

CHAPTER IV

IMPERIALISTS AND TOKUGAWA RETAINERS

The Tokugawa Government returned its mandatory power to the Emperor in 1867. This gave rise to heated discussions among the Tokugawa retainers and the Imperialists. The Imperialists were wiser than the other in taking advantage of the situation. They issued the Dajokan Nisshi in February, 1868 and printed the reports of battles which were being fought between the Imperialists and the Tokugawa samurais. Not only that but the Imperialists backed Mr. John Hartley, a resident in Osaka, when he attempted to issue a paper named Kakkoku Shimbunshi (All Countries News). The paper was first issued in April, the same year. The restoration of the Imperial regime was first reported to the people in western Japan through Hartley's paper. The first number of the journal had an article with the caption of "Dai Nippon". It read to the following purport:—

"We are greatly rejoiced at the Imperial Restoration, effected when all the people in Japan are suffering from the high prices of commodities. The people will remain loyal to the gracious Emperor and to the country, leading an industrial life in their own line. The visit of the Emperor to Osaka was a source of happiness to the people here, not only Japanese but foreigners also. It must be wished that all the country will be unified and peace will obtain forever, and that the communications with other countries will long be maintained."

It is clear from the tone of this article that the paper was backed by the Imperialists whose power was rising in the western part of Japan.

The newspapers issued in the year of the restoration included such papers as the Chugai Shimbun (International News), the Dajokan Nisshi (Government Daily Bulletin), the Koko Shimbun, the Yenkin Shimbun (Far and Near), the Naigai Shimpō (The world), the Moshio-gusa, the Naigai Shimbun, the Nichi-Nichi Shimun (Daily News), the Koshi Zappo, the Kojo Nisshi (Tokyo News), the Shisei Nisshi (City News), the Chindai Nisshi, the Chinjo-fu Nisshi and several others. The English equivalents to these names are only translations ventured by the author for the benefit of foreign readers. The following data of these publications as to the dates of their issue and the editors' names will be of some use whenever references are made:

- 1868 The First Year of Meiji
Beginning with September 8,
1868 (the Fourth Year of
Keio)
- Feb. 24 Chugai Shimbun, Edi-
tor:—Shunsan Yanagawa,
Price:—One momme.
- Feb. Dajokan Nisshi.
- March 25. Anzai-sho Nisshi.
- March 25. Kaigun Kaisha Ni-
chi-Nichi Shimbun.
- April. Kakkoku Shimbunshi.
Osaka.
- April 3. Koko Shimbun. Edi-
tor:—Genichiro Fukuchi.
Price:—One momme.
- April 10. Yenkin Shimbun.
Price:—One momme.
- April 10. Naigai Shimpō.
Daily. Price:—eight bu.
(1 bu—25 sen or 8/10 mom-
me)
- April 11. Moshio-gusa. Edi-

IMPERIALISTS AND TOKUGAWAS

- tori:—Ginko Kishida. Office:—No. 31 Yokohama. Price:—One momme.
- April 17. Naigai Shimbun. Weekly. Office:—Chishinkan, Osaka.
- April 27. Koshi Zappo. Price:—one momme.
- May 5. Kojo Nisshi. Price:—one momme.
- May 19. Shisei Nisshi. Price:—5 bu.
- June. Chindai Nisshi.
- Aug. 5. Chinjo-fu Nisshi. Price:—one momme.
- Dec. Tokyo-Jo Nisshi.

As is seen from the above, the year 1868 is the memorable year, not only for the revolutionary change effected in the political history of Japan but for the rise of modern journalism in this country. The phenomenon tells us how newspapers were needed by the Tokugawa Government and the Reformers for their own political reasons.

The Chugai Shimbun, which was first issued on February 24, 1868, by Shunsan Yanagawa, was one of the best papers among those which appeared in those days. Not only in quality but also in the choice of editorial stuff, the paper surpassed others. The editor-in-chief, Shunsan Yanagawa, was a learned scholar of the Chinese and Japanese classics, also of the Dutch, English and French languages. He was born in Nagoya and was a genius. He translated more than 100 foreign books for the lord of Owari. Later he became a teacher at the Kaiseljo, a Government institute for the study of foreign languages. On March 12, 1871, he died of a sudden illness at a certain restaurant in the city while he was taking dinner with a friend of his.

How important a position was held

by the Chugai Shimbun among the papers in those days can be judged from the editorials of a few other papers, such as the Naigai Shimpō and the Yenkin Shimbun, which appeared in the same year as the Chugai Shimbun, although two months later.

The Naigai Shimpō said in its first number:

“Since the appearance of newspapers in France in the Kwanyei period (1624-1629), other nations followed the example and now there is no country on earth where no newspapers are issued. There is now the Chugai Shimbun in Yedo by which the general public is informed of events at home and in other countries. However, it is a pity that the journal neglects the news reported by English papers in Yokohama. Therefore, the Naigai Shimbun has its own reason for existence, in that it will contain the news from English papers in Yokohama and also will print all Government orders and appointments, so that it will be useful for the general public.”

The Yenkin Shimbun also said in its editorial:

“Although there are several papers already in existence, such as the Chugai Shimbun and the Naigai Shimbun, we deem that there is still room for more papers. The function of newspapers is to carry anything new interesting to the public and we pledge ourselves that we will do our best in the discharge of our duties.”

All these late-comers mentioned the Chugai Shimbun as their esteemed predecessor. They equally said, however, that they had their own reasons for existence. The Naigai Shimbun pointed out the absence of foreign news in the Chugai Shimbun, saying that it would try its best to introduce

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE JOURNALISM

the reports in Yokohama foreign papers to the Japanese readers. But, this statement is false, because as is seen from any copy of the Chugai Shimbun, it printed translations from Yokohama English papers. Not only that, but the following editorial in its first issue proves it.

"We have been disseminating copies of the news translated from English language papers in Yokohama, such as the Japan Times and the Herald, but our copies were scribbled by ourselves, so the circulation was limited. Now we are glad to say that we have arranged to issue our paper printed from wooden blocks. The prices of commodities in Yedo will be reported.—Ed."

Then surveying the origin of newspapers in Japan, it said:

"Newspapers are now to be found in any large town in the world. It is so, not only in Europe or America but also in big Oriental towns, such as Hongkong, Shanghai, Singa-

pore or Ceylon. Japan must have her own newspapers. In 1863 a paper was started in Yokohama by an Englishman and since then there have been six papers. However, all of these are run by foreigners. They cannot be called Japanese papers in the strict sense. Seven or eight years ago, the Kaiseijo Institute published a newspaper but it was not favoured by the public at that time. We are glad to say that our paper has been very popular since its appearance and has found its way even into the remotest towns. Only within a month of its first issue, our subscribers have increased to 1,500. From this fact it can be judged that people now like to read the news of the day and that Japanese culture has improved so far. Now in Kyoto there is a journal called the Dajokwan Nisshi but this being under the control of the Imperial Government, it is not proper to compare our journal with it. We claim ourselves that our paper, the Chugai Shimbun, is the father of Japanese journalism in its true sense."