

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE OSAKA ASAHI AND THE OSAKA MAINICHI

In 1888, the year before the Imperial Constitution was promulgated, two leading papers of Osaka, which now hold the reputation of being national papers, the Osaka Asahi and the Osaka Mainichi, made their first appearance. These two papers have since made constant progress and have become the two greatest papers throughout the country, with amazing circulations distributed from coast to coast.

One of the chief reasons for their success was the selection of the place of birth. Osaka was becoming the commercial centre of Japan and these two papers were badly wanted by the commercial community there.

The Osaka Nippo, which had been under the editorship of Shiro Shiba, who was known as the author of the "Kajin no Kigu", was bought by Hikoichi Motoyama, present President of the Osaka Mainichi Company, in 1868 and the latter changed its name to the Osaka Mainichi. Hikoichi Motoyama was then general manager of the Fujita Gumi, Limited, a very big firm in Osaka, and was one of the pupils of Yukichi Fukuzawa. Motoyama then invited Osamu Watanabe and Ki-ichiro Takagi to his paper from the Jiji Shimpō and gave them important positions. Osamu Watanabe became editor-in-chief of the paper and Ki-ichiro Takagi business manager. Watanabe was the father of Minojiro Watanabe who died in March 1924, and was until a few years ago chief editor of the Osaka Mainichi. Ki-ichiro Takagi was the father of Rita Takagi, present managing director of the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi, sister paper to the Osaka Mainichi.

Osamu Watanabe worked hard to make the Osaka Mainichi one of the best papers in Japan. In order to improve the paper, he picked up able newspapermen from other papers.

The Osaka Asahi, which has been and is the rival of the Osaka Mainichi, was first issued in January, 1888, by Ryuhei Murayama, who still holds the position of president of the Asahi Company.

Since then a few papers have appeared in Osaka but none of them succeeded and now the western part of Japan is absolutely dominated by the Asahi and the Mainichi. So, the competition between the two papers is vehement. When one of them starts a novel plan, it will immediately be followed or counteracted by the other. If one issues an extra to report some important news one day, the other is sure to issue an extra on another important news item the next day. The Mainichi sent five special correspondents to an international conference, for instance, the Washington Arms Parley, and the Asahi despatched the same number of correspondents to the same conference.

The Asahi and the Mainichi took the chance of the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution on February 21, 1889, to fight each other. They both followed the method of reporting by issuing "extras." Ryuhei Murayama, of the Osaka Asahi, had been staying in Tokyo in order to learn the contents of the Imperial Constitution ahead of others. He got it and sent it by telegraph to the editorial department of the Osaka Asahi which was prepared to receive it any moment. The correspondents of the

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Osaka Mainichi went out to Yokohama by train for fear of the congestion of telegrams in Tokyo and from Yokohama sent the matter by telegraph to the Mainichi offices in Osaka.

Naohiko Seki, who was then President of the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi,

was present at the ceremony in the Imperial Palace held on February 21, but left the palace before the ceremony was over and hastened back to the offices of the Nichi-Nichi in order to report it by an extra. Mr. Seki is now a member of the Kakushin Club, headed by Mr. Ki Inukai.