

Hokusei Jo Gakko Annual Reports in the
1911–1923 Hokkaido Station Reports to
the Japan

Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the United
States of America

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Introduction

Among the various sets of annual reports from Hokusei Jo Gakko (North Star Girls' School, 北星女学校), out of which grew today's Hokusei Gakuen, the most complete and definitive unified set of information on the later years Sarah Smith served as missionary there is the *Japan Mission Reports*. It gives the fullest account of life at the school up to her retirement as missionary in 1922, much as *Sumisu-Sensei Nikki (or Koumu Nenshi)*¹ does for its early years. The two differ in that, whereas the formatting and word usage of *Koumu Nenshi* suggest that it was not necessarily intended for publication, *Japan Mission Reports* clearly was. The reports to the Mission were compiled and published in book form.

Key words : Board of Foreign Missions, Japan Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Hokusei Gakuen, Hokusei Jo Gakko, Sarah C. Smith

Japan Mission Reports consists essentially of extracts of reports presented at the annual meeting of this organization from 1911 to 1923 (with the 1922 update missing) by missionaries representing districts, stations, or themselves individually. The Japan Mission belonged to the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). Its Japanese partner church organization was the Church of Christ in Japan(日本基督教会).² Its affiliation in the area of education was the Association of Christian Schools in Japan(キリスト教学学校教育同盟). Reporters from Hokusei Jo Gakko presented updates on life at the boarding school for girls which Smith, the other missionaries, and their Japanese administrator and teacher counterparts operated. The book also includes descriptions of work in Hokkaido beyond Hokusei and mission activity in other areas of Japan. These accounts serve to provide a context for the ministry at Hokusei Jo Gakko and in so doing make possible a more complete understanding of the school's life and work.

Whereas other overviews of happenings at Hokusei were written to be read primarily by an administrator or a more specific group of supporters, *Japan Mission Reports* addresses a more general readership. For instance, other remaining descriptions of life at the school include letters to the head of the organization sponsoring Hokusei's missionaries. *Woman's Work for Woman*, the magazine which was the literary arm of the several women's mission organizations which existed inside the Presbyterian church at that time, was focused more narrowly on that category of readers. *Japan Mission Reports*, however, apparently was intended to provide for local church members in the US, mission administrators, fellow missionaries, future mission appointees, or basically anyone concerned with missions a picture of on-goings at the various locations of Presbyterian mission work.

As part of a research project funded by Hokusei Gakuen University, its Smith Mission Center Steering Committee members have transcribed and made available as a Web resource several sets of historical documents related to the establishing and development of Hokusei Gakuen, including *Japan Mission Reports*. In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of Hokusei Gakuen's historical roots, the Committee has made the materials accessible through the 開学50周年記念事業 *Hokusei Gakuen University the 50th Anniversary in 2012* section of the University Web site <<http://www.hokusei.ac.jp>>. Clicking on the button marked 記念事業 *the 50th Anniversary in 2012* takes the reader to the collection. This article introduces the background and format of information in *Japan Mission Reports*. It also provides a brief description and some analysis of their contents. Hopefully it helps make possible a more thorough understanding of Hokusei Gakuen's origins and growth while also presenting a model of Christian education including ideals, principles, concepts, and objectives which can be transferred, given fresh interpretation, and applied to modern contexts as the institution looks to the next 125 years and beyond.

Historical Background

The Hokkaido Station of the BFM Japan Mission was established in 1911. Until that time, it had been part of the Tokyo Station (sometimes called Tokyo Mission). Generally speaking, reports from Hokusei Jo Gakko tended to be kept in less detailed fashion in the early years and then more thoroughly and consistently as the school became firmly established.

The annual mission meeting was held during the summer; therefore, a typical year's report covers a portion of the previous calendar year and of the current year. For instance, the 1911 report provides an update on events occurring between the summer 1910 meeting and that of summer 1911. Generally the accountings cover the key aspects of the academic year running 12 months from April of the previous year, then supplementing them with more recent updates on significant events which have taken place between April of the current year and the Mission meeting. As a result, the data in each report do not fall neatly into any category of a 12-month calendar or academic year but often represent a combination of two school years. The information in Figures 1-7 (pp. 143-149), however, has been separated into April-through-March academic years.

The reporters on events at Hokusei Jo Gakko vary from year to year. They include Misses Sarah Smith, Alice Monk, Elizabeth Evans, Frances Davidson, and Grace Curtis.

The general Hokkaido Station reports for these years are compiled and edited by different missionaries case by case. These are individuals who support Hokusei on a part-time basis at one time or another but primarily serve in other capacities, including Mr. George Pierson, Mrs. Ida Pierson, Miss Carrie McCrory, Mr. Leo Lake, and Mr. Carroll Whitener. In some instances, the general editor's name is not given. Some present Hokusei-related sections with lengthy direct quotations from the reports of the school's teachers, while others do more summarizing and re-phrasing.

As for the sources which *Japan Mission Reports* authors have used in compiling their work, they in some cases present their information with no particular documentation, while in other cases quoting or paraphrasing from reports which individual missionaries have filed on their work for the year. Occasional references also appear to books on Christian life, particularly mission work, which are currently influencing the writer's thinking regarding issues missionaries face.

Purposes

As noted above, a key purpose of the *Japan Mission Reports* is to inform the supporters

of the PCUSA mission effort regarding how the organization is pursuing and achieving its goals. In addition to providing objective information on significant events in its constituent organizations, it aims at reaffirming the purposes of the BFM mission enterprise. The 1914 report asserts, for example, “Our girls’ schools are chiefly in order to make Christians and develop Christian character” (p. 36). Likewise, in the 1920 report George Pierson, a missionary who has lent supervisory and other support to Hokusei Jo Gakko for many years, states, “We are in constant danger of being side-tracked from the main line of personally getting the Gospel to the ‘every creature’ of the nation. . . . *Our work is significant only in so far as it is Spiritual*” (p. 13).

Another reason for publishing *Japan Mission Reports* appears to be to inspire readers to greater faith, for instance through presenting particular episodes in which Christian modes of living are being adopted by Japanese people. The 1913 report describes student volunteer group activities at Hokusei: “The Junior and Senior Christian Endeavor Societies, under the care of Miss Evans and Miss McCrory[,] have a very recognizable spiritual influence in the school” (p. 27).

Occasionally quotations from or references to the Bible appear, such as the reminder in the 1912 report that “He who is for us is more than they who are against us” (p. 17, perhaps an adaptation of I John 4:4 [King James Version], “. . . Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” or Romans 8:31, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”). The 1917 report includes the words, “Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but only God can give the increase” (p. 15), an adaptation of I Corinthians 3:6. The intent is apparently to assure the BFM’s base of supporters that they are making progress toward their missionary goals and to deepen faith, which will in turn help ensure the maintenance and expansion of support for the mission effort in the future. In some cases the appeal for assistance is more direct, writers making the case for creating positions which new missionaries would be sent to fill in order to meet certain existing needs.

Format

Each year’s report typically includes information on such matters as changes in personnel, fluctuation in enrollment, numbers of graduates, current numbers of Christians, special events held, the condition of facilities, and particular problems or opportunities which have emerged. Consistent attention is given to the particular church-related work which missionaries conducted along with their educational ministry at Hokusei Jo Gakko. From time to time writers include content such as (a) general descriptions of the sociocultural context of Hokkaido, (b) first impressions new missionaries have of life at Hokusei, (c) episodes from daily life which illustrate the lives of the people with whom they work, (d) health conditions of the school population, (e) the school’s progress toward being accredited, (f) special needs (such as for more missionaries), and (g) hopes and plans for the future.

Accounts of the school's activities vary in format year to year. The length of each of the *Japan Mission Reports* and the content and order of its component parts differ significantly on occasion. Some writers present their updates in a more corporate style, and in other cases individual missionaries' submissions are presented separately. Nevertheless, on the whole, the authors provide accounts of events that in one form or another present essentially the same categories of information for each year.

Hokusei-related sections of the *Japan Mission Reports* for each year typically run 5 to 10 pages in length. Those transcribed on the Web site total approximately 100 pages.³ No report is included for 1922, for unstated reasons. A few descriptions of mission work not directly connected with Hokusei Jo Gakko also have been included in the online transcriptions (noted on p. 134). They provide examples of the types of activities and individuals with which the school was linked organizationally, personally, and in terms of purpose in its affiliation with the PCUSA mission organization. The Christian ministries they illustrate were conducted by people who at various times taught at Hokusei Jo Gakko and continued to support the school's work in various capacities as long as they were part of the Hokkaido Station team.

Overview of Contents

Figures 1 through 7 on pp. 143-149 present the picture of Hokusei Jo Gakko's development which the *Japan Mission Reports* paint.⁴ The student population grew from 139 to 260 during the years it covers, as Figure 1 indicates. Within this group, the number of boarding pupils was recorded from time to time but not consistently. It is described as growing from 60 in 1910-1911 to about 80 in 1914-1915, then showing little variation through the last year reported, remaining at 80 in 1920-1921. The number of new students admitted per year is listed fairly regularly, as Figure 2 shows. From the lowest number of new entrees, 25 in 1912-1913, this segment of the student population grew to a high of 105 in 1920-1921 and almost as many the following year, the last one for which this category of information is recorded.

Each year's account includes information on which missionaries—two to four total—were currently on staff. This information can be seen in the article “Missionaries Who Worked with Sarah C. Smith (Part II)” (Allison, 2009, p. 51) and essentially matches *Japan Mission Reports* in content. Therefore, it is not repeated in this article.⁵ Reporting on the number of Japanese teachers at Hokusei was far less consistent. What little information that does appear consists by and large of notes on numbers (typically two to five) of teachers who either were hired or resigned their positions.

As Figure 3 shows, the number of graduates fluctuated somewhat. It began at 22 in the first year reported, falling to 11, reaching a peak of 28, then declining to 17.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the number of people at Hokusei Jo Gakko who were baptized was reported consistently for the first six years under consideration, then sporadically afterward. It rose and fell between 13 and 24 during most of the years reported, with a high of 38 (1920–1921). The 1916–1917 report indicates (p. 13) that a year in which 21 students were baptized was “normal.” In a few cases, the reporter provides statistics on people at Hokusei (usually students, on one occasion a teacher) who had made professions of faith in Christ. The high was 62 in 1911–1912 (p. 17), and the total reached a few dozen in other years. By comparison, those who became members of churches following their decisions were significantly fewer, always or nearly always below two dozen in the seven reports in which they appear.⁶

The number of Christians in the school was recorded for roughly half of the 13 years *Japan Mission Reports* covers. The range over this span of time was 30 to 79, as Figure 5 indicates. Figure 6 depicts the high percentage of graduates who had by the end of their studies at Hokusei made a decision to accept Christian faith. As for the teachers, reporters mention on four occasions the specific numbers of instructors who are Christians, in each case nearly the entire teaching staff. Finally, Figure 7 presents the often less-than-precise but nonetheless significant number of students in the Sunday schools which Hokusei teachers and students operated. In the three schools open during most of the years under consideration here, a total of anywhere from around 50 to 300 pupils received Bible and other Christian instruction in a typical year. The teams of Hokusei teachers and students who operated these classes number at least 13 and 14 in the years they are reported.

Analysis of Contents

The *Japan Mission Reports* provide a relatively coherent and thorough account of life at Hokusei Jo Gakko as it developed in its earlier days. The book includes information which is similar in subject matter to the annual reports from Hokusei to the PCUSA General Assembly, though each year’s description in *Japan Mission Reports* is lengthier and more detailed in content. *Japan Mission Reports* supplies relatively thorough accounts similar in content also to *Koumu Nenshi*, though covering a different time period. As the *Japan Mission Reports* follow soon after the years *Koumu Nenshi* covers, the two taken together form a nearly complete and fairly detailed description of life at Hokusei Jo Gakko from its establishment to just after the official retirement of its founder. As such, they offer readers a choice between them and the much briefer summaries of which the reports to the PCUSA General Assembly consist.

Woman’s Work for Woman and Our Mission Field, the mission magazine, also differs from *Japan Mission Reports* in that it presents various features and updates for 1880–1924 but not a consistent accounting of events. The former also appears aimed at a more specific readership, especially the women’s missionary societies in PCUSA churches. Letters and other

personal communications to and from Hokusei missionaries, preserved in microfilm form (Heuser), present more of an inside look at events at Hokusei than *Japan Mission Reports*, the microfilmed correspondence written in many cases not for publication but to be held in confidence.

As for the content of the various documents just noted, despite their differences at numerous minor points, they essentially agree on the general pattern of Hokusei's formation. Thus they serve to reinforce each other in the content of the various information they were intended to convey.

Turning to the growth of Hokusei Jo Gakko's student population, as Figure 1 illustrates, the enrollment increased dramatically over the years covered by *Japan Mission Reports*. It nearly doubled, growing from 139 in 1910-1911 to 260 in 1922-1923. There was actually a serious decline to nearly the 100-student level by 1913-1914. According to *Koumu Nenshi* records (Allison, 2012), it was a continuation of the decline which had continued from the 1905-1906 high of 193 pupils. From the time the decline was reversed in 1914-1915, the school experienced steady growth year on year. Sarah Smith describes the fall off in attendance in the 1911 report (p. 19) as a result of increased competition after the opening of other schools in Sapporo. The missionary and future head of the school, Alice Monk, in the 1913-1914 report (p. 36) describes the reversal of the decline as largely attributable to the completion of a new and attractive school building complex, including dormitory facilities. The recognition, or accreditation, of the school by the government in 1919 was no doubt a major contributing factor to the continuing rise in enrollment, as the official affirmation of Hokusei Jo Gakko enhanced its reputation considerably. The 1920 report (p. 14) also notes the general prosperity of Hokkaido farming communities as a factor. The increase in new enrollees (Figure 2) followed a very similar pattern to that of the total student population, likely for many of the same reasons.

In contrast with the consistent growth in student population after facilities were upgraded and accreditation achieved, the number of graduates during this period remained a small portion of the entire student body. As Figure 3 demonstrates, the size of the graduating class in fact fell from 22 in the first year reported (1912-1913) to 17 in the last (1922-1923). Apparently the difficulty in retaining students to the end of their course of study, with which the school had struggled since its foundation, continued to be a challenge during the years under examination.

As Figure 4 shows, the number of baptisms reported rose and fell from year to year yet remained consistently in at least double digits. As these statistics reflect faith choices made by individuals within social groups, it goes almost without saying that the number of pupils who would make this choice in a given year, as well as whether and how long

they would in later life continue on the path of that faith, are matters remarkably difficult to measure with accuracy.

Those who did make the decision to identify themselves as Christians had a community of faith, ranging from around 30 to 80 members strong, to which they could belong, as Figure 5 indicates. In approximate terms, it constituted from one fifth to one half of the total student population. Among these believers was typically a senior class composed of students who had nearly all become Christians by their final year at Hokusei. Figure 6 illustrates this. Figure 7 reflects two aspects of the nature of Hokusei Jo Gakko as a mission school. First, its students, some of whom taught Sunday school classes together with the adult teachers, were involved not only in gaining knowledge for themselves but also in serving others through meeting these particular educational needs. Second, and closely related, the school understood its mission as not staying in isolation from the surrounding community but building links with it through activities such as conducting these classes. Record-keeping was not always consistent, and participation in the classes was on a volunteer basis and, perhaps reflecting this, erratic at times.

Conclusion

As Hokusei Gakuen celebrates its 125th anniversary and Hokusei Gakuen University its 50th, they look to the future facing the choices of what ideals, mission, and goals they will take as their own. The reports of Hokusei Jo Gakko and its missionaries to the BFM's Japan Mission provide not only reliable documentation of the historical facts and events which have directed its journey in the past. They also reveal an identity, a sense of mission, a set of values, and a spirit of learning—all centered on Christ—which can lend guidance and support as Hokusei navigates the uncertain waters of the future.

To what extent these ideals will be relied upon as the actual forces necessary to propel the institution forward in the years ahead is an open question. It is possible Hokusei Gakuen will in the end allow itself to set them aside and, despite its formal Christian identity and remaining elements and aspects of commitment to it, be an institution essentially secular in nature and secularizing in influence. It is likewise possible to rediscover, reinterpret, and reapply to modern contexts the ideals expressed in such documents as *Japan Mission Reports* and hold to an authentic Christian faith which can light the way ahead. Whichever of these (or other) alternatives is actually chosen, hopefully more convenient access to these records and increased awareness of them will assist in the process of making the most enlightened and informed decisions possible.

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ス校務年誌 [*Sumisu koumu nenshi*, Miss Smith's annual report on school affairs]. (K. Ishihara, Trans. Original work unpublished manuscript. (n.d.). Sapporo: Hokusei Gakuen.)

Notes

- (1) *Sumisu-Sensei Nikki* (スミス先生日記, Miss Smith's journal) is more commonly known as *Koumu Nenshi* (校務年誌, Annual report on school affairs) and will be referred to as such in this article.
- (2) Today the PCUSA maintains an ecumenical partnership with Hokusei Gakuen through the school system's affiliation with the United Church of Christ in Japan (日本基督教団).
- (3) The page numbers in the original *Japan Mission Reports* do not appear in the online transcriptions.
- (4) The gaps in graph lines indicate that no relevant data were recorded for those years in the *Japan Mission Reports*. Likewise, notes below graphs are included only for years in which information requiring notation appears.
- (5) The information in this table derives from *Koumu Nenshi* and other sources, including BFM missionary personnel files and annual reports on Hokusei Jo Gakko by the Japan Mission to the PCUSA General Assembly.
- (6) The years in which professions of faith are reported often differ from the years additions to the church were made. The two sets of data refer to different groups of new believers.

Acknowledgment

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Figure 1. Student population.

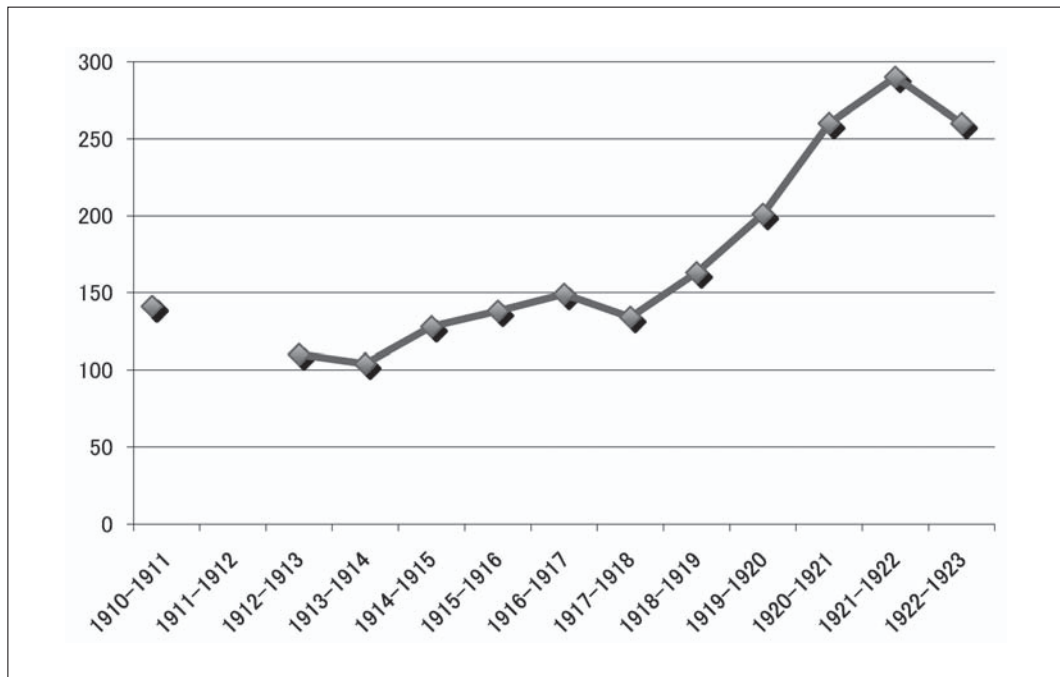


Figure 1 Notes :

- 1910-1911 This figure, reported on p. 19, refers to students "entered," which apparently indicates the entire student population, not only new students.
- 1914-1915 According to the 1915-1916 report, the 1914-1915 student population was 93 as of April 1914 and later rose to this total.
- 1915-1916 Of these, 124 were present at the beginning of the school year in April 1915, and 14 were added during the year. The enrollment fluctuated over the course of the year, but the average was approximately 120 pupils.
- 1916-1917 This number represents the total as of April 1916.
- 1917-1918 No specific number is given for the April 1917 to April 1918 period. The report to the PCUSA General Assembly (Vol. 2, p. 261) for 1918 places the number at 134, which appears here.
- 1919-1920 The number of students for this year "exceeds 200" (1919 report, p. 16), but the 1920 report writer indicates that as of April 1920 there has been a 30% increase in enrollment from the previous April, bringing the total to 260. Thus, in 1919-1920 the student population was very close to 200.
- 1922-1923 Though this year is the last reported specifically in the *Japan Mission Reports*, the account indicates that the influx of students in April 1923 would bring the total for the coming year to "beyond 300" (p. 18).

Figure 2. Number of new students.

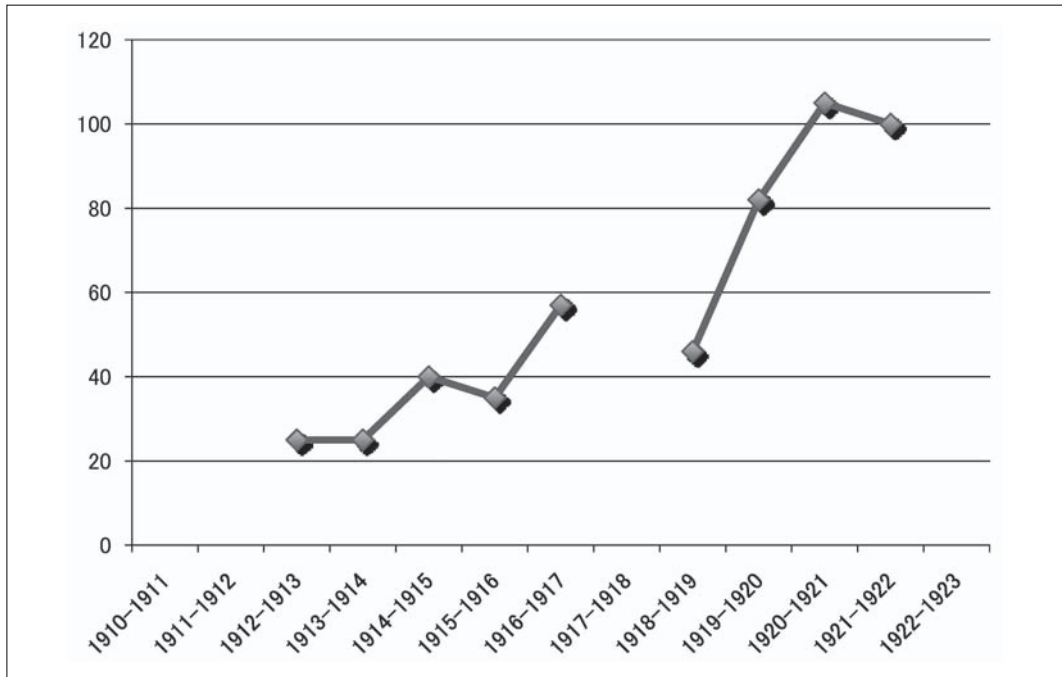


Figure 2 Notes :

- 1913-1914 No data on new admissions appears in this year's *Japan Mission Reports*; however, the report to the PCUSA General Assembly for 1914 (Vol. 2, p. 264) places the number at 25, which appears here.
- 1914-1915 The 1915-1916 report indicates that two more students were admitted that year than in the previous one. That would make the 1914-1915 total 33 rather than the 40 noted in the report for this year, though the differing numbers may simply refer to admissions counted at different stages of the school year.

Figure 3. Number of graduates.

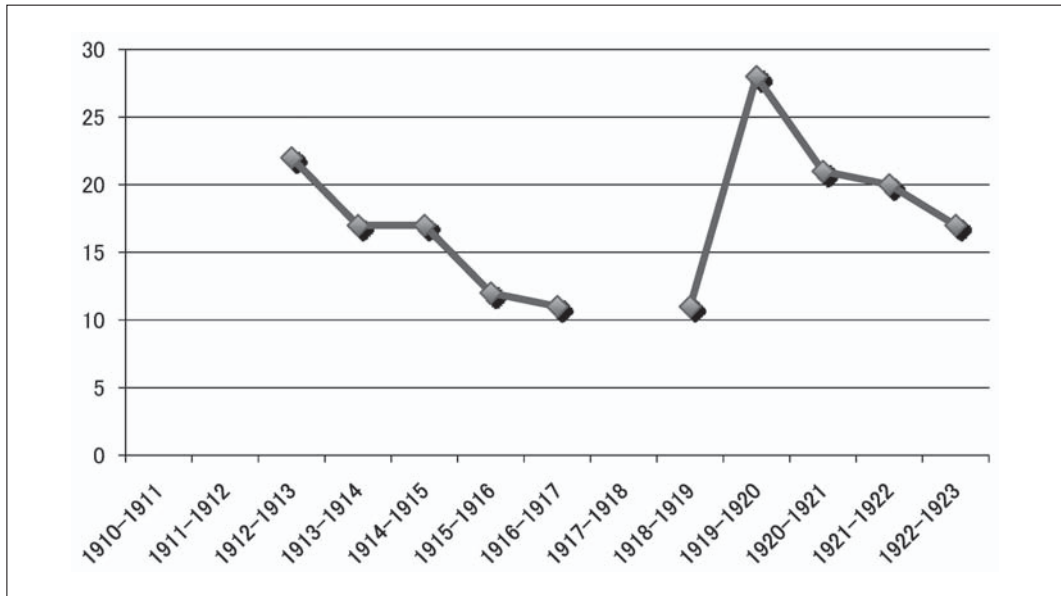


Figure 3 Notes :

- 1913-1914 The table on the unnumbered page included in this report places the number of graduates at 22; however, pp. 36 and 61 state the number as 17.
- 1914-1915 The report for this year does not include a number of graduates. The figure appearing here is the one given in the report to the PCUSA General Assembly for 1915 (Vol. 2, p. 256).
- 1915-1916 Of these, four were from the “full course,” four the “Japanese course,” and four “special courses” (p. 17).
- 1916-1917 The 1916-1917 report places the number at 12, and the 1917-1918 report presents the number for the previous year as 11.
- 1921-1922 No number is reported for this year. The figure presented here comes from the report to the PCUSA General Assembly for 1921-1922 (Vol. 2, p. 295).

Figure 4. Number of baptisms.

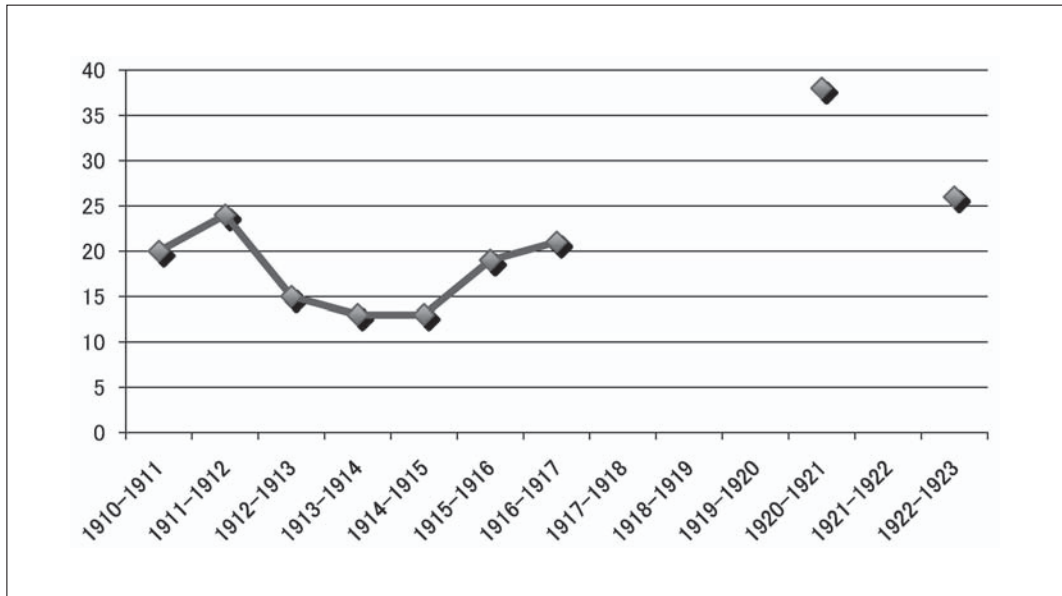


Figure 4 Notes :

- General The data recorded on number of baptisms apparently refer to pupils and do not include others except where specified. Also, figures do not take into account those who chose to accept Christian faith at some point after graduating from Hokusei (for instance the graduates noted in the 1914 report, p. 61).
- 1910-1911 The report for this year does not include statistics on people baptized. The figure appearing here is from the Hokusei Jo Gakko report to the PCUSA General Assembly for 1911 (Vol. 2, p. 249).
- 1912-1913 The number appearing here is in the table in the 1914 report(page unnumbered). The 1912-1913 report lists 13 baptized, including 12 pupils and 1 teacher. This covers the period from April 1912 to April 1913.
- 1920-1921 In addition, two students and one teacher joined a church which did not administer baptism. These figures cover the year running from May to May rather than the standard April to April, for unstated reasons.

Figure 5. Current number of Christians.

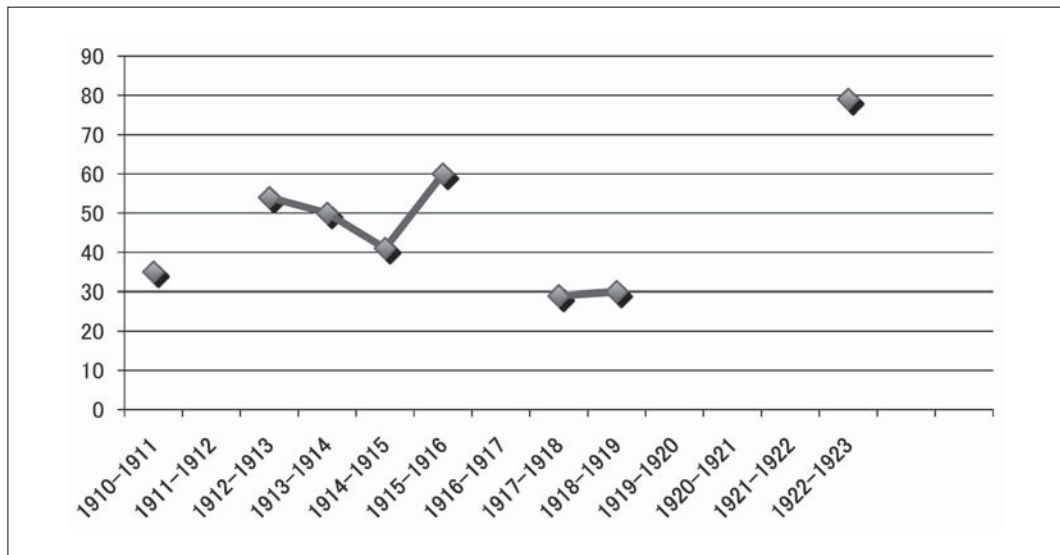


Figure 5 Notes :

- General The data recorded on current numbers of Christians apparently refer to pupils and do not typically include others except where specified.
- 1910-1911 This year's report (p. 19) places the number of baptized Christian students at 30 to 40 of the 139 students "entered," or enrolled in the school. The author notes that nearly all the unbaptized students have "professed belief and desire," that is, presumably, belief in Christ and/or desire to know Him.
- 1912-1913 This number includes 35 baptized Christians and 19 believers who were not yet baptized.
- 1913-1914 Among these 50 were at least 11 new members admitted to churches and perhaps the 2 students who had not been baptized but were believers.
- 1914-1915 In addition, 42 were "inquirers" (p. 73).
- 1915-1916 The report notes that of the 12 Christians graduating this year, 2 were believers who had not yet publicly confessed their faith. The total number of "Christians" among the students was approximately half the student population, which was about 120 on "average" (p. 17). Thus the approximate figure of 60 appears here.
- 1916-1917 The 1916-1917 report states that 50 students had signed "decision cards" (p. 11), some portion of these had already led to baptisms, and there was hope all soon would. Beyond that, the nature of these decisions is not specified. Thus the actual number of "Christians" at this point was likely well above the 21 pupils baptized this year (p. 13).
- 1918-1919 This number is approximate according to the report and appears not in the *Japan Mission Reports* but the report to the PCUSA General Assembly for the year 1919 (Vol. 2, p. 230).

Figure 6. Number of Christians among students graduating.

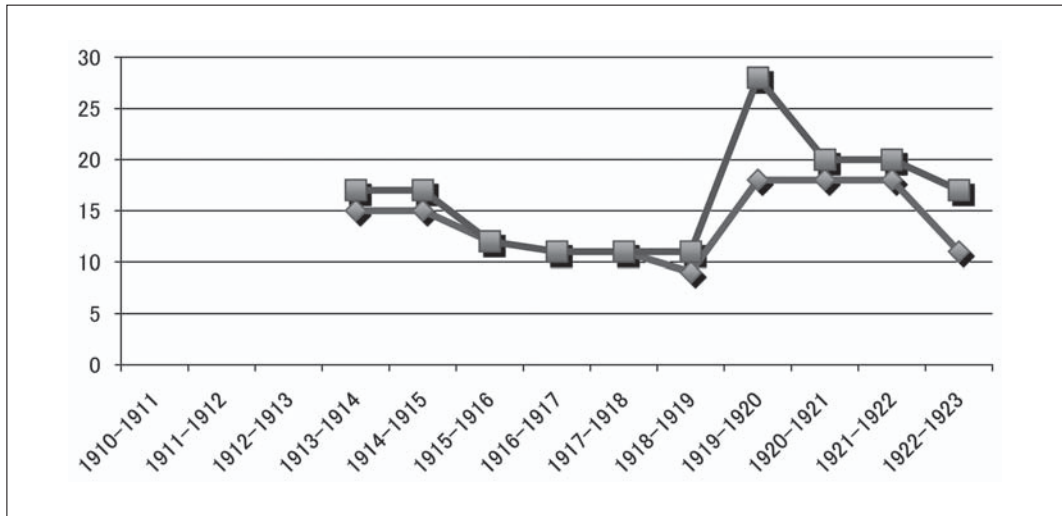


Figure 6 Notes :

- General The upper line in the graph represents students graduating. The lower line indicates Christian students.
- 1915-1916 Two of these students had not yet made a public profession of faith.
- 1916-1917 This figure is in the 1917-1918 report. The 1916-1917 report places the figure at 12 graduates, all of whom were Christians.
- 1921-1922 These numbers are recorded in the 1922 report of the Japan Mission to the PCUSA General Assembly (Vol. 2, p. 295).

Figure 7. Number of students in Sunday schools.

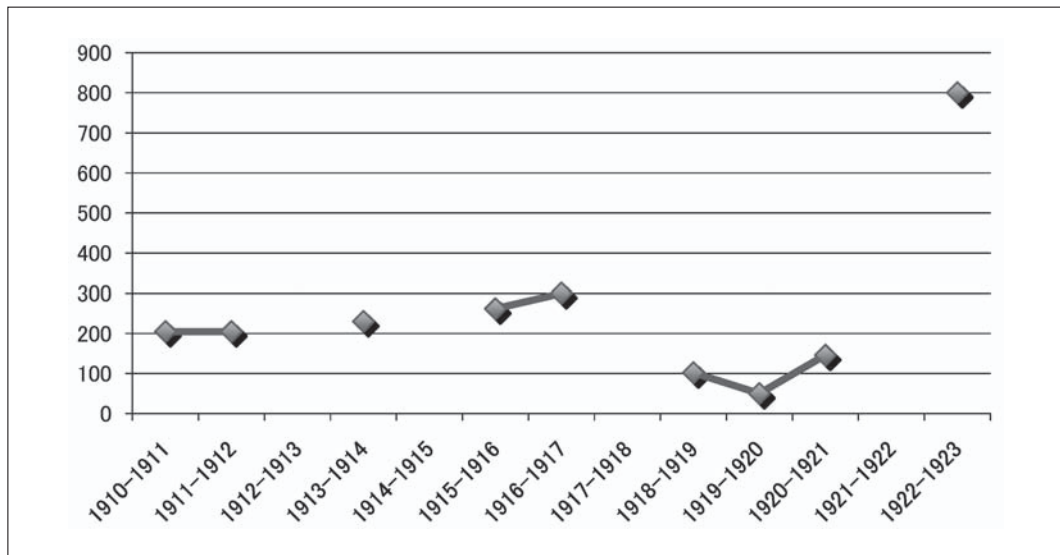


Figure 7 Notes :

- 1910-1911 This figure is approximate and reflects average attendance, the report indicates.
- 1913-1914 This figure is approximate and reflects average attendance, the report indicates.
- 1915-1916 This number reflects average attendance, the report points out.
- 1916-1917 Miss Smith records (p. 10) average attendance of 80 at the Sunday school she leads, Miss Evans indicates (p. 12) that hers averaged 170, and Miss Davidson reports 25 to 100 students in the Zenibako Sunday School she and Miss Monk conduct (p. 12). An estimate of 50 for the Zenibako school is included in the total of 300.
- 1918-1919 Miss Monk reports (pp. 17-18) attendance of 12 at the Toyohira Sunday school, 20 to 45 (counted as 30 in the total here) in the school in Zenibako, and 60 in the Sapporo Fukuinkwan Sunday school, where the attendance had been at 100 for some time recently. Thus the total recorded here as 102 is somewhat arbitrary, and the actual figure may well have been over 150.
- 1919-1920 The figure reported is over 50.
- 1920-1921 The report for this year states the figure as at least 146.
- 1922-1923 The 1923 report (p. 21) notes that a Sunday school Miss Evans served had 50 students, while the various Sunday schools Miss Smith ran included nearly 800. With other Sunday schools not reported, it appears that the figure of 800 is a conservative one.

[Abstract]

Hokusei Jo Gakko Annual Reports in the 1911–1923 Hokkaido Station Reports to the Japan Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

James E. ALLISON

The missionaries who led in the foundation of Hokusei Gakuen reported annually on happenings at the school to the Japan Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions, their sponsoring agency and an arm of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Their descriptions of life at Hokusei Jo Gakko for the years 1911–1923 were later compiled as the book, *Japan Mission Reports*. This article is an introduction to the Hokusei-related sections of the work, including a discussion of its background and an overview and analysis of its contents. The book furnishes a unique set of facts and figures necessary for a thorough understanding of Hokusei Gakuen's formation and development. It provides a coherent, unified, reliable, and relatively detailed account of events at the school during these years. Transcriptions of the Hokusei reports have been made available online in the *Hokusei Gakuen University the 50th Anniversary in 2012* (開学50周年記念事業) section of the University's Web site as part of a University-funded Smith Mission Center research project.

Key words : Board of Foreign Missions, Japan Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Hokusei Gakuen, Hokusei Jo Gakko, Sarah C. Smith