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HIDEYO NOGUCHI

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH¹

HIDEYO NOGUCHI was born on November 24, 1876, in Inawashiro, Fukushima, a village in the mountains of northern Japan. His name during childhood was Seisaku which, as is the custom in his country, was changed to another when he reached manhood. The adoption of the name "Hideyo" gives us an insight into the way his budding mental powers impressed those about him, for of the two parts composing the word, "Hide" means superior or eminent, and "yo" means world. The prophecy carried by the name came to a remarkable realization as subsequent events showed.

Noguchi graduated from the local academy at Aizu in 1889, receiving during this period a preliminary introduction into medical practice. The circumstances of his early schooling are delightfully set forth in an account prepared by his teacher and foster-father, Mr. Sakae Kobayashi, which was used in connection with the memorial exercises held in Dr. Noguchi's honor in his native village.

According to this account, Noguchi belonged to a family which had become greatly impoverished. After the restoration of the Meiji, Mr. Kobayashi, a samurai of the Aizu clan, being learned in the Chinese classics, entered the teaching profession and became principal of the higher school (academy) at Inawashiro, with which were affiliated a number of more elementary schools of the neighboring villages.

The principal visited these lower schools, and on one occasion while examining the children at Sanjogata, his interest was aroused in an ill-elad pupil whose left hand was badly deformed. On inquiry it developed that at the age of two years the hand had been severely burned, and the primitive medical treatment had left the fingers, while not completely lost, yet grown together and almost useless. The physically backward child Seisaku gave his age as fourteen, and explained that, because of the poverty of his family, he would be obliged to leave school. On learning that, in spite of having entered the school a year or two later than the other pupils, his progress had been so rapid that he had surpassed them all, the principal had him transferred to his own school at Inawashiro.

¹ The substance of this sketch was adopted as a minute for the records of the Board of Scientific Directors of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

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