

# JAPAN'S FOREIGN NEWS-SERVICE

BY DR. N. HANSEN

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SEVERAL efforts have been made by the newspapers of Japan, within the past few years, to secure an independent news-service from abroad. Seven years ago the Reuter Bureau had an absolute monopoly of the Japanese news-market. Captain Brinkley, a brilliant but unscrupulous political writer, who was for more than forty years publisher of the Japan *Daily Mail*, and Tokyo representative of the London *Times*, was also Reuter's representative in that country. He had acquired an influence over public opinion there much stronger than that exercised in China by his colleague, Dr. Morrison, the Peking correspondent of the *Times*. The truth is that Brinkley, with the help of these three agencies for influencing public opinion, did more to bring about the alliance between Japan and England than did Count Hayashi and the London cabinet. The full force of his personal influence was behind the press campaign which was systematically carried on against Germany in Japan between 1885 and 1905. His use of the Shimonoseki scandal, involving the Krupps, was only an episode in these political and commercial intrigues. Brinkley died before the war broke out. During the last years of his life he was the adviser of the Nippon Yusen Kaishi, a powerful, and at that time heavily subsidized, steamship company. The English had previously discovered, through their own agents, that he was receiving a yearly subvention of 240,000 *yen* from the Japa-

nese government for promoting its interests in Great Britain.

Brinkley's successor as the Reuter representative in Japan, Mr. Pooly, was a more conscientious servant of truth regarding that country. In 1913, when he sent home a plain statement of Japan's financial condition and a caustic criticism of the government's machinations with its gold reserve, the Japanese authorities, after trying to buy him out without success, found him *persona non grata*. So, on January 1, 1914, he was called back to London.

Thereupon Reuter lost its preferred position in the Japanese newspaper world. The government decided to set up its own monopoly of telegraphic press news. Capital was supplied, partly by Japanese financiers and partly from the public treasury. But the Reuter service still proved indispensable. After Pooly, who was arrested at Tokyo, returned to England, where he was given a high administrative position at the head office of the company, Mr. Kennedy, who had previously been a representative of the American Associated Press, was put in charge of the Reuter Tokyo telegraph monopoly, at the instance of Mr. Mori, who represents the Japanese government's investment in the enterprise. Thereafter, Japan was aided in floating her loans at home and in Great Britain, and the financial section of the Reuter Bureau made large earnings; but public opinion in Japan and Great Britain was intentionally misled. Some of the leading

Tokyo newspapers had, by this time, an independent cable-service with London. *Jiji* (the Times), *Asahi* (the Morning Sun), and *Nichi-Nichi* (the Daily Gazette) publicly announced that they would have nothing more to do with Reuter so long as Kennedy remained its Tokyo representative. A number of other newspapers canceled their contracts with the Reuter service, and obtained an increasing amount of their material through the American Associated Press, and the cable department of the East Asia Lloyds.

During the war, however, the three great newspapers we mentioned above — the first two of which print editions also in Osaka — became utterly dependent upon England. They did not even attempt to conceal the exclusively English origin of their articles, and one often received the impression, when reading their telegraphic columns, that the Reuter Bureau was using them to publish propaganda against Germany which it prudently avoided issuing under its own name.

But the influence of Reuter in the Japanese press world has waned perceptibly since the war. The Associated Press is a rival of growing strength. Its Manila branch supplies Japan with voluminous reports of economic and political events in North America and Europe. A private Japanese news-agency, established last spring, has an independent cable-service from Paris. So, on the whole, the Japanese newspapers are fairly well supplied from several sources with foreign matter. Provincial papers buy their news mostly from a Japanese agency, which is practically a branch of the Associated Press. The principal papers of the larger cities subscribe for both the Reuter and the Associated Press service. Most of them also have their own correspondents in London and Paris. These foreign representatives are still,

in many cases, Englishmen or Americans. Nevertheless, there is an efficient corps of Japanese journalists in all the important world-centres, who keep the readers of their country well informed upon important events abroad.

Another important factor, however, comes into play here. The cost of telegrams from New York to Tokyo is still 76 *yen* a word, while the cost from London to Tokyo is only 35 *yen*. With the same expenditure of money, the English can deliver more than twice as much news to Japan as can the Americans. In fact, the English have not raised their charge for press-telegrams appreciably since before the war. At that time they were one shilling and threepence, and now they are one shilling and fourpence.

A regular reader of the leading Japanese newspapers soon discovers that the people of that country take a lively interest in foreign affairs, — particularly in what is occurring in Ireland and India, — and that they are abundantly supplied with information on those topics. I need cite only one or two examples to show how alert and 'on the job' the Japanese correspondents are. A Japanese journalist, Fuse, representing the Osaka *Mainichi*, was one of the first foreign correspondents to visit every important city of Central Europe immediately after the Armistice was signed. He even traveled through Soviet Russia, studied conditions in Moscow carefully, and then returned to Japan across Siberia.

When the *Manchester Guardian* scooped its contemporaries last spring by printing the characterizations of Wilhelm II in the unpublished third volume of Bismarck's *Thoughts and Memories*, all the important passages were at once wired to Tokyo.

Japanese correspondents and editors do not trouble themselves particularly to have their foreign dispatches, which

are usually printed on the second page, conform with the editorial policy and leaders of the paper. Here odd instances of contradiction have occurred. A supplement editor or a market editor would take it very ill of the man who writes his paper's political leaders were the latter to interfere with his department. Late last May one of the principal Tokyo papers was advocating vigorously, in its editorial columns, friendlier relations between Japan and America, while, on the next page, it was publishing extremely irritating and sensational dispatches, describing the espionage practised by an American naval attaché in the principal shipyards of Japan, although the American had visited this establishment in full uniform and accompanied by Japanese officers. The Japanese Navy Department compelled this newspaper to publish a correction. It did so, but in the smallest of type, in the most obscure corner of its advertising section. As a rule Japanese correspondents, whether at home or abroad, prefer to tell their news in narrative style, rather than as terse statements of fact.

Both home and foreign news are still subject to censorship. Five classes of items are not permitted to be published, lest they 'disturb the peace of the land and threaten the existing order of society.' These five categories are:—

- (1) Reports of political trials.
- (2) Information concerning confidential government documents.
- (3) Reports of certain meetings of public corporations.
- (4) Dispatches which might arouse economic and political unrest.
- (5) Reports and communications calculated to diminish the prestige of the Imperial family.

Every newspaper must deposit 2000 yen as a guaranty that it will not vio-

late these provisions, and keeps a dummy editor to serve its jail sentences: Each new cabinet has promised to remove these oppressive censorship restrictions, which rest so heavily upon the public opinion of Japan; but so far no decisive steps in that direction have been taken. The result is that not infrequently matters which everybody knows about are never mentioned in the press; or they are referred to in an indirect way, that does not put much strain upon the reader's imagination.

Just now the Japanese censorship is conducting an especially vigorous campaign against what is called 'dangerous thinking.' Anything associated with Socialism and Bolshevism, no matter how indirectly, is excluded. For instance, the *Japanese Advertiser*, an American paper published in Tokyo, was forbidden to appear because it printed a proclamation issued by Japanese Socialists in Europe, expressing sympathy for the European revolution. The *Japan Chronicle*, a British paper printed in Kobe, was prohibited to be published for several weeks because it had printed the platform of the Socialist International. The responsible editor of the *Kobe Herald*, another English paper, in the same city, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment because he reprinted an article from a Peking newspaper in which the Mikado was referred to as 'inexperienced.' However, this English journalist left the country betimes, and so escaped serving his sentence.

A young professor of the Imperial University in Tokyo, who printed in a Japanese paper a matter-of-fact account of Prince Kropotkin's views and doctrines, had to serve a jail sentence of three months for his rashness. Obviously, therefore, the Japanese newspapers are not yet free agents in guiding and expressing public opinion.

# SELF-DETERMINATION: THREE EPISODES

BY MAJOR S. E. M. STOBART

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THE wide open space in the centre of the village lay bathed in the bright moonlight, save where a gigantic rubber tree threw its shadows on the grass beneath. This was the meeting-place of the tribe, and on this night a council of importance was to be held; for the space was alive with dusky figures, some squatting silently in little groups, others moving from place to place and converging gradually on the spot where, on his stool beneath the tree, sat the chief Sanchu himself, preparing to preside over the deliberations of his tribe. From far away on the hills came the faint tap-tap of the signal drums. From the forest below came others, nearer, yet indistinct; on the hills above, a single muffled boom. Then silence, followed by a deep reverberating crash, as the council drum within the village sent forth its word that all were present and the council of the tribe assembled in full session.

First came the ceremony of propitiation, with the slaying of a black and a white cock, from which the blood was allowed to drip slowly into a wooden bowl held by the village priest and *juju* man. Into this bowl Sanchu himself, then each of his head councilors and sub-chiefs, grouped in semicircle round the stool, first dipped a forefinger, then lightly smeared the forehead with the blood. This ceremony finished, the bowl was handed back to Ayok, the *juju* man, who swallowed the remnant of the mixture in one gulp, then hurled the bowl far over the heads of the as-

sembled councilors. Followed a brief silence, till the village drums once more crashed forth in unison and the council was thus formally opened.

Sanchu himself was the first to speak. He had assembled the tribe, he said, to discuss a weighty matter. The German District Commissioner had sent a messenger to say that German and English white men were at war; that the Germans would soon 'eat' the English and drive them into the sea; that all the men of the village, and of those villages which followed Sanchu, were required to report themselves at once for work as carriers or soldiers; that Sanchu himself was to bring them in to headquarters, while failure to do so would result in the destruction of the village and the shooting of Sanchu and his headmen. Only by a strategic retirement to the bush when the news arrived that a government messenger was approaching, had he, Sanchu, managed to evade a direct reply and gain time in which to consult the members of the tribe. What had they to say, he now inquired, and what answer should be sent upon the morrow?

Silence fell upon the assembled meeting when he had finished speaking. Presently, up rose an old and wizened patriarch, bent, apelike, and almost inhuman in his skinny nakedness. It was Ayok, the *juju* man — a relic of the past, but a source of lively terror to the present; for even the young men feared his spells and had perforce to listen to his words. This was his hour,