

CHAPTER II

PARENTS OF PRESENT DAY PAPERS

The origin of newspapers in Japan was as remote as 1751, if the term "newspaper" is broadly applied to any sheets disseminated among the people in order that the news of the day could be conveyed to them. But the parents of the present day newspapers were not so far distant.

The Yosho Shirabe Jo Kigenko (The Origin of the Institute for the Study of Foreign Books), which dealt with the origin of the institute established by the Tokugawa Government for the investigation of foreign books, had the following to say:

"On December 8, 1860, Tatsunosuke Hori became an assistant instructor in English. On December 26, Kenzo Honda, Yetsujiro Suwa, and Yogoro Haruta were appointed librarians. On December 27, some copyists were appointed. They were Taiho Kaneko, Tatsunosuke Kosuge, Kimpachiro Sakurai, Kozaburo Suzuki and Kensuke Yoshida. Yoshida was the chief copyist. These copyists took copy of what was dictated by instructors who verbally translated news from foreign papers. These copies were later printed with wooden block types and were sold. This was the first time that news (shimbun) was ever printed."

It must be mentioned that the term shimbun used here had a meaning different from our present day usage. The shimbun in our vocabulary means a newspaper but the word used in the extract and used in those days meant just news. When they wanted to say newspapers they said shimbunshi. The usage of those days of shimbun and

shimbunshi ought to be recommended to be revived, because there are no Japanese words to express "news" in our daily glossary at present. Shimbun and shimbunshi are now used in the meaning of newspapers only.

The Yosho Shirabe Jo, or the Institute for the Study of Foreign Books, was the father of the Kaisei Gakko, which later became the nucleus of the Tokyo Imperial University when the latter was established in the early part of the Meiji era.

The Yogakujo (Institute of Foreign Learning) was first inaugurated in the Astronomical Observatory in 1811. The institute had translated reports from the Netherlands to the Japanese Government into the Japanese language since 1840. These reports were presented to the Tokugawa Government by the Government of the Netherlands to help the latter to be correctly informed of the events of the world. The institute changed its name to Bansho Shirabe Jo (Institute for the Investigation of Alien Books) in 1856. The name of Yosho Shirabe Jo was given to the institute in 1862, as the word 'alien' conveyed a disagreeable impression to foreigners, as the Chinese character 'ban' (蕃) meant uncivilised as well as alien.

The first periodical with the world's news translated from foreign papers by the Yosho Shirabe Jo was the Batavia Shimbun, published in January 1862, which was a kind of duplicate of a Dutch paper in Batavia, Java. The publication of the journal was under-

PARENTS OF PAPERS IN JAPAN

taken by Heishiro Yorozuya. Each issue consisted of only five or six sheets and was printed with wooden types. The news of each country was printed under a separate head. The first number included such news as the celebration of the 85th anniversary of the foundation of the United States of America, held in London by Americans.

In August, 1862, the Kaigai Shimbun Besshu (News Overseas) was brought out by the same publisher. Its first issue had the news of the civil war in the United States, translated from New York papers, and the report of the visit to Europe of Takeuchi Shimotsukeno-kami, translated from papers in Batavia, Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

How intense was the desire of the Japanese people in those days to learn the news of the world outside their country can be imagined from the fact that not only Dutch or English language papers were made the source of information but Chinese papers were also used as such. Some Chinese papers were reproduced with all the news translated into Japanese except news of Christianity, which was banned by the Tokugawa Government.

The first non-official newspaper run by a private individual, including news translated from foreign papers, was the Shimbunshi (Newspaper). Such papers as the Batavia Shimbun and the Kaigai Shimbun, already mentioned, were official organs and the news was the by-product of the work of the Government Institute for Investigation of Foreign Books. It was the object of the institute to investigate the world's situation through foreign books. Therefore these

papers were something like their own notes printed for themselves. But the Shimbunshi was the first to be intended by a private individual for the dissemination of news among the people.

The Shimbunshi came out in June, 1864 and was edited by Joseph Hiko or Hikozo a Japanese nationalised as an American. Hiko's life was quite romantic. He was a common sailor of Banshu. A shipwreck decided his future life, for it was by an American ship that he was rescued and taken over to America. When the ship arrived in America he could not speak English. Meantime he naturalised himself as an American and received an American education. When Yokohama was opened for international trade he returned home as an interpreter at the American Consulate. Then many Japanese who wanted to learn something about America used to visit him. To them, Hiko translated American newspapers. Then an idea was mooted to publish the news from foreign papers. His translation was copied by Senzo Homma and Ginko Kishida. The latter's name is well known and identified with the birth of journalism in Japan. The Shimbunshi started by Hiko was instructive with such news as Parliamentary reports from England, the condition of international trade, and so on. He took pains in translating into Japanese the terms which had no Japanese equivalents. The U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives, for instance, were translated by him as higher and lower conference places. He gave a definition to these terms, that the Senate was a place where roju, (supreme councillors of the Tokugawa Government) met and the House was a place where daimyo (local lords) met.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE JOURNALISM

Regarding the life of Hiko, Ginko Kishida, one of his associates, wrote:

"It was in 1864 that we published the *Shimbunshi*. While I was helping Dr. Hepburn in making what was called Hepburn's Dictionary, I came to know Joseph Hiko or Hikoza, a Japanese naturalised as an American. He was a sailor of Banshu. When he was 13 years old, he was shipwrecked, and was rescued by an American ship, which brought him over to America where he received an American education. In 1853, when Commodore Perry was coming to visit Japan, he accompanied him. The Tokugawa Government built a foreign style house in Yokohama and gave it to him. At that time I was living with Dr. Hepburn, through whom I came to see Hiko. I met him very often and learned from him the English language as well as the real condition of America. There was a man named Senzo Homma, who hailed from Kakekawa, Enshu. I got to know him, also, as he often visited Hikoza. One day Hikoza told us that there were newspapers in America as carriers of the news of the day. He talked on the importance of newspapers and said that Japan ought to have some. Then Hikoza told me his idea of making a newspaper, which was eventually realised. However, in starting his paper, the trouble was that there were no types, so we had to have types carved from wooden blocks. We even had to write letters and characters ourselves for type cutters. The first issue was of 12 pages of Japanese paper and was called *Shimbunshi*. We acted as newsboys too. This paper should be claimed as the first newspaper that had ever appeared in this country."

Later Hikoza returned to America but again came and lived in Haramachi, Koishikawa, under the name of Hikoza Hamada.

The Dr. Hepburn mentioned in Kishida's story was a famous surgeon at that time. His name is often quoted whenever a man speaks of the life of Tanosuke, one of the foremost actors in those days. He was under Dr. Hepburn's knife more than once and had his legs amputated. He appeared on the stage in the role of a person who did not use his legs.

Among the foreigners who were the earliest to arrive in this country on the opening of Kanagawa, were two missionaries with their families—the Rev. S. R. Brown and Dr. Hepburn. They lived in Kanagawa in temples, not far from the American Consulate. Both had for a long time wrought in their Master's cause in China. Dr. Hepburn was a medical missionary and soon became popular among the Japanese. They came to this country with a knowledge of the Chinese language and both speedily turned this to account, as it greatly facilitated their study of the Japanese language. Dr. Brown published a grammar of the colloquial language of the Japanese while Dr. Hepburn produced "*Hepburn's Dictionary*" in the summer of 1867 with the assistance of a competent Japanese, Ginko Kishida.

Ginko Kishida was not only one of the forerunners of Japanese journalism but the father of joint stock corporations, the business of transportation of goods by steamers, of Japanese drug exporters. While he was engaged in the work of compiling a book on the geography of China, he died in Tokyo in June 1905 at the age of 73.