

CHAPTER XIX

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

The first international conference at which many Japanese papers and news agencies were represented by their staff correspondents who were staying there or specially despatched from Japan was the Peace Conference at Paris in 1919. The following were the correspondents who were in Paris to cover the news of the conference:

Shingoro Takaishi, Naoshi Kato, Hanzaburo Uyenishi (Osaka Mainichi and Tokyo Nichi-Nichi).

Raisuke Shigetoku, Seigo Watanabe, Bunshiro Suzuki (Asahi) Rihei Onishi, Masanori Ito (Jiji) Denkichi Matsubara (Hochi) Shuroku Kuroiwa, Yasujiro Ishikawa (Yorozu Choho)

Tsunego Baba (Kokumin)

Seifu Otani (Miyako)

Yuhō Soga, Sekizo Uyeda (Dem-po Tsushin)

J. R. Kennedy (Kokusai Tsushin)

Shun Akimoto (Japan Advertiser)

Mr. Hideo Ono, in his work on the evolution of the Japanese press, says that despite their efforts they could not compete with Reuter or Havas, because the Japanese journalists had the handicap of languages and also lacked the facility to get access to the statesmen of the Powers, while those English and French news services had the ablest reporters on their conference staff and also had direct wires or wireless system from Europe to the Far East. However, inside stories of the conference reported by special correspondents of the Asahi and the Mainichi were interesting. These papers tried to get inside information from the Japanese dele-

gation, but in most cases they failed and it drove one of the correspondents in Paris to call Baron Makino, now Viscount, the "most undemocratic representative". The use of the Sydney line by the Osaka Mainichi towards the end of the conference proved a success.

The next international conference to which public attention was drawn was the Labour conference at Washington held in November 1919. This conference was not so significant in its nature as was considered in Tokyo. American papers did not report the conference on the first page. Japanese papers, however, had a wrong notion of the conference, and sent many special correspondents to Washington.

The latest and greatest international conference in these years was the conference for the limitation of armaments held at Washington from November 12, 1921 to February 1922. When Japan was invited to this conference, she reserved her answer, asking Secretary Hughes to show her the agenda for the conference. There were many publicists in Japan who considered that the conference was intended to deprive Japan of her possessions in the Far East. Public opinion was strong and warned the Government to study the situation more carefully. So, just on the eve of the Washington Conference as many correspondents as mentioned below were in the capital of America.

Seigo Watanabe, Shigeru Kamio,

Taketora Ogata, Ko Shimoura,

Bunshiro Suzuki (Asahi)

Yoshitaro Kusuyama, Kin-ichi

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Ishikawa, Motosaburo Takata,
Mitsushi Kono, Kanesada Hanazono (Osaka Mainichi and Tokyo Nichi-Nichi.)
Takeo Goto, Seitoku Ito, Kinno-suke Adachi (Jiji)
Midori Komatsu, Butaro Ishida, Shozo Niizeki (Chugai Shogyo)
Isuke Tokumitsu (Maiyu Shimban)
Yoshihiro Yamakawa (Chuwō Shimbun)
Chomatsu Sato (Yorozu Choho)
Ryo Hasegawa (Kokumin)
Ri-ichi Yamamori, Juichi Soyeda (Hochi)
Shunzo Matsuoka (Miyako)
Taro Nakajima (Niroku)
Yasuo Fuwa (Yomiuri)
Yukichi Iwanaga, Jo-on Doi (Kokusai Tsushin)
Sekizo Uyeda (Nippon Dempo Tsushin)
Isoh Yamagata (Seoul Press)
Samata Fuwa (Toho Tsushin)

Besides these, there were many other correspondents representing principal papers in Japan and Japanese language papers in the United States. Thus Japan headed the list of newspaper correspondents in Washington in number. About seventy Japanese correspondents assembled in Washington. At dinners or luncheons held in honour of newspaper correspondents in Washington, the Japanese correspondents half dominated such functions. They tried their best to create understandings between Japan and other countries, mingling with the correspondents of other nations, writing for American papers or giving dinners for their American friends. They worked exactly as American newspapermen did. They sought only straight news. They hurried about the city in order to gather news even at

midnight. The Hotel Shoreham, the headquarters of the Japanese delegation, was visited by them late every night. They never failed to attend the press conferences given by the delegates of Great Britain, France, Italy, China and other countries. By the courtesy of the American Government, the Japanese correspondents, as well as other foreign correspondents, were given access to the weekly conferences with Secretary of State Hughes and President Harding. On these occasions, they got tips and worked hard to check up the news. Some of them who had many friends among American newspapermen were found almost every night in the rooms of the Press Club in New York Avenue, on the top floor of the same building as the Washington Bureau of the New York Times, enjoying rest or chatting with their American friends, after their good day's work. Sometimes they would run out of the rooms to send cables or wireless to Tokyo or Osaka. Such papers as the Osaka Mainichi and the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi or the Asahi instructed their correspondents to send all their telegrams at urgent rates, irrespective of expense.

The Osaka Mainichi and the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi staff stayed at the Hotel New Ebbitt and correspondents of other Japanese papers lodged at various hotels. Most of them, however, left for home at the end of the year 1921 or in January the next year and those who remained in Washington until after the close of the Washington conference were only New York correspondents of three Japanese papers, the Asahi, the Osaka Mainichi (and the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi) and the Chugai Shogyo; namely Shin-ichiro Fujita, of the Asahi, Kanesada Hanazono, of the Osaka

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Mainichi and the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi and Butaro Ishida, of the Chugai Shogyo. They had been sent to New York as New York correspondents before the conference was opened.

Admiral Kato, the chief of the Japanese delegation, and his party left Washington for Japan about the middle of February. Japan at first thought that at the conference she alone was going to occupy the role of defendant. She came to the conference knowing that she was under suspicion and disapproval in America. But, the Japanese delegates, especially Admiral Tomosaburo Kato, acted very cleverly. Mark Sullivan says in his work, "The Great Adventure at Washington, The Story of the Conference," published soon after the conference was over, "Japan's conduct at the conference could only be described as 'clever' in the sense that cleverness is identical with the intelligence that recognizes an adverse opinion about her actions, and makes a sincere effort to overcome it. . . . She advocated and practised openness in her diplomacy to an extent that some of the nations did not regard themselves as more virtuous. She settled the Yap controversy with Hughes in a manner satisfactory in detail to both countries. She turned back Shantung to China, which had put her in an undesirable light. She gave the impression of not unreasonably impeding the process of restoring China to territorial and governmental integrity beyond what the others were will-

ing to do, except in a few particulars; and she was reasonably helpful in arriving at the all-important naval agreement—helpful in this respect more markedly than at least one other nation which had greater reason to be helpful, and in spite of the fact that the sacrifices of naval strength that Japan made must cause her political difficulties of a sort that were seriously embarrassing; but which she did not, nevertheless, plead in extenuation."

Although the Japanese delegates were serious on their arrival at Washington because of their consciousness of the important mission on which they were sent to the conference, they left Washington, saying good-bye with much ease to Secretary Hughes and other high officials of the American Government and others who gave them a hearty send-off. Admiral Kato, Prince Tokugawa, Ambassador Shidehara and Mr. Hanihara, members of the Japanese delegation, gave very favourable impressions to the Americans. However, the naval strength apportioned to Japan of 3 against 5 and 5 for Great Britain and the United States respectively as the result of the conference, to which the Japanese delegates and the Japanese Government gave in, was heatedly criticised at home by certain papers. However, at that time, liberalism or, to be accurate, sentimental liberalism was the key note of the press and, Japanese papers, on the whole, welcomed the United States' move for the limitation of armaments and approved the naval ratio assigned to Japan.