

East Japan Report
1897

HOKUSEI JO GAKKO

The Hokiusei Jo Gakko (Northern Star Girls' School) is located in Sapporo in the Hokkaido. Its grade is higher than that of any girls' school in the Hokkaido, excepting that conducted by the Methodist Mission in Hakodate, which is two days travel distance. It is the only school of the kind connected with any of the co-operating Missions in this part of the empire. The school was founded by Miss S. C. Smith, and this is now its twelfth year. The property in use was bought three years ago for Yen 2000 and is at present worth Yen (unreadable). Originally a barn, so constructed as to make every beam impartially conspicuous, it now has an attractive interior, thanks to the labor of the girls, under the direction of Miss Smith, Miss Rose and Mrs. Pierson.

About half of the pupils come from the city of Sapporo, and the remaining half from different parts of the island. They are chiefly daughters from the homes of farmers in the newly opened lands, merchants in the newly built towns, and owners of fisheries on the North and West coasts. The girls are strong in body, bright in mind, and independent in spirit. The number in constant attendance during the year has been 75. There are thirty-two boarders. Of these, fifteen meet all their expenses, 8, more than half, 3, a small part, and 6 receive their entire support from the school. The majority of the pupils are in the primary courses, but it is the policy of the school every year to drop the lowest class out of the course, until the Advanced Course shall contain only four and the Preparatory Course only two classes. The scholarship of the girls is (unclear) and their growth in Christian character is most gratifying.

During the year one teacher and nine of the pupils have professed their faith in Christ. Among them the entire Senior class, all of whom are day scholars. With one exception they were all baptized on Christmas Day. That one was ready and eager to receive sacrament, but was forbidden by her father. In the autumn one of the older pupils died. During her last hours Mrs. Pierson went to visit her in her home in a distant town, and saw her die in the faith. Her mind during her last days was full of the school, and her thoughts were thoughts of affection. For a long time the converts were indifferent to Christianity or even opposed to it. The means instrumental to the change were regular instruction in the Scriptures and personal conversation. And many prayers were offered for them. The

pupils have several Societies which meet weekly for spiritual profit. They also contribute generously to the church and charity. During the past year they made sixteen yen by their work; and have done much in the past to diminish the School debt, which is now less than 100 yen. A large part of the congregation and of the Sunday school is made up of the pupils, and all but two of the Sunday school teachers come either from the older girls or from the Faculty.

In Jan. 1897, Mr. And Mrs. Pierson moved from Otaru to Sapporo. From that time Mrs. Pierson has had a part in the care of the school; and since last August, when Miss Smith returned home for a furlough, it has been entirely in her hands.

[Roll 116-117, document 5, no date recorded (c. 1897)]

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Miss Smith' s report

Hokusei Jo Gakko

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The school has registered one hundred pupils during the present year, a gain of twenty over last year, though the number of new entries has been over thirty. It is but just to say that a large number of these are small children some of whom could not be admitted to the Government Schools for want of room, these being over crowded. Interest in Christianity among the day pupils seems sadly wanting, one only having united with the church from their number. Among the boarders however the interest is encouraging, six having united with the church and several more are only waiting until they are a year or two older. There have been some discouragements and some disappointments but all things considered there is much reason for rejoicing.

S. C. Smith