

Miss Sarah C. Smith

Filing Dept.

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Secretaries

**THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.  
156 Fifth Avenue  
New York**

(Alice M. Monk)

Sapporo, Japan,

November 16, and December 14, 1931.

Dear friends:-

While the world-wide depression affects Japan very seriously, and Hokkaido with the rest of the empire, favorable weather this fall has averted the worst of the consequences feared because of the very late, wet spring. For while certain fruits and vegetables are scarce and high, the rice crop is nearly normal. And that, as you know, is the mainstay of the people. Thus famine need not be feared. On the other hand, robbery and begging in the streets have already shown a great increase. One does not know what to expect this winter.

You have heard, no doubt, of Miss S. C. Smith's decision to return to America.

Leaving Sapporo on September 21, exactly 51 years from the date of her first arrival in Japan, Miss Smith reached San Francisco safely, on October 23 or 24. After Miss Smith's decision was made public there were, of course, many farewell functions: An all-day gathering with a group of the oldest graduates in Sapporo and vicinity; A dinner given by a dozen of the normal school graduates of more than forty years ago, when Miss Smith was teaching there in part to earn something for the girls' school which she was just starting—then called "Smith School for Girls"; A farewell by the Ladies' Society of the Sapporo Church; A special communion service at the church, on a Monday afternoon, as a farewell.

A Farewell Tea was given jointly by the Educational Societies of Hokkaido and of Sapporo, attended by the Governor in person, the Mayor's representative, the President of the University and one or two of the chief professors, the President Emeritus (Baron Sato), the principals of all schools of secondary grade. Mr. Lake and I were invited with Miss Smith. At this affair a handsome fox neck-piece and lap robe were presented to Miss Smith. Both the Governor and Baron Sato (who has known Miss Smith almost ever since her coming to Sapporo in 1887) gave highly appreciative speeches, to which Miss Smith responded suitably.

A farewell meeting was held by the school and alumnae as a whole, followed by a reception given by Hokkaido Station for a large number of Sapporo friends, both Japanese and foreign. There was a meeting of the alumnae of Tokyo, Yokohama and vicinity, at the Tokyo Y. W. C. A. to which came one graduate all the way from Osaka. Besides this, when Miss Smith was about to take train from Sapporo, the Station Master did her the rare honor of opening a private waiting room where she could greet the great numbers of persons who had gathered to see her off. Again, just before she sailed from Yokohama there was brought to her a special letter of thanks from the Minister of Education for her valuable services as and [*sic*] educationist in Japan. You will recall that in 1919 she received an Imperial Decoration for the same reason.

A touching tribute was the fact that at several places along the way, from Sapporo to Hakodate, at the little fishing village of Zenibako (where the express does not stop) at Otaru, at Kuchan, where the stop occurred about midnight, at Hakodate in the early morning, and again on the main island, smaller or larger groups gathered to bid her God speed. But in some ways the greatest tribute of all, it seemed to me, was paid to her during the meeting of the church Ladies' Society. There the leader was an early graduate, two of the prayers were offered by other early graduates and by a long-time teacher and matron at the school. The pastor, who is generally credited with being exceptionally independent, gave a remarkable tribute to her as a pioneer both in evangelism and in higher education for girls, particularly lauding her intrepid faith. She did not doubt nor fear he said, to follow her Lord's guiding, whether to Japan itself—which in those days may well have seemed to an American young woman the remote dwelling-place of savage barbarians, nor a little later to the wilds of Hokkaido, remote even to Japanese. There was then only one short line of railroad in the island from Otaru to Sapporo. She came not because she chose, but because God called. And now she was returning to what must seem the strange land of her birth, again at what she felt sure was God's bidding. "I was just as sure", he continued, "that she ought not to go. She is more a Japanese, after these fifty years than am I. And her presence here is needed. We cannot spare her. It is a mistake for her to go. So I went to her home to reason with her. But when she replied, 'I have prayed over this; and I am as sure of guidance now as when I decided first to come to Japan', what could I say? Surely not that that was a mistake." Then, turning to Miss Smith, he went on, "But I have one fervent request to make. Today may not be a seemly time for it, but I cannot refrain from speaking. And this is what I beg, for the sake of all of us and of the work which you have done in Hokkaido; that when your days on earth are ended, you will at least make provision that your ashes rest here in Sapporo, where you have labored so long. This is our most earnest, our parting request."

This address was most moving, the more so, as I have said, as coming from a man of such independence of thought and speech as our pastor. He is not one to make conventional pretty speeches.

December 14- And now in the intervals between the beginning and ending of this letter we have had the visit of certain members of the laymen's Educational Commission. Those who reached us were Dr. and Mrs. Oxnam of DePauw University and Miss Ruth Woodsmall of the Y.W.C.A. We were glad they could come so far.

They were here a scant two days, one of which was Thanksgiving Day. Dr. and Mrs. Oxnam spent most of their time at the Imperial University and with Baron Sato, President Emeritus, though they did visit the Catholic High School for girls and attended one chapel service and a part of a student recital at our school. Miss Woodsmall was a college friend of Mrs. Lake's and therefore divided her time between the Lakes and ourselves, with sometime [*sic*] also at the University. I was glad that we were able to arrange for them all to meet our Mr. Onomma (pastor of Sapporo church) for a frank talk about the greatest need of Japan as Mr. Onomma sees it, for they recognized both his ability and his unusual frankness. Mr. Onomma told them that, while he and his fellow-ministers are deeply over present day economic and social problems, and are all studying them, they feel that the vitally important, the essential thing for the salvation of Japan is to preach the Christian message—the Christian view of God and the world—in orderto [*sic*] supplant the profound pessimism, the blank despair of atheistic materialism, with the joy of the Christian believer. “Nothing else can save Japan, but this can and will.”

Yours faithfully,

Alice M. Monk.