

## CHAPTER X

### GEN-ICHIRO FUKUCHI AND YUKICHI FUKUZAWA

Gen-ichiro Fukuchi and Yukichi Fukuzawa were the two biggest figures in the journalistic world in the early years of the Meiji era. Gen-ichiro Fukuchi was the editor of the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi and Yukichi Fukuzawa was the editor and proprietor of the Jiji Shimpō. Quite coincidentally there are often two big men in the same field. The Meiji civilization was a period which lasted for 45 years. In this period, there were two big figures in various lines. In literature, were Koyo Ozaki and Roban Koda as novelists, representing schools of realism and idealism respectively, Shoyo Tsubouchi and Ogai Mori as scholars of English and German languages and literature; in religion, the Rev. Kozui Otani, of the Western Hongwanji Temple, and the Rev. Koyen Otani, of the Eastern Hongwanji; in the army General Yamagata and General Oyama as the two supreme soldiers; in the theatrical field Danjuro IX and Kikugoro V as the two leading actors.

Fukuchi and Fukuzawa maintained their highest positions as newspaper editors for a long time. However, they were the same in leaving journalism towards the end of their lives. The former made an error in trying to be a politician. The latter buried himself as an educationist.

Ochi was the pen name of Fukuchi, and he is better known as Ochi, because he wrote many plays under his pen name and they were so popular as to be staged very often. He was very versatile.

There are now few editors who can write novels or plays and at the same time discuss politics and

the diplomacy of the day. However, in the early days of journalism there were not a few editors who had literary talent. Osamu Watanabe, who was the editor of the Osaka Mainichi, wrote novels, Fumio Yano, who was the editor of the Hochi, is the author of the famous story "Fujo-Monogatari", Tetcho Suyehiro, who was managing editor of the Akebono Shimbun, wrote "The Setchu-Bai" (Plum Blossoms in the Snow) and other famous novels, Ryuhoku Narushima, who was the editor of the Choya Shimbun, was not only a noted editor but one of the best poets in those days.

The object of these editors in writing novels and plays was to appeal to the general public in a more attractive way and to put before it their aims of social innovation under literary coats. This was rendered necessary, because they had no other way to express their views under the strictest press law that any country had ever had.

Yukichi Fukuzawa did not write novels or plays but he was known as one of the finest writers in those days. He purposely choose an easy and plain style for writing, so his books were widely read. If anybody's books contributed to the progress of a country, his books must be ranked with them. So plain was his style of writing that even the uncultured sections of the people enjoyed his books.

He died on February 2, 1901, as a grand commoner. Although he was once offered a baronetcy, he declined it and remained a commoner until his death. The highest pleasure for him must have been

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to see the growth of Keio University, which he founded.

In 1879-80, the Government leaders, Ki Inouye, Hirobumi Ito and Shigenobu Okuma, planned to issue a newspaper by which to unify the people's views towards the opening of the Imperial Diet. They decided to make Yukichi Fukuzawa, who was an adviser to the Government, the editor of the Government organ. It was a sort of disappointment to Gen-ichiro Fukuchi, who had thought that the Ministers would approach him in this respect. This was said to be the direct cause that made Fukuchi become an enemy to the Government and to take the chance to attack it, when the latter tried to sell the Government property in Hokkaido to a man of Kagoshima for 300,000 yen.

Meantime many small papers appeared and strong competition developed in the press world. As a result big papers mostly suffered financially, due to the high cost of production. The Tokyo Nichi-Nichi was no exception and Fukuchi had to retire from the paper.

The declining years of Fukuchi were not to be compared with his best days and he died on January 4, 1906.

Both Fukuchi and Fukuzawa started their lives as teachers of the English language. They opened private schools and had a number of pupils. How hard it was for them to learn English in those days is seen from "Fuku-o Jiden" (Fukuzawa's Autobiography). I presume an extract from the autobiography of the grand commoner may be of some interest to my readers.

"A year after my arrival in Yedo (Old Tokyo) from Osaka in 1859, the treaties concluded with five

western Powers were published; so Yokohama had only then just opened. It was then that I went from Yedo to have a look at the new settlement. Very few foreigners had arrived at that time. Their dwellings, which were little better than log huts, were dotted about here and there. In these houses they opened shops. On visiting these places I was greatly embarrassed, as I had no means of communication with them. They did not understand my Japanese, and of course I could not make out what they said. I could neither read the shop signs nor understand the labels on bottles. Among all the letters that met my eye there was not one that was familiar to me. Was it English that was written, or was it French? I did not know at all. In wandering through the foreign settlement, I came across a shop owned by a German named Kniffler. This man, though a German, understood written and spoken Dutch. He didn't know much Japanese, but he said that if I wrote in Dutch he could manage somehow or other to understand me. So I carried on a good deal of conversation with him in this way; and, after making a few purchases, went back to Yedo. The whole thing had proved to be a very toilsome affair. In those times leave of absence from the mansion of the lord one served was limited to a certain number of hours. I started one night at 12 o'clock and returned at the same hour the following night. So it meant that I had been on the tramp for no less than 24 hours.

"It was the day after I got back from Yokohama that for a while I gave way to a fit of despair. But on that very day a new resolve sprang up in my mind,—I determined that thenceforth the study of

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English should be the one great purpose of my life, and that all things should be made to give way to it. But the question was, how was I going to begin? At that time there were no facilities for commencing such a study. There was of course no place anywhere in Yedo where English was taught".

Then Fukuzawa tells us that after a while by inquiry he found out that a Nagasaki interpreter called Taichiro Moriyama was in Yedo and he was in the employ of the Government, in connection with the drawing up of the new treaties. Fukuzawa thought he would go to his house and get him to teach him. Moriyama was living in Suidocho, Koishikawa.

"I at once applied to him," Fukuzawa writes in his autography. "This is what he said. 'At present, having a great deal of official business in hand, I am very busy; but since you say you are bent on learning English, I am willing to teach you. But you must come early every morning before I go to the office'. Thus the affair was arranged. At that time I was living in Teppozu, which is, I should say, more than five miles distant from Koishikawa. Well, I went to Mr. Moriyama's house every morning. But I did not get what I wanted. One morning he said:—'It is now near the time for my starting for the office; so please come to-mor-

row morning.' The next morning when I got there earlier, I was again put off. 'Somebody has come to see me this morning,' said Mr. Moriyama; 'so I cannot teach you.' It was quite evident that he had no time to teach me. His refusal to do so was not because he was unobliging. As the treaties had to be got ready for signing of course he was very busy and had no time to give to teaching me English. But after making the above remark, he added:—'I can't bear to see you coming like this every morning and going away without my being able to teach you anything. Won't you come at night?' 'I will do so,' was my reply. So after that I started for his house after dark. However, my nightly visits were as fruitless as my morning ones had been. I was put off with one excuse or another. At one time I was told that Mr. Moriyama had visitors, at another that he had been summoned to the Foreign Office and had to go there at once. The thing was hopeless. I kept up my visits to his house for two or three months, but I saw that, do what he would, he could not find time to teach me. It was plain that I could never learn English by going on in this way. Moreover, I found out that Mr. Moriyama was not at all well acquainted with English; that he had got no further than knowing a little about pronunciation. So I was forced to the conclusion that there was nothing for it but to try some other way."