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Kishida Toshiko and the Rise of the Female Speaker in Meiji Japan

Marnie S. Anderson

In October 1883, a young woman named Kishida (Nakajima) Toshiko (1861–1901) stood up in front of an audience of between 500 and 600 people at the Yotsu no Miya Theater in Ōtsu city, outside Kyoto, and delivered a speech entitled “Hakoiri musume” (literally, “Daughters Kept in Boxes”).¹ A term in common circulation throughout the Kyoto area, *hakoiri musume* referred to the actions of concerned parents who, to “protect” their daughters, created a “box” to put them in, rendering them safe from the outside world. Kishida claimed that although parents who engaged in such practices might think they had their daughters’ best interests at heart, they were in fact mistaken. By denying girls the freedom to grow and develop intellectually, parents actually caused their daughters to rot (*mushiiri musume*) and even drove them to run away from home.² At the end of the lecture, Kishida was promptly arrested by local authorities who claimed that her speech contained illegal political content. Specifically, they charged her with slander, asserting that Kishida had not merely criticized child-rearing practices but had employed metaphors whereby daughters were equated with the Japanese people and parents with the police and government. As a result, Kishida spent eight excruciating days in jail. Due to illness, she was released early, and was eventually fined 5 yen for introducing political content into what was supposed to be a strictly educational or academic speech (*gakujutsu enzetsu*). She was, however, cleared of the charge of “insulting officialdom.” After the incident she cut back on her speaking engagements, and she ceased delivering

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political speeches altogether upon her marriage to the politician and activist Nakajima Nobuyuki in 1884.³

Newspaper coverage of Kishida’s arrest captured attention across Japan. Her speeches had been the object of considerable media coverage ever since she had begun her career as the first female speaker to participate in the public lectures sponsored by the Constitutional Party (Rikken Seitō) some eighteen months earlier. Not only was Kishida the sole woman, but she was someone of pedigree who had ties to the imperial house. A commoner of merchant class background, Kishida had been educated in the public schools that had opened up around Kyoto soon after the Meiji Restoration.⁴ Her talent had been recognized early on, and at the age of eighteen she had been selected to serve as the empress’s tutor in the Chinese classics. Such an honor was unprecedented for a commoner and caused a stir throughout local society.⁵

Although Kishida was not the first Japanese woman in the historical record to speak in public, she was the one who captured the most attention nationwide. Along with Fukuda (Kageyama) Hideko (1865–1927) and Shimizu Toyoko (1868–1933), she is celebrated today both in textbooks and in conventional histories of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (Jiyū Minken Undō), a series of movements that called for constitutional government and championed newly assimilated notions of “freedom” and “rights.”⁶ The case of Kishida demonstrates that women participated in the vibrant political culture of the late 1870s and early 1880s. Her story draws our attention to a short period when women occupied a visible part of the political landscape as speaking subjects. As such, it complicates our understanding of modern political history and the gendering of Meiji political culture.⁷

The task of uncovering what female speakers said is made difficult by the dearth of speech records. Even in the case of Kishida Toshiko, we have the text of just one full speech—and then only because she was arrested and tried for it. Nevertheless, some of Kishida’s published work gives us an idea of what she may have said in her speeches. Newspaper articles are of limited utility, for while they offer the titles of speeches and details about their location, journalists tended to focus on the speaker’s appearance and the crowd’s reaction rather than the content of the speech (which is, in itself, telling).

Due to the fragmentary nature of the historical record, much of this essay focuses on Kishida. In examining her career as a speaker, I look at the content of her speeches and the response she generated from the media and the audience. I also consider how contemporaries imagined the proper way for women to speak and what this tells us about Meiji

ideals of femininity and women's relationship to the burgeoning public sphere. I argue that the nature of women's access to the Meiji public sphere was both limited and paradoxical.⁸ On the one hand, if they adhered to proper gender and class behavior, they stood a better chance of being heard, as opposed to being dismissed as "unladylike" or "tomboyish." On the other hand, adherence to gender norms could lead to specific problems: although audiences and reporters may have appreciated a female speaker's proper performance of femininity, they did not necessarily hear her message. Yet the case of Kishida shows that, far from being without agency, female speakers had a significant impact both on members of the audience and, more broadly, on the shape of Meiji political culture.

Historical Context for Women's Speech

The rise of the female speaker occurred during the first decades of the Meiji period (1868–1890), an era of rapid social and political change. After the overthrow of the previous warrior government in 1868, the new Meiji leaders abolished formal status distinctions and began setting up the infrastructure of a modern nation-state. European Enlightenment ideas concerning "rights" and "liberty" were introduced via translations of Rousseau and J. S. Mill and quickly entered the vocabulary of the populace, though not always with agreed-upon meanings. The era saw the rise of a political culture centered on debate meetings and speeches (*enzetsukai*), which spread around the country via newspapers.

Drawing on their new knowledge of the Western practice of rhetoric (and in particular on public debate), reformers began delivering speeches (*enzetsu*) in the 1870s. The intellectuals of the Meirokusha (Meiji Six Society) were the first to take up the practice, which later spread to party politicians and activists, many of whom were associated with segments of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement.⁹ The 1880s saw the formation of hundreds of local associations all over the country that sponsored speech meetings as a principal activity. According to historian Inada Masahiro, speech meetings were usually held at theaters, temples, and sometimes even at public baths.¹⁰

The appearance of women on the lecture platform coincided with what Massimiliano Tomasi has called "the golden age of oratory" in Japan.¹¹ In other words, political speech by men was also at its height.¹² A combination of government repression and a shifting political environment meant that this period would not last long. What enabled the rise of the female speaker was the relative fluidity of early Meiji political culture, along with shifting definitions of public and political space. Some have viewed the phenomenon of the female speaker as made possible by the relatively "liberal" environment of the 1870s

and early 1880s. It seems more appropriate, however, to regard the absence of legislation barring women from speechmaking as a sign that the government was preoccupied with the task of building a modern nation-state and never imagined that women would engage in such acts in the first place. As part of a series of crackdowns on people’s rights activities, the government would issue a revised version of the Meetings Law (Shūkai Jōrei) in 1882, closing a loophole that had enabled speakers to circumvent government interference by characterizing their speeches as “academic” (*gakujutsu enzetsu*) rather than “political” (*seidan enzetsu*) in nature.¹³ However, women were not explicitly barred from making political speeches for another eight years.

We have, then, a trajectory of women’s public speaking beginning in the early Meiji period, an era of relative possibilities. In the late 1880s, women speakers still appeared, but they faced mounting difficulties and the times were moving toward the formal exclusion of women from politics. By 1890, the Association and Political Meetings Law (Shūkai Oyobi Seisha Hō) denied women the right to attend, much less speak, at political meetings. Even so, it is important to note that women continued to speak in public, although the setting had changed. For the most part, they spoke within the context of women’s groups, where their words were ostensibly nonpolitical and the audience was composed almost entirely of women.

Women in the Audience, Women on Stage

Reports of women in the audience at speech meetings began to appear in newspapers in the 1870s. According to the diary of the People’s Rights activist Kōno Hironaka (1849–1923), the Risshisha (Self-Help Society), a political association based in Kōchi, reserved seats for women at its meetings in June 1877; four months later, it was receiving requests to increase the seating capacity for women.¹⁴ Literary scholar Takada Chinami has pointed out that some Meiji political novels featured scenes where women traveled to lectures alone via railway.¹⁵ Meetings, then, offered new access to public space, and novel modes of transportation sometimes conveyed the audience to these spaces. Eyewitness accounts make it clear that women, like men, participated in the cheering and jeering that were so central to the *enzetsu* experience. Geisha seem to have been particularly expert at calling out *no no* (“No no”) and *hiya hiya* (“Hear hear”) at the appropriate intervals.¹⁶

But women were not merely members of the audience. According to the great Taishō chronicler of the history of speech meetings Miyatake Gaikotsu (1867–1955), female students first began delivering speeches at newly established girls’ schools in the

1870s. Countering the assumption that Kishida Toshiko was the first female speaker, Miyatake stated that the first speech meeting had in fact taken place at the Tōkyō Joshi Shihan Gakkō (Tokyo Women's Normal School) in 1878. He went on to observe that at the time, the *Kōeki Mondō Shimbun* chastised the students for “impertinence” (*namaiki*), a charge that would frequently be leveled throughout the next decade against women who were viewed as transgressing the boundaries of proper femininity. At the same time, the paper cautioned that speechmaking would harm women's “gentle and chaste” nature (*onjū teisō*, even suggesting that public speaking would lead to promiscuity.¹⁷

In the late 1870s and early 1880s, reports from around the country attest to the fact that women had begun speaking at political gatherings. Sometimes they delivered congratulatory tidings or read poems; occasionally, they delivered their own speeches. Considered a novelty, women speakers were clearly in demand. One male speaker advertised his speech as a “girl's speech” (*musume enzetsu*), leading the audience to assume that the speaker would be a girl. When a crowd in Gunma prefecture expressed disappointment at the failure of a female speaker to materialize, the male performer explained that by “girl's speech,” he meant that the speech was designed so that “even girls can understand.”¹⁸

Sekiguchi Sumiko, in her insightful reading of the rise of the female speaker, has suggested that Kishida Toshiko, certainly the most well-known speaker of the era, differed from her predecessors in that she delivered overtly political speeches.¹⁹ Though Kishida may indeed have been the first to speak openly about political subjects, I would caution that we know too little about developments around the country to conclude that other women were not making political speeches. For instance, in Niigata prefecture, the historical record attests to one Nishimaki Sakuya delivering a speech at a people's rights gathering in Kashiwazaki in which she called for women's education and discussed “equal rights for men and women” (*danjo dōkenron*). However, Nishimaki's speech seems to have been poorly received.²⁰ In contrast, Kishida's background as a former tutor to the empress and her connections to an official political party lent her an aura of prestige. As I shall suggest, her lectures spurred women in places such as Kyoto and Okayama to form their own organizations. Even those who may not have been present in the audience could read about her activities in the newspapers.

Kishida and Speechmaking

After leaving her post at the imperial palace, Kishida eventually traveled to Osaka where

she became acquainted with members of the Risshisha. Shortly thereafter, we find records documenting her appearances at lecture meetings (*enzetsukai*) sponsored by the Constitutional Party. The first took place in April 1882 in Osaka, where Kishida was featured as part of a lineup that included a number of famous male activists. It seems that some members of the Constitutional Party recognized the potential of a female speaker to draw crowds. At the same time, Kishida’s impeccable credentials rendered her socially acceptable. Dressed in elegant silk kimono and sporting stylish hairstyles, Kishida delivered speeches that were rousing and spirited. While some were attracted by her call to raise the status of women, the media and audience were entranced by the spectacle of a beautiful woman speaking.

With the exception of “Daughters Kept in Boxes,” there are no complete records of Kishida’s speeches.²¹ Newspapers specify the titles of speeches given in various locales throughout the country, such as “The Way of Women” (*Fujo no michi*) and “Women Must Combine Strength and Gentleness” (*Joshi mata gōjū o kenyū sezarubekarazu*). Kishida’s most comprehensive statement of her thought during her career as a speaker can be found in her serialized article “To My Sisters” (*Dōhō shimai ni tsugu*), which appeared in the pages of *Jiyū no tomoshihi* (Lamp of freedom) in 1884.²² Kishida was encouraged to write for this publication by the politician Mutsu Munemitsu, the former brother-in-law of her soon-to-be husband—a fact that highlights just how intertwined Kishida’s life was with high politics. Her essay has been heralded by scholars as the first written proclamation of women’s rights in Japan composed by a woman.²³ It is likely that much of the material for “To My Sisters” was drawn from her speeches.

One of the main arguments that Kishida develops in “To My Sisters” is that granting rights (*kenri*) to women would benefit men, too. She seems to confine herself to addressing property rights and rights within the household (I discuss her treatment of political rights below).²⁴ In her view, the current situation, in which women lack rights, not only renders them unhappy and entirely reliant on men but also deprives men of potential happiness they would receive from relationships governed by love (*airen*) rather than by power (*kenpei*). Kishida addresses those who fear that granting women’s rights would destroy peace within the home as well as in the larger society, arguing that relations between the sexes would actually improve. Moreover, she contends that men, who already enjoy privileges, are obligated to grant rights to women instead of continuing to take advantage of women’s ignorance. Men need not fear that women will take advantage of this reversal and behave badly, she declares. Instead, men and women will

learn to “respect and protect one another’s rights.” Stressing the hypocrisy of some of her male colleagues, Kishida addresses them bluntly: “Oh you men, do you not shout ‘reform’ and ‘revolution’ whenever you open your mouths? Why is it only in regard to the question of equal rights (*dōken*) that you still yearn for the customs of old?”²⁵

Although some male reformers expressed irritation with Western etiquette, such as the practice of men asking women for permission to smoke, Kishida praises such practices, viewing them as a mark of respect for women. At the end of her essay, she reflects that if Japanese men were to follow any of these customs, “I would happily delay talk of political participation (*sanseiken*) and legal matters and instead remain in this unequal position, but enjoy courteous treatment.”²⁶ Some scholars have taken these words to signal a retreat from political aspirations, but I believe that her flippant remark served as a rhetorical device designed to shock men into granting women better treatment. Though Kishida does not call for voting rights directly—and it is important to stress that voting rights were not a central issue for her or for most Meiji female activists—the way she addresses anti-suffrage arguments suggests that she was sympathetic to calls for female enfranchisement.²⁷ She was certainly aware of the activities of female activists in Europe and the United States, thanks to reports in the pages of *Jogaku zasshi* (Women’s education magazine), and she refers to such efforts in the essay. Moreover, Kishida draws attention to the twisted logic of those who pronounce female enfranchisement unnecessary because it had not yet been enacted in the West: “The West is civilized [only] compared to uncivilized (*mikai*) countries. It [the West] has not attained the highest level of civilization.”²⁸ She suggests that Japan selectively adopt the worthwhile aspects of Western culture, and hints that the issue of women’s rights is one area where Japan could surpass the West.²⁹

Subsequent commentators have faulted Kishida for the limitations of her vision, which did not explicitly call for suffrage rights and emphasized female virtue.³⁰ I wish to shift the focus away from Kishida’s “shortcomings” and instead call attention to the fact that “To My Sisters” features a sustained series of powerful arguments that demand rights and, most of all, respect for women. Though Kishida borrowed many of the ideas of the British activist Millicent Fawcett (1847–1929), she tailored the content to her audience.³¹ For instance, religion plays almost no role in Kishida’s essay whereas it constitutes a central theme in Fawcett’s writings, and the erudite language is all Kishida’s own. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Kishida’s essay is the degree to which it is suffused with the logic of status differences. Without overstating the case, it appears that when male commentators wrote about “women’s issues,” they tended to characterize women

as an undifferentiated category, whereas Kishida displayed an abiding concern for differences among women arising from education and wealth.³² Although some male and female commentators tried to exclude women as women, others, such as Kishida, placed more emphasis on differences in wealth, status, and education. In her view, men and women of certain backgrounds were entitled to particular rights and privileges. The statements that some scholars read as evidence of Kishida’s narrow vision can equally well be interpreted as evidence of the continuing importance of status, a legacy of the Tokugawa period, in Meiji political discourse.³³

Another important issue concerns how Kishida justified her presence on stage. In her “Daughters Kept in Boxes” speech, Kishida begins by anticipating her audience’s reaction: “Some people may think disparagingly: what is a person who used to be wrapped in silk brocade [a reference to her service at court] doing performing (*kōgyō*) on stage?” Seeking to clarify her actions, she asks, “What, after all, is the meaning of ‘performing’ but ‘to carry something out’ (*okoshi okonau*)? I carry out this performance for the nation-state (*kokka no tame*).”³⁴ Certainly, one could argue that Kishida was appealing to the nation-state merely to render her somewhat outrageous behavior acceptable. Yet a more extensive reading of her other writings indicates that Kishida was a sincere nationalist.³⁵ Historian Hirota Masaki has suggested that this self-justification by way of the nation enabled some women to lay claim to a role in the political sphere while simultaneously adhering to the dictates of proper feminine behavior.³⁶ I would emphasize that, rather than a cynical device to escape the confines of the home, Kishida’s embrace of the nation was profoundly heartfelt and suggestive of the intimate connections between political awakening, the nineteenth-century discourse on rights, and nationalism. As historian Joan Judge has suggested in the case of Chinese women at the turn of the century, the use of nationalism by women as an “authorizing discourse” results in a number of paradoxes: “The appropriation of nationalism does enable women to carve out new subjectivities and act on them. . . . however, it also yokes them to the demands of the larger national project.”³⁷ Nevertheless, that nationalism provided a new and potent vocabulary for women like Kishida to use when asserting their rights cannot be overlooked, for indeed the very existence of the nation made it possible for women to claim rights in the first place.

Reactions to Kishida

Just as important as what Kishida said is how she was perceived. Of course, our records are largely confined to written responses culled from newspapers and journals. Sekiguchi

Sumiko underscores the fact that Kishida was a master at manipulating the crowd; indeed, some scholars have gone so far as to call her an “agitator.”³⁸ On one occasion in Tokushima, the police neglected to step in and halt Kishida’s speech despite her inflammatory rhetoric. The crowd went wild and she kept on speaking through their cheers.³⁹ On another occasion, when a male speaker in Hitoyoshi (Kumamoto prefecture) faked a tooth- and stomachache to avoid sharing the podium with a woman, she mocked him and earned the admiration of the crowd.⁴⁰

Kishida’s speeches were performances, perhaps even more so than those of her male colleagues. The way she presented herself—both her clothing and her credentials—were crucially important. The *Rikken Seitō Shimbun*, a paper affiliated with the Constitutional Party (the party that sponsored Kishida’s speeches), heralded her as a “rare lady (*keishū*) who is accomplished at sewing. She also excels at poetry, prose, calligraphy, and painting.”⁴¹ The article continued by noting that Kishida laments the lack of models for motherhood in Japan and plans to open a school for girls to reform old customs. In this way it domesticated her political acts and perhaps attempted to ward off potential criticism.

A few common themes run through newspaper coverage of Kishida’s speeches. Kishida’s critics—nearly always men—tended to accuse her of acting “like a man.” Not only were her gestures deemed unacceptable for a woman but her reliance on difficult Chinese compound words was interpreted as a clear transgression of male linguistic prerogative. Even men who admired her talent were sometimes disturbed by her abilities. In 1882, one critic declared, “When one thinks of great women, Queen Elizabeth and Empress Jingē come to mind. When one thinks of famous female speakers, there is only Kishida Toshiko. All who hear her speeches cannot but admire her.” Yet he went on to claim that Kishida possessed bad habits: “Her posture and manner of speaking are unbecoming a woman; she acts how men should act (girls should behave in a manner appropriate to their sex). This is one of her shortcomings.”⁴²

Literary scholar Hirata Yumi cautions that writing and speaking were highly gendered realms.⁴³ Women were expected to use archaic classical forms and to avoid Chinese compounds. As evidence, Hirata identifies letters to the editor that targeted Kishida. One in particular was composed by the head of printing operations at the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. He lamented that women were in effect losing their “womanliness” with the spread of compulsory education, particularly since girls were now being exposed to Chinese writing:

The establishment of public schools marks a major change from the temple schools of the previous era, and school-age children of both sexes have been vying to get into school. As a result, the level of learning has increased, which is truly to be welcomed. But in the midst of this situation, there is something surprising and lamentable: the continuous increase in the number of unfeminine girls (*rashu naki fujo*).⁴⁴

He recalled having heard female students use such masculine personal pronouns as *boku* (“I”) and *kimi* (“you”) in their speech, and noted that their notebooks were replete with poorly written Chinese-style prose. Why could they not stick to learning Japanese discourse, which was infinitely more suited to women? “In matters of language,” he declared, “it is important for women to be feminine.” Turning to the case of Kishida, he observed, “As for the popular Kishida Toshiko, she is truly an admirable figure, but as I said before, from the perspective of womanly conduct (*fujo no hinkō*), her case is exceedingly lamentable.”⁴⁵ Apparently, Kishida’s refusal to adhere to strict gender protocol, and particularly her facility with Chinese-style prose, troubled the writer deeply. Or perhaps he found it problematic that she dared to appear in public in the first place.

The press also derided Kishida in more unseemly ways by implying that she spent her time chasing after men in the movement. Members of the media invoked an enduring double standard and connected her to a number of different male activists, a ploy that served to trivialize her political acts. Meanwhile, male activists, who clearly spent a significant amount of time in teahouses and brothels, were never subject to the same kind of censure. In 1929, Itō Chiyū (1867–1938), a politician and lecturer, reflected on the many women who participated in the people’s rights (*minken*) movement:

Around the time of the sixteenth year [1883] of the Meiji era, there were many female *minken* activists. They gave good speeches and wrote in an excellent manner—in this sense, they exceeded men, and were truly without fault. However, once they became involved in sexual relations with their male comrades they ceased making assertions [presumably about politics] and became caught up with following men’s bottoms . . . hopping from man to man. . . . As a result, it was common for them to become utterly dissipated, behave like fools . . . and ultimately disappear.⁴⁶

In Kishida’s case, evidence that she had any such relations with her male colleagues is scant. However, she did go on to marry Nakajima Nobuyuki, the president of the Constitutional Party and vice president of the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō). Their trip to

Atami prior to their marriage generated a great deal of gossip. Miyatake Gaikotsu, writing in 1926, linked Kishida with a number of activists, arguing that she is proof of the saying, “Those of smooth tongues become promiscuous” (*shita no suberu mono wa oshiri mo karukunaru*).⁴⁷

Other contemporaries took a more positive view of Kishida. The *Jiji Shimpō* announced that her “presence has encouraged many women to attend speeches.”⁴⁸ Some journalists noted the derision that greeted the male politician who claimed a toothache in order to avoid standing up with Kishida.⁴⁹ One listener recalled his surprise at the atmosphere that prevailed at Kishida’s speech, for he had apparently expected heckling: “There was very little vulgar jeering [from the crowd]. Kishida was beautiful, had a rich voice, and was an accomplished speaker. She began by critiquing the *Onna daigaku* and discussed issues including the need to expand women’s rights.”⁵⁰

In all these accounts, the disproportionate attention paid to Kishida’s appearance is striking. Whether negative or positive, reactions tended to focus on her style and her eloquence. While contemporary accounts portrayed men solely as speakers or activists, Kishida was represented *both* as a speaker (*benshi*) and a woman (*onna* or *joshi*). As a result, the force of her message was attenuated or even dismissed; in other words, the implications of what she said were effectively obscured. This tendency was compounded by the journalistic obsession with Kishida’s attire. By offering details about her *obi* (sash) and her kimono design, they rendered her an object of curiosity rather than a threat. Some writers devoted considerable space to describing her hairstyle, attire, and how she changed her kimono during the intermission—all markers of her high social status. Scholar Sumiya Etsuji notes that crowds were “intoxicated” by her “aristocratic figure.”⁵¹ Sumiya informs us that teeth were a mark of beauty, and Kishida’s teeth were reported to be lovely. Articles refer to her “*meibōkōshi*” (clear eyes and white teeth), signs of a beautiful woman. Her clothing was stunning: “In Osaka, she wore an *obi* (sash) in the style of a *kabuki* princess. . . . In Kyoto, she wore an elegant gown with three layers.”⁵² In 1899, a writer for the *Hōchi Shimbun* recalled Kishida’s 1882 debut speech in Osaka: “The crowds, who had never heard a woman speak, were taken by surprise and applauded. While speakers who affect a tomboy style (*otenbaryē*) are common, [Kishida] was the first to deliver a lady-like speech all the while maintaining her dignity (*hinkaku*).”⁵³ The writer seemed to conclude that Kishida’s public speaking was acceptable precisely because of her high social status and radiant femininity.

I would suggest that the explosive interaction of “female-ness” (in appearance)

and “male-ness” (in language) that Kishida embodied accounts for much of the admiration and censure that surrounded her figure. On the one hand, her appearance allowed her to make potentially inflammatory comments and employ a masculine style replete with Chinese words without being entirely dismissed by her audience. On the other, as the critic who compared her to Queen Elizabeth and Empress Jingē implied, Kishida’s behavior and demeanor appeared exceedingly “unladylike” in the eyes of many and prompted an array of responses, including censure. For some contemporaries, her presence threatened the perceived natural order. For others, however, it inspired activism.

Reactions to Female Speakers

Male commentators who concerned themselves with elevating the status of women frequently encouraged the presence of women on the lecture platform, heralding their presence as a mark of civilization. The educator Nakamura Masanao (1832–1891) trained girls at his school in the 1870s in the art of speech, and as we have seen, the Constitutional Party welcomed female speakers at its meetings.⁵⁴ Even in 1889, the former Liberal Party was still advertising for female speakers. One announcement read: “Our party is devoted to reform and progress in politics and society; for our purposes, speech is truly important. We are looking for graceful women who can move audiences.” The advertisement sought five women between the ages of fifteen and thirty who “embrace the principles of the former Liberal Party,” “are chaste and upright in their morals,” and “who have a general education and can deliver speeches.”⁵⁵ The description would seem to fit what we know about Kishida Toshiko during her days as a speaker. Six years later, young educated women speakers were apparently still desirable and capable of drawing a crowd.

Yet despite the popularity of female speakers, some commentators still expressed uneasiness with the idea of women on stage. For instance, in the second half of his famous essay *Nihon fujinron* (1885, On Japanese women), the prominent educator and intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi anticipated possible objections to the first part of his essay by some readers on the grounds that women would interpret his efforts to raise their status as a license for bad behavior. Fukuzawa characterized the stance of this hypothetical opposition as follows:

Already we find some girls who prattle a few foreign words. Though they have not even learned how to sew properly, they put on airs and make light of their parents

and senior members of the family; they speak out unreservedly at a gathering, or even worse, forget they are girls and attempt to make speeches in public.⁵⁶

In response, Fukuzawa de-emphasized such possible infractions by girls, declaring them inconsequential when measured against the deplorable behavior of men in general. He also highlighted society's different expectations for girls and boys:

Society would consider this kind of girl immodest, or in popular language *otenba* (tomboy), and disapprove of her, but even if this tomboy were actually a boy, he would seem very gentle when seen among men. . . . For using the same language and behaving in the same manner, a girl is scolded and a boy is passed off because he is a boy.⁵⁷

Fukuzawa conceded that new ideas concerning the reform of the female sex may lead some women to behave improperly—he even agreed that it was a pity that some women could not sew—but he reminded his readers that such instances were uncommon. In any case, Fukuzawa claimed that society was still adjusting to new ideas, a process that would take time.

Unlike Fukuzawa, Iwamoto Yoshiharu, founder and editor of the prominent women's magazine *Jogaku zasshi*, announced in 1886 that he was not in favor of the phenomenon of “women's speeches.”⁵⁸ A close reading of his pronouncements suggests that Iwamoto was primarily opposed to the possibility of women speaking to a male or mixed-sex audience, particularly when women had no prior experience speaking to an all-female audience. Expressing his displeasure with women's speeches in Japan, he pronounced, “European and American women would not attempt to give a speech in front of men unless there was a national emergency.” Iwamoto never expressed opposition to the prospect of women attending political speeches; rather, he welcomed the presence of women at political gatherings (but not as members of political parties).⁵⁹ He urged women to become activists, provided that they confined themselves to certain kinds of activism: “If women from the better classes (*kijo*) truly pity the [ordinary] women of Japan and are passionate about reform policies, they should establish organizations of influence and address other women. In this way, they can gently and calmly carry out reform policies.”⁶⁰ This is precisely what happened. When Mary Leavitt, a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and its first “round the world missionary,” came to Japan in 1886, Iwamoto's magazine sponsored a women-only lecture.⁶¹ The meeting,

attended by more than 600 women, led to the formation of the Tokyo Women’s Reform Society (Tōkyō Fujin Kyōfūkai), an organization that featured lectures at its meetings.

Commentators seem to have been tolerant of female speakers who discussed issues relating to the reform of the female sex, so long as the speakers possessed the appropriate level of education and behaved “properly.” The author of a letter to the *Shinonome Shimbun*, while welcoming the presence of women “of education and talent on par with the West,” decried the fact that there were some women who support “the expansion of women’s rights” (*joken kakuchō*), “in spite of the fact that they are completely uneducated, cannot even remember their ABCs or read the Confucian classics.”⁶² The author had heard rumors that uneducated women were giving speeches. If true, he claimed, this could only “impede the movement of talented and educated women to purify old customs,” by leading the audience to associate the expansion of women’s rights with uneducated and “impertinent” (*namaiki*) women.⁶³ Those without education were, essentially, putting the cart before the horse. In a later issue, a female reader responded, reminding the author of the original letter that centuries of customs which discriminated against women meant that there were few educated women in the present who were qualified to work for “the expansion of women’s rights.”⁶⁴ Given the circumstances, she urged him to adopt a more tolerant view of women who, while lacking in education, were nevertheless dedicated to the cause: “Admire their passion and overlook their shortcomings.”⁶⁵ After pointing out that many of the brave men (*sōshi*) who had worked for political reform (presumably during the time of the Meiji Restoration) similarly lacked knowledge of their ABCs and the ability to read the classics, she concluded that education, while desirable, could not always precede action.

Another interesting perspective on the relationship between women and speaking—as well as the issue of uneducated female speakers—can be found in an 1887 manual for female speakers entitled *Fujin enzetsu shinan* (Instructions for women’s speeches).⁶⁶ At the time, there were a number of speech manuals in circulation, but this text stands out in that it specifically addressed women. In the introduction, the author, one Kagawa Rinzō, informed his readership that recently “speech meetings by geisha (*geigi*) have become a widespread problem.” He clarified that his book was not intended for “good daughters who stand on the platform and actively enlighten their fellow women,” for they were in no need of instruction. Rather, he addressed his book to the “eight or nine out of every ten geisha who are uneducated and illiterate.”⁶⁷ This leaves us to wonder how they were to read it. He promised his readers success if they memorized the fifty lessons contained therein.

Many of the lessons focused on how to deal with an unruly audience. Kagawa advised female speakers to simply ignore the “lower-class” members of the audience, who did not respond to a speech based on the skill of the speaker or the substance of the argument (rather, such folk were solely interested in the speaker’s appearance). Kagawa also urged female speakers to adhere to certain codes of femininity, while simultaneously instructing them to exploit these strategies to both surprise and soothe the audience. For example, listeners who appeared hostile toward female speakers should be “drawn in through the use of mild language. More forceful language can gradually be introduced.”⁶⁸ When dealing with listeners who appear irritated, he advised that women first appease them by saying something like, “I have something I wish to ask. . . . Please let me humbly borrow your time.”⁶⁹ Kagawa also cautioned that it was a good policy to tread lightly at first: “No matter how active one’s spirit, girls should try to look weak when they first mount the podium. They should try to look like any gentle girl. However, once they begin speaking they should become spirited and adopt a powerful posture.”⁷⁰ Much of the book is dedicated to issues of style, for as Kagawa explains in lesson five, “In the matter of women’s speeches, voice, tone, and the use of unusual expressions in order to strike an emotional chord in the audience are more important than argument.”⁷¹ Contemporary reactions to female speakers, especially to Kishida, certainly seem to confirm this assertion.

Kishida’s Impact on Women

Kishida’s impact on women was considerable, though it has yet to be studied sufficiently. Based on newspaper articles and other sources, we can surmise the extent of her influence on her female contemporaries. As is often noted, the activist Fukuda Hideko, in her autobiography *Warawa no hanshōgai* (1904, *Half of my life*), commented on the significant impact of Kishida’s speech in Okayama in 1882 on her own decision to become an activist.⁷² In addition, Kishida’s trip to Okayama resulted in the establishment of a women’s organization, the Okayama Konshinkai (Okayama Friendship Society). Many of the members were wives of people’s rights activists who wanted to form an organization that would promote women’s education and social improvement.⁷³ Fukuda herself went on to found a school for women and become involved in the 1885 Osaka Incident, a plot by left-leaning Liberal Party activists to foment revolution in Korea. Other women, often wives of activist husbands, formed groups in Kishida’s wake dedicated to social reform, education, the exchange of knowledge, and the task of helping their husbands advance the cause of *jiyū* (freedom).⁷⁴

A tracing of Kishida’s lecture circuit from Kyoto to Kyushu reveals that she appeared increasingly alongside other female speakers, some of whom were her disciples. In Kumamoto, one young girl was so inspired by Kishida that she composed an essay advocating women’s education that was subsequently published in the *Kumamoto Shimbun*.⁷⁵ There is also a document from the young Tomii Oto (Tora), who wrote to Kishida begging to become her disciple (*deshi*).⁷⁶ Historian Suzuki Yūko has lamented that we know too little about these disciples of Kishida, some of whom went on to become activists in their own right; nor do we know much about the women’s organizations apparently inspired by Kishida.⁷⁷ More research in local archives will help to clarify Kishida’s role in sparking the formation of women’s groups, and further elucidate the nature of women’s political participation and public speaking in the early Meiji period.

Ōki Motoko has taken a step in this direction with an exciting archival discovery—a heretofore unknown journal article by Kishida that tells the story of a woman who came to visit her in the hospital where she was recovering from the ordeal of imprisonment. As Kishida explained, her visitor was upset and troubled by an article on the formation of a women’s group in Toyohashi (Aichi prefecture) that had appeared in the *Rikken Seitō Shimbun*. Though the journalist had welcomed the news about the women’s group in his article, he had cautioned that “women should not harm their innate virtue: their gentle nature” (*onwa jējū tenpu no sei*). Kishida’s visitor, an Osaka merchant’s wife in her thirties, had previously attended a speech by Kishida, and decided to visit her in the hospital to consult her.⁷⁸ She had been offended by the journalist’s insinuation that women were weak. She pointed out examples of women’s physical strength, for instance, that women in the Ōtsu area were accustomed to carrying heavy luggage. What did Kishida make of the journalist’s assertion?

In Kishida’s telling, it took many hours to enlighten this woman, whom Kishida nonetheless praised for her interest and spirit. To this end, Kishida used an argument built on the critical relationship between inner strength and external appearance. Kishida argued that women should be gentle, but she cautioned that gentle was not synonymous with “submissive” (*mui kutsujē*).⁷⁹ If women developed inner strength, they would project their gentle nature to the outside world. This text, besides shedding light on our understanding of Kishida during this period, suggests that she influenced women beyond young students and activists in various regions who were moved to form groups around women’s issues. Specifically, it indicates that some women who apparently never participated in women’s groups were nevertheless actively reading newspapers and attending political speeches.⁸⁰

Although Kishida's impact on other women during the 1880s is undeniable, there is little evidence that she directly influenced female activists in subsequent decades. I would suggest, however, that in the process of acting in public, first as a speaker and later as a teacher and a writer, Kishida helped secure and shape a place for women in the public sphere, one that later activists, including the early Socialists and the Seitō (Blue-stockings) writers, would build upon.⁸¹

Conclusion

Kishida Toshiko's act of claiming public space triggered mixed responses, and her charged presence brought significant numbers of women into the audience. The combination of her elegantly dressed female body and her deployment of masculine vocabulary created a fantastic choreography of opposites that allowed her to participate in the public political realm even as she sometimes violated the audience's sense of propriety. Her popularity, coupled with the fact that her speeches elicited a multitude of powerful reactions from the audience, rendered her a dangerous woman in the eyes of the state and led to her arrest in 1883. Though female speakers continued to appear throughout the decade, they faced mounting legal obstacles as well as a general decline in the popularity of public speaking.

Still, the fact that Kishida was able to offer a public critique during the short period of 1882–1884—a critique that was enthusiastically received by many and that inspired some women to become activists—is significant, as is the moment in which she acted. Six years later, she would not have been able to speak in public about explicitly political matters at all. Although her lectures—which frequently stressed virtue, morality, and education—may not have been as subversive as scholars have sometimes assumed, what she said, combined with the electrifying way she said it, highlight the possibilities for some women to speak and be heard in the political public realm of the early Meiji period.⁸² These chances to speak about political matters in explicitly political settings were foreclosed or sharply curtailed by the late 1880s, and have since been largely forgotten by mainstream histories. Some scholars have interpreted the 1890 law barring women's political activities as a reaction to the spectacle of politically active and publicly visible female people's rights activists.⁸³ We can also understand the government's legislation as evidence that women like Kishida played a critical role in shaping the boundaries of modern political space, eventually forcing the government to crack down and restrict women's activities. Through their public speaking in the 1880s and their putative

absence from the political sphere after 1890, women were intimately involved in the creation of modern political culture.

Many scholars view Kishida’s career as a political speaker on the national stage as exceptional.⁸⁴ Without denying her uniqueness, I believe that we must see Kishida at the center of a larger phenomenon: the rise of the female speaker in the midst of a volatile political setting. However the crowd reacted—whether with expressions of support, disgust, or dismay—it seems clear that Kishida and some of her followers were successful in reaching out to other women. They served as role models and inspired some women to become activists and speakers.

An examination of Kishida’s career as a speaker sheds light on both the limitations and the possibilities of the early Meiji period, an era when the question of how women should behave in public was still not entirely settled.⁸⁵ Kishida and her followers took advantage of this lack of consensus to occupy center stage and speak. Their role as a spectacle was complex: on the one hand, it afforded them limited access to political space; on the other hand, the very way in which women speakers were seen frequently made it difficult for them to be heard. The paradoxical nature of women’s speech highlights the increasingly masculinist quality of Meiji political culture. Yet, despite the fact that women were prohibited from speaking in public about explicitly political matters after 1890, their exposure to and training in the art of public speaking during the 1870s and 1880s served them well as they devoted themselves to ostensibly nonpolitical movements for reform.⁸⁶

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. There is some disagreement as to Kishida’s date of birth. The usual date cited is 1863. I follow Nishikawa Yūko, who discovered Kishida’s family registry (*koseki*) in the early 1980s. See Nishikawa, “Kishida Toshiko shinshiryō ni tsuite,” *Hongo dayori* 14 (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1986), 3. For details concerning the speech, see the court records: Suzuki Yūko, ed., *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1986), 219–28. For another view of Kishida in English, see Sharon Sievers, “Feminist Criticism in Japanese Politics in the 1880s: The Experience of Kishida Toshiko,” *Signs* 6, no. 4 (1981): 602–16.

2. Rumi Yasutake covers this episode in *Transnational Women's Activism* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 19. See also Sharon Sievers, *Flowers in Salt* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983), 33–35.

3. Suzuki, “Kaisetsu,” *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 21 (n. 1 above). Kishida would deliver speeches at girls' schools in the late 1880s.

4. Yokozawa Kiyoko, “Kishida Toshiko shōron,” *Senshū shigaku* 30 (1999): 60–61. On Tokugawa and Meiji female education, see Martha Tocco, “Made in Japan: Meiji Women's Education,” in Kathleen Uno and Barbara Molony, eds., *Gendering Modern Japanese History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 39–60.

5. It seems, however, that life in the imperial palace did not suit Kishida, and she left after less than two years. The fact that she was able to serve the empress bespeaks the extraordinary social mobility of the early Meiji period.

6. This movement, which turns out to have been a series of loosely connected movements, grew out of opposition to the fact that power in the new government was exercised primarily by oligarchs from two of the southwestern domains. Participants advocated the establishment of a parliamentary system as well as a wider distribution of power within the new government. Those who embraced people's rights also protested the terms of the “unequal treaties” imposed by the Western imperialist powers, and frequently linked their call for people's rights (*minken*) to the cause of national rights (*kokken*). In 1881, their demands were partly met when the government announced that a constitution would be promulgated by the end of the decade. For the purposes of this essay, I use the conventional framework of a single “Freedom and People's Rights Movement.”

7. Historians have usually focused on women's exclusion from the political sphere beginning in 1890 with the passage of the Association and Political Meetings Law (Shūkai Oyobi Seisha Hō). This essay is part of a larger argument I am making about women's relationship to public space in modern Japan. During the 1870s and 1880s, female speakers laid claim to a public space in speech and print, and they held onto this space even after their formal exclusion from politics in 1890. See Marnie S. Anderson, “A Woman's Place: Gender, Politics, and the State in Meiji Japan” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2005).

8. On the public sphere, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Berger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). For various critiques of Habermas, see the essays in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

9. Massimiliano Tomasi, “Oratory in Meiji and Taishō Japan,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 57, no. 1 (2002): 44.

10. Inada Masahiro, “Jiyū minken undō,” in *Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 17: 103.

11. Massimiliano Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), chapter 3.

12. For instance, in 1882, there were 13,212 public speeches. See Yamamuro Shin'ichi, “Kaisetsu,” in Matsumoto Sannosuke and Yamamuro Shin'ichi, eds., *Nihon kindai shisō taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), 11: 527.

13. By 1888, it seems to have been practically impossible for women to obtain the permission necessary to deliver a political speech. Ōki Motoko, *Jiyū minken to josei* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2003), 80–81.

14. *Meiji no joseishi ten zuroku* (Kōchi: Kōchi-Shi Jiyū Minken Kinenkan, 1996), 25.

15. Takada Chinami, “Tetsudō to joken,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 70, no. 5 (1993): 84.

16. Sekiguchi Sumiko, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 406 (July 2000): 26.

17. Miyatake Gaikotsu, *Meiji enzetsushi* (Tokyo: Yēgensha, 1926), 38.

18. Fukui Junko, “Musume enzetsu to sono shūhen,” *Media-shi kenkyū* 5 (1996): 1–2. For other cases of deception, see Miyatake, *Meiji enzetsushi*, 119–20, 175 (n. 17 above).

19. Sekiguchi Sumiko, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 396 (September 1999): 37–38. Sekiguchi’s fine scholarship inspired me to write this piece. My interpretation ultimately differs, in that I view the phenomenon of women’s speech as continuing even after 1890, although the content and setting had changed. Sekiguchi seems to focus on the disappearance of female speakers around 1890 and the fact that those few who remained championed “Confucian female virtues” and *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother) ideology. See Sekiguchi, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 406 (July 2000): 26.

20. Ōki, *Jiyū minken to josei*, 18–19 (n. 13 above).

21. “Hakoiri musume” was subsequently published in a volume with “Kon’in no fukanzen” (The imperfections of marriage) by Shinshindō in 1883, while Kishida was still in jail. For the published version, see Suzuki, *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 33–42 (n. 1 above). For the police record of the speech, see *ibid.*, 213–19.

22. The full text of “Dōhō shimai ni tsugu” can be found in Suzuki, *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 54–78 (n. 1 above), and also in Suzuki Yūko, ed., *Nihon josei undō shiryō shūsei* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1996) 1: 74–85 (hereafter abbreviated as *Shiryō*). I use the latter version here.

23. Itoya Toshio, *Josei kaihō no senkusha: Nakajima Toshiko to Fukuda Hideko* (Shimizu Shobō, 1984), 65. The essay appeared a year before Fukuzawa’s famous work *Nihon fujinron* (On Japanese women) and featured a far more thoroughgoing critique of women’s status.

24. See especially part IV of “Dōhō shimai ni tsugu.” Though woman usually controlled their dowries, property rights were invested in the head of household (*koshu*), who was usually a man but sometimes a woman.

25. Kishida, “Dōhō shimai ni tsugu,” in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 84 (n. 22 above).

26. *Ibid.*, 85. The statement has engendered a great deal of disagreement as to whether Kishida advocated suffrage for women. Okuda Akiko maintains that in “To My Sisters,” Kishida is “passive” about political rights: Okuda, “Jiyū minken undō no kakawatta onna tachi no kokkakan,” in Igeta Midori, ed., *Nihon kokka to onna* (Tokyo: Seikyōsha, 2000), 22. Sekiguchi Sumiko declares that Kishida (and other women speakers) never called for political rights (*joshi sansei no ken*) but rather for “women’s rights” (*joken*), which according to Sekiguchi, meant “a revolution in power relations with men within the home.” See Sekiguchi, “‘Enzetsu suru onna tachi’ o meguru seiji,” *Shigaku zasshi* 109 (2000): 106.

27. Considering that female suffrage rights had yet to be granted in most parts of the world,

this lack of emphasis on the vote is hardly surprising. See John Markoff, “Margins, Centers and Democracy: The Paradigmatic History of Women’s Suffrage,” *Signs* 29, no.1 (2003): 85–116.

28. Kishida, “Dōhō shimai ni tsugu,” in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 84 (n. 22 above). During the 1870s and 1880s, the Japanese government was struggling to overturn the unequal treaties and gain parity with the Western powers. At this time, the notion that the status of women reflected a country’s level of civilization enjoyed widespread currency in the West and in Japan. Kishida’s comments are particularly interesting given this context.

29. Kishida distinguishes between *sanseiken* (suffrage rights) and *danjo dōken* (equal rights for men and women), suggesting at some points that the two are distinct, and at others that *dōken* should encompass *sanseiken*.

30. For instance, see Sekiguchi, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 403 (April 2000): 37; Sekiguchi, “‘Enzetsu suru onna tachi’ o meguru seiji,” 106 (n. 26 above).

31. Suffrage was not the central concern for Kishida that it was for Fawcett. Still, Sekiguchi Sumiko has pointed out the extent of Fawcett’s influence on Kishida’s thought in this particular essay. Sekiguchi, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 399 (December 1999): 36–39; Henry Fawcett and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Essays and Lectures on Social and Political Subjects* (London: Macmillan, 1872), part X. Fawcett’s text was translated into Japanese in 1883. Of course, Kishida and other activists during this era were certainly influenced by the writings of a number of philosophers, including John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer.

32. In this, Kishida is reminiscent of the female heroine in Suehiro Tetchō’s novel *Setchūbai*, as discussed by Takada Chinami. At the beginning of the story, the heroine is charmed by a speech that predicts dire consequences for “middle and upper class society” should the vote be granted to those of the lower class who lack property and education. Takada’s article probes the links between the symbol of the railway and the concept of *joken*. He discusses how class differences were reified within the space of the train, as compartments were divided by class. Men and women of property and education could get to know one another while separated from the lower orders. Here was a space, then, where class differences mattered more than sex differences—an elitist vision to be sure, but one that included some women. See Takada, “Tetsudō to joken,” 87–88 (n. 15 above).

33. Older notions of status persisted into the Meiji period, even as some formal categories were dismantled and new ones were instituted. At the same time, the languages of class, the product of a rising industrial society, would not become widespread until the turn of the century. Thus the first few decades of Meiji were a time of transition when older notions of status—itsself changing from an inherited social identity to one increasingly receptive to individual initiative—rested uneasily alongside incipient notions of class.

34. Suzuki, *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 213 (n. 1 above).

35. Suzuki and others have observed that ideas about “people’s rights” (*minken*) and “women’s rights” (*joken*) were closely intertwined with the notion of national rights (*kokken*) in the thought of many Meiji activists: Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 25 (n. 22 above); Okuda, “Jiyū minken undō,” 27 (n. 26 above). For other examples of Kishida’s nationalism, see Suzuki Yēko, ed., *Kishida Toshiko kenkyū bunken mokuroku* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1986), 36–38.

36. Hirota Masaki, “Kindai elitto josei no aidentiti to kokka,” in Wakita Haruko and Susan B. Hanley, eds., *Jendō no Nihon shi* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994), 2: 202–3.

37. Joan Judge, “Talent, Virtue and the Nation: Chinese Nationalisms and Female Subjectivities in the Early Twentieth Century,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 765–66. Laura Bier has commented on similar tensions at work in the Egyptian women’s press in the 1950s and 1960s: “This binding of the liberation of women with the liberation of the nation . . . was both emancipatory and disciplinary. It allowed women to make new claims for rights and to envision new sorts of freedoms and gender roles in the name of progress and modernity; however it placed such roles in the context of submission to the nationalist project.” Bier, “Modernity and the Other Woman,” *Gender and History* 16, no. 1 (2004): 107–8.

38. Tsuburaya Shingo, *Kotoagesuru onna tachi* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1989), 11–19.

39. Sekiguchi, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 396 (September 1999): 38.

40. Ibid. See also Itoya, *Josei kaihō*, 34 (n. 23 above).

41. Itoya, *Josei kaihō*, 29 (n. 23 above). This newspaper would have been considered “progressive” within the Meiji context.

42. Kurita Shintarō, ed., *Meiji enzetsu hyōbanki* (Tokyo: Henryōkaku, 1882), reprinted in Suzuki, *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 203 (n. 1 above). Empress Jingū was the legendary first empress of Japan.

43. This had been true since the Heian period (794–1185).

44. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 7, 1882. Quoted in Hirata Yumi, *Josei hyōgen no Meiji shi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), 22.

45. Ibid., 23.

46. Suzuki, “Kaisetsu,” *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 14–15 (n. 1 above).

47. Miyatake, *Meiji enzetsushi*, 104 (n. 17 above).

48. *Jiji Shimpō*, May 8, 1882, reprinted in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 56–57 (n. 22 above).

49. *Chōya Shimbun*, December 6, 1882, reprinted in Itoya, *Josei kaihō*, 33–34 (n. 23 above).

50. Itoya, *Josei kaihō*, 34 (n. 23 above). One Hamuro Kametarō spoke to Itoya. The *Onna daigaku* (Greater learning for women) is a Tokugawa-period didactic text attributed to Kaibara Ekken. The text is known for both affirming and reflecting women’s inferior status.

51. Sumiya Etsuji, “Jiyū minken no bijin tōshi,” *Bungei shunjū* 43 (1965): 242–43. Apparently Kishida’s experience as the empress’s tutor marked her as aristocratic in the writer’s eyes.

52. Ibid., 243.

53. “Fujin no sugao: Nakajima Shōen joshi.” *Hōchi Shimbun*, April 19, 1899, reprinted in Suzuki, *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 194 (n. 1 above).

54. Sekiguchi, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 396 (September 1999): 37. For more on Nakamura Masanao and his dedication to the education of women, see E. Patricia Tsurumi, “The State, Education, and Two Generations of Women in Meiji Japan, 1868–1912,” *U.S.–Japan Women’s Journal*, no. 18 (2000): 6–7.

55. *Shinonome Shimbun*, June 14, 1889, reprinted in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 114 (n. 22 above). As I have suggested already, it seems to have been difficult for women to obtain permission to speak in political settings by this point.

56. Eiichi Kiyooka, trans. and ed., *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Japanese Women* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1988), 67. For the original text, see Nishizawa Naoko, ed., *Fukuzawa Yukichi chosakushū: Nihon fujinron, Nihon danshiron* (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Shuppankai, 2003), 10: 11–53.

57. Kiyooka, *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Japanese Women*, 69 (n. 56 above).

58. *Jogaku zasshi* 22, May 15, 1886. Iwamoto wrote, “During the height of the *minken* [people’s rights] era, Kishida Toshiko gave a speech in Osaka and the geisha of Kaga copied her. Later, there were women who gave speeches in Tokyo. I did not welcome these events.” For more on Iwamoto and *Jogaku zasshi*, see Rebecca Copeland, *Lost Leaves* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000), chapter 1.

59. “Joshi no seidan bōchō,” *Jogaku zasshi* 225, August 9, 1890; “Konnichi no joshi, seitō ni hairubekarazu,” *Jogaku zasshi* 202, March 1, 1890. These editorials are unsigned but are commonly attributed to Iwamoto.

60. *Jogaku zasshi* 22, May 15, 1886.

61. For an account of Leavitt’s visit, see Rumi Yasutake, *Transnational Women’s Activism*, chapter 2 (n. 2 above). On Iwamoto’s dislike of female speakers, see Sekiguchi Sumiko, “Enzetsu suru onna tachi,” *Mirai* 406 (July 2000): 21–22.

62. “Yo no namaiki naru fujo o imashimu,” *Shinonome Shimibun*, May 10, 1888, reprinted in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 102 (n. 22 above). *Shinonome Shimibun* was an Osaka-based paper published by Nakae Chōmin (1847–1901) with ties to the former Liberal Party.

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Shinonome Shimibun*, May 15, 1888, reprinted in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 102–3 (n. 22 above).

65. *Ibid.*

66. Kagawa Rinzō, *Fujin enzetsu shinan* (Osaka: Shinshindō, 1887).

67. *Ibid.*, 1–2.

68. *Ibid.*, 13.

69. *Ibid.*, 17–18.

70. *Ibid.*, 12.

71. *Ibid.*, 5.

72. Murata Shizuko and Ōki Motoko, eds., *Fukuda Hideo shū* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1998), 16. Fukuda does not seem to have delivered many speeches.

73. Okayama Joseishi Kenkyūkai, “Okayama Joshi Konshinkai ni tsuite,” *Rekishi hyōron* 204, no. 10 (1983): 2–18.

74. See the documents in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 71–74 (n. 22 above). There were women’s groups in Okayama, Kanagawa, Toyama, Shizuoka, Miyagi, Osaka and Kagoshima, to name just a few places.

75. Mizuno Hisashi, “Kishida Toshiko no Kumamoto yūzei,” *Kumamoto shigaku* 45 (1975): 27–28.

76. The letter can be found in Maruoka Hideko, ed., *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1977) 8: 116–17.

77. Suzuki, *Kishida Toshiko hyōronshū*, 13–14 (n. 1 above). For information on some of

these groups: Ōki, *Jiyū minken to josei*, chapters 1–2 (n. 13 above).

78. *Gakujutsu shinkō shinshi* 1 (1884). The document can be found at the University of Tokyo Meiji Shimbun Zasshi Bunko. For a transcription and commentary, see Ōki Motoko, “Kishida Toshiko: ‘Yo no fujo ni satosu,’” *Kōchi tanki daigaku shakaigaku ronshū* 77 (2000): 209–15.

79. *Ibid.*, 215. *Mui kutsujū* could also be translated as “slavish.”

80. In October 1883, geisha in Kyoto formed an organization called the Geigi Jiyū Kō (Free Association of Geisha); they planned to raise money and hold meetings twice yearly, to which they would invite speakers such as Kishida Toshiko and other “women who advocate freedom” (*jiyū*). *Nihon Rikken Seitō Shimbun*, October 19, 1883, reprinted in Suzuki, *Shiryō*, 53 (n. 22 above).

81. In the case of the Seitō writers, it seems that with the exception of Fukuda (Kageyama) Hideko, who herself had been active in the 1880s, few of these later activists displayed an awareness of earlier female activism. My thanks to Jan Bardsley for pointing this out to me. On female politicians in the postwar period, see Sally Ann Hastings, “Women Legislators in the Postwar Diet,” in Anne Imamura, ed., *Re-Imaging Japanese Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 271–300.

82. Mary P. Ryan usefully distinguishes between the civic and political public in “The Public and the Private Good: Across the Great Divide in Women’s History,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15, no. 1 (2003): 18.

83. For instance, see Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 206, note 63 (n. 2 above). Sievers follows Maruoka Hideko’s interpretation. See also Ōki, *Jiyū minken to josei*, 93–94 (n. 13 above).

84. For instance, see the portrayal in Kurita, *Meiji enzetsu hyōbanki* (n. 42 above).

85. Of course, gender norms themselves were in the process of being redefined and varied according to social status and region.

86. The activities of the Women’s Reform Society (Tōkyō Fujin Kyōfūkai), which later became the Japan Women’s Christian Temperance Union (Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai), and of the Patriotic Women’s Association (Aikoku Fujinkai, founded in 1901), come to mind. For more on these and other examples of women’s activism, see Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chapters 2–3.