries as to the relations and mutual duties of man? All earnest men are crying out for a strengthening of the moral life of the nation through the reform of the family and are proclaiming the necessity of monogamy; but, aside from the Christians, none appear to see how this is to be done. Even Mr. Fukuzawa says that the first step in the reform of the family and the establishment of monogamy is to develop public sentiment against prostitution and plural or

illegal marriage; and the way to do this is first to make evil practices secret. This, he says, is more important than to give women a higher education. He does not see that Christianity with its conceptions of immediate responsibility of the individual to God, the loving Heavenly Father, and of the infinite value of each human soul, thus doing away with the utilitarian scale for measuring both men and women, together with its conceptions of the relations of the sexes and of man to man, can alone supply that foundation for all the elements of the new social order, intellectual and emotional, which will make it workable and permanent, and of which monogamy is but one element.\* He does not see that

\*The effect of Christian missions cannot be measured by the numbers of those who are to be counted on the church rolls; almost unconsciously the nation is absorbing Christian ideals from the hundreds of Christian missionaries and tens of thousands of Christian natives. The necessities of the new social order make their teachings intelligible and acceptable as the older social order did not and could not. This accounts for the astonishing change in the anti-Christian spirit of the Japanese. This spirit did not cease at once on the introduction of the new social order, nor indeed is it now entirely gone. But the change from the Japan of thirty years ago to the Japan of to-day, in its attitude toward Christianity, is more marked than that of any great nation in history. A similar change in the Roman Empire took place, but it required three hundred years. This change in Japan may accordingly be called truly miraculous, not in the sense, however, of a result without a cause, for the causes are well understood.

Among the Christians, especially, the old order is rapidly giving way to the new. Christianity has brought a new conception of woman and her place in the home and her relation to her husband. Japanese Christian girls, and recently non-Christian girls, are seeking an education which shall fit them for their enlarging life. Many of the more Christian young men do not want heathen wives, with their low estimate of themselves and their duties, and they are increasingly unwilling to marry those of whom they know nothing and for whom they care not at all. Already the idea that love is the only safe foundation for the home is beginning to take root in Japan. This changing ideal is bringing marked social changes. In some churches an introduction committee is appointed whose special function is to introduce marriageable persons and to hold social meetings where the young people may become acquainted. Here an important evolution in the social order is taking place before our eyes, but not a few of the world's wise men are too exalted to see it. Love and demonstrative affection between husband and

representative government and popular rights cannot stand for any length of time on any other foundation.

wife will doubtless become as characteristic of Japan in the future as their absence has been characteristic in the past. To recapitulate: these distinctive characteristics of the emotional life of the Japanese might at first seem to be so deep-rooted as to be inherent, yet they are really due to the ideas and customs of the social order, and are liable to change with any new system of ideas and customs that may arise. The higher development of the emotional life of the Japanese waits now on the reorganization of the family life; this rests on a new idea as to the place and value of woman as such and as a human being; this in turn rests on the wide acceptance of Christian ideals as to God and their mutual relations. It involves, likewise, new ideals as to man's final destiny. In Japan's need of these Christian ideals we find one main ground and justification, if justification be needed, for missionary enterprise among this Eastern people.

## X

CHEERFULNESS — INDUSTRY — TRUTHFUL-  
NESS—SUSPICIOUSNESS

MANY writers have dwelt with delight on the cheerful disposition that seems so common in Japan. Lightness of heart, freedom from all anxiety for the future, living chiefly in the present, these and kindred features are pictured in glowing terms. And, on the whole, these pictures are true to life. The many flower festivals are made occasions for family picnics when all care seems thrown to the wind. There is a simplicity and a freshness and a freedom from worry that is delightful to see. But it is also remarked that a change in this regard is beginning to be observed. The coming in of Western machinery, methods of government, of trade and of education, is introducing customs and cares, ambitions and activities, that militate against the older ways. Doubtless, this too is true. If so, it but serves to establish the general proposition of these pages that the more outstanding national characteristics are largely the result of special social conditions, rather than of inherent national character.

The cheerful disposition, so often seen and admired by the Westerner, is the cheerfulness of children. In many respects the Japanese are relatively undeveloped. This is due to the nature of their social order during the past. The government has been largely paternal in form and fully so in theory. Little has been left to individual initiative or responsibility. Wherever such a system has been dominant and the perfectly accepted order, the inevitable result is just such a state of simple, childish cheerfulness as we find in Japan. It constitutes that golden age sung by the poets of every land. But being the cheerfulness of children, the happiness of im-