



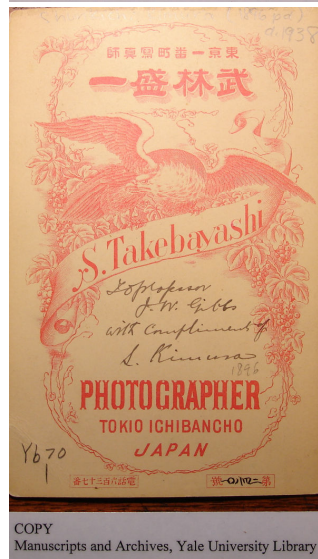
# Japan and Yale in the History of Science (2)

*By Takuji Okamoto*

Olmsted, with Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864), was one of the leading scientists at Yale in the early nineteenth century. When thinking of scientists in the latter half of the nineteenth century who were representative of Yale, or perhaps America, without doubt the name of J. Willard Gibbs (1839-1903) comes to mind. Anyone who has studied natural science or engineering at university will certainly have heard of this name in relation to the basics of thermodynamics, statistical mechanics, physical chemistry and other fields. It is not well known but Gibbs himself is not without connection to the Japanese scientific community.



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***A Photo of Shunkichi Kimura. Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University***

At the same time that I was researching in the Komaba Library, I had an opportunity to see documents relating to the Daiichi Kōtōgakkō (First Higher School, one of the precursors of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tokyo). Among these were the documents relating to the case of UCHIMURA Kanzō's impiety (Uchimura did not bow deeply enough before the Imperial Rescript on Education signed by the Meiji emperor and consequently had to resign from the school); the documents included his letter of resignation, which however is said not to be the work of Uchimura himself. At the time Uchimura was suffering from influenza, and in his place another teacher, KIMURA Shunkichi (1866-1938), drew up the letter of resignation. Kimura had invited Uchimura to Ichikō in the first place, and shortly after his resignation, Kimura followed suit by tendering his resignation. Kimura, who was also a graduate student, perhaps as a result of this incident, went on to study for his degree not in Japan but in America. His supervisor for his doctorate was Gibbs.

After receiving his degree from Yale, Kimura returned to Japan, where he worked at the Second Higher School in Sendai. After this, on the advice of his brother who was in the Japanese Navy, Kimura joined the navy where he worked on the development of wireless telecommunication devices, endeavoring to improve on the new technology. One could say that the overwhelming victory of the Japanese fleet in the war of the Sea of Japan in 1905 was built on the wireless signaling newly implemented thanks to the efforts of Kimura.