

Chapter III.  
THE VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS

The pre-war Southern California Japanese population supported three daily newspapers published in Little Tokio. These dailies constituted the chief organs of public opinion; *and*

Los Angeles Japanese Daily News  
(The Rafu Shimpō)

Japan-California Daily News  
(The Kashu Mainichi)

Southern California Industrial Daily  
(The Sangyo Nippo)

In a highly organized community they exerted an influence greater than is generally attributed to the press in American life. In creating popular attitudes and views on issues affecting the community, the Japanese vernacular newspapers played a primary role.

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All three publications differed in size of circulation, age, editorial policies; but in several respects they shared common attributes. Each was owned and financially controlled by an Issei, although minority stock interest in the Rafu Shimpō, largest of the three, was held by Nisei. *and* Each was primarily a Japanese language medium, with an English section supplement of one or two pages. The Rafu Shimpō and the Kashu Mainichi issued enlarged English sections on week-ends.

In none of the three newspaper offices was there close daily editorial collaboration between the Japanese and English Sections, if such collaboration is to be measured in terms of successful elimination of occasional contradictions and conflicts



in printed points of view. ] For instance, in the field of reporting international events, these differences are most conspicuous. In addition to extensively using Domei Japanese wireless dispatches originating from Tokyo, the Kashu Mainichi subscribed to the Hearst International News Service; the emphasis in Japanese section space allotment was placed on Domei dispatches, whereas the English section of that paper made greater use of I.N.S. items.

Similarly, the Rafu Shimpo availed itself of not only Domei but also the Transradio Press Service; often for no other reason than the time-saving device of relying on Transradio copy which did not have to be translated, the English editors of The Rafu Shimpo made no use of Domei.

[The Japanese section staffs of these newspapers were composed largely of Issei, with an occasional Kibei. In the two years immediately preceding war, the major preoccupation of Japanese section reporting and editorializing, if measured by column inches of space, was undoubtedly the steady deterioration of American-Japanese relations.]

The English section staffs of these newspapers were composed entirely of Nisei.]

All three newspaper offices and plants were located within three blocks of each other in the East First Street Little Tokio area. While there was a spirit of competition between the rival staff members, Japanese section editorial workers of all three publications were informally organized in the fraternal "Press Club," with officers and dues but no headquarters. Dinners honoring visiting Japanese dignitaries, with off-the-record con-



versations and interviews as the chief attractions, seem to have been the only notable activity of this association. For the most part, the publishers refrained from active participation in the goings-on of the Press Club; this was primarily an employees' show. The Press Club membership rarely exceeded twenty-five, and English section staff people were never invited to join. No such organization ever developed out of the Nisei press fraternity of Little Tokio, though suggestions were heard on occasion.

In 1940, the combined circulation of the three dailies, based on published figures of each, reached a total of 17,000.<sup>1\*</sup> Roughly half the daily output of each was delivered by bicycle carrier much in the same manner as metropolitan dailies, while half went by mail. There was a good deal of overlapping in subscription lists among them. It was the assertion of the business manager of ~~The~~ Rafu Shimpo that "the average Japanese family in Southern California subscribes to two out of the three newspapers." By 1940, publishers of all three dailies acknowledged little hope of increasing circulation; there simply were no more potential readers of a Japanese vernacular sheet. Moreover, it was likewise conceded that chances of boosting circulation at the expense of the other two were limited. In the matter of competing for the limited resources of Little Tokio merchants' advertising expenditures, there was considerable expression of feeling in the business offices that "there is really room for only two self-supporting dailies." There was practically no news stand sale of any issue; each day's printing went to a regular subscription list.

Some of the overlapping no doubt was due to the unbusiness-

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1. The Rafu Shimpo 8,200, Kashu Mainichi 6,100, Sangyo Nippo 3,000.



like practice of Japanese newspapers to continue to "carry" delinquent accounts. Due to the seasonal nature of the farming subscriber's income, this practice seems to have had an early start. In 1940, the business manager of the Rafu Shimpō, checking his records for the preceding 18 years, estimated that the company carried \$50,000 in unpaid subscription bills; furthermore, there was "no hope of collecting." The Sangyo Nippo, which evolved into a daily in the late thirties from a farm weekly sponsored by the Southern California Farmers' Federation, claimed to print over 3,000 issues each day in the first few months of its publication; there grew up a widespread suspicion, however, that over half of the Sangyo's circulation list at this time was a "throw-away" or "free" list; and subsequent efforts of Sangyo collectors to place such readers on a paying basis failed, until after Pearl Harbor, to elevate the business department of this newspaper into solvency.

The Kashu Mainichi's record in maintaining non-paying readers in its active circulation files, though for a much shorter period than the older Rafu Shimpō, probably exceeds both the Rafu and the Sangyo. Above and beyond dependence upon circulation and advertising income, the Kashu resorted to various other means for support, including outright donations from loyal followers of the publisher, sale of books authored by the publisher, fees from lectures delivered by the publisher.

As a business, the Japanese language newspaper was no money maker. Compared with the major economic enterprises of the community, it was financially insignificant. Both the Sangyo and the



Kashu were seldom debt-free; neither Publisher Sei Fujii of the Kashu Mainichi, nor Publisher Koh Murai of the Sangyo Nippo were men of means and wealth. Admittedly better off financially than either of his two competitors, Publisher H. Toyosaku Komai of the Rafu Shimpō, was still a comparatively minor figure in terms of annual income among leading Japanese business men of Southern California; he drew a salary as publisher of less than \$300 monthly. As the largest of the three dailies, the Rafu Shimpō's total gross income annually was usually considerably under \$140,000; the Kashu Mainichi closer to \$80,000, and the Sangyo Nippo around \$45,000. Expenditures were invariably trimmed to keep ledgers black, but it was only after some 35 years of uninterrupted publication that the Rafu Shimpō, oldest and largest of the dailies, acknowledged itself well-enough anchored to meet employee payrolls regularly and without delay. It was not uncommon for staff members of the newest paper, the Sangyo Nippo, to complain of "bouncing" salary checks.

With high rentals and fixed costs of paper and supplies, compared to standards of American newspaper publishing, the business departments of the vernacular dailies were hard put to paying "decent" editorial salaries. No editorial employee of any of the three Japanese language papers ever received more than subsistence wages in regular compensation. Any vernacular newspaperman, Japanese or English section, could probably have secured for himself a better wage in either the produce or floricultural industry; on occasion some did.

In 1935, for instance, the then managing editor of the



Kashu Mainichi was receiving \$110 monthly for his services; the then English Editor was earning \$70 monthly. Five years later, each position was worth \$10 a month more to the occupants of the same desks who had since changed. At no time was the position of managing editor of the Rafu Shimpo worth more than \$165 monthly, and most of the time it was less; the most that any English editor of that same publication ever received in regular salary for that position was \$125 monthly, and that only for a comparatively brief period. These were top salaries; for most employees, monthly paychecks ran closer to \$65, \$75, and \$85. The fact that all three newspapers at one time or another provided employees with three meals a day in a plant commissary provided business offices with a defense of salary standards. Board was usually valued at \$15 a month.

If newspaper employees, in both editorial and composing departments, were conscious of low standards of income, there was seldom outward expression of dissatisfaction. One reason was that these salaries were on a general par with Little Tokio paychecks. In the Rafu Shimpo organization, there were half a dozen employees of nearly twenty years standing who had averaged around \$100 monthly. At one informal gathering, the publisher of the Rafu Shimpo once expressed his opinion that "anyone working for any Japanese language newspaper ought to expect around \$100 a month in pay, certainly not much more." His feeling was that anyone with ability would "eventually graduate" from the "local level."

In 1936, when the Rafu Shimpo added an English editor to its then full-time section staff of three, wages were: linotypist



\$80, English editor No. 1 (in point of years of service) \$65; English editor No. 2, \$60. Salaries at the Kashu Mainichi at this same time for the English section compared even less favorably, though one job as editor paid \$5 a month more.

Some significance may be attached to these figures in discussing the function and relationship of the English sections during this period. The English sections, as late as 1940, were regarded by business departments as dependent appendages which, whatever potentialities they held for future self-support, were still in their financial adolescence.

This was almost equally true of all three newspapers. The Rafu Shimpō claimed the first and oldest English section, started in 1926 as a weekly supplement; some five years later when the Kashu Mainichi was founded out of the dissolution of the strike-bound Rafu Nichi-Bei, an English section appeared with its first issue. And seven years later the Sangyo Nippo similarly came out with a two-language publication, the English department also being a minor appendage.

There is some question as to how high calibre of journalistic timber any of the vernacular dailies attracted to either of its two staffs. The community was known to have, for instance, several promising young men and women who had completed university training in journalism. But the limited field of English section work on vernacular dailies offered few incentives, even fewer opportunities. The Japanese sections were staffed by persons who for the most part had comparatively little formal preparation for the profession.



Within the social structure of the Japanese community, however, there was prestige attached to the status of a newspaperman; this, and the nebulous desire to find expression and service probably brought those few seeking such employment into this field.

Despite this, however, the men and women who composed both the Japanese and English staffs had, as a group, a higher-than-average educational background; and they were, by a process of elimination, persons who stuck to their jobs often out of loyalty to their profession however poorly their remuneration compared with other opportunities at hand.

The men and women who wrote, interpreted, and edited the news for the Japanese language newspapers of Los Angeles had diverse backgrounds and personal histories; mostly they were Issei. And their political philosophies ranged from opposite extremes in thinking among resident Japanese of Southern California.

But Whatever else may be said about ~~the~~ acceptable views that could safely be embraced by these staff members, it was generally acknowledged that to become tainted with the label "Aka" or Communist was a cardinal sin. Editorial direction and policy-making were, in all three newspaper offices, in the hands of conservative men with fairly characteristic Japanese antipathy toward any views favorable to Soviet Russia. The term "Aka", in the more common parlance of the community, included not only those intellectuals who acknowledged merit in the Russian experiment, but those who actively campaigned to unionize hotel and restaurant employees, fruit stand workers, and others of the community's proletariat. It was often directed sharply against the occasional Issei who spoke out or wrote about the "militarism" of Japan.



The journalistic experiences in Los Angeles of Ujinobu Konomi and May Tanaka are illustrative. Konomi was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Southern California, a native of Japan where he completed his higher education before coming to this country. A capable writer in both languages, he was employed first on the staff of Sei Fujii's Kashu Mainichi Japanese section; he graduated after a few years to a similar editorial spot on the Rafu Shimpō. In both offices, he gained the reputation of being a top-notch writer. However, the managing editors condescendingly added, he had "radical" theories and ideas; as a matter of fact he kept company with "Aka" persons. He was known privately to be extremely critical of political leadership in Japan. He deplored the fact that military Fascists (the term he himself used) had gained ascendancy across the Pacific. An independent thinker, he strained under the leash of "stultified fascist dogma" which he charged was coming over the short wave wireless each day in the Domei Japanese News Agency dispatches that the vernacular dailies were publishing. He found outlets of expression for his own concern about international politics in the literary circles of the community which conservative elements dubbed as "Aka." There were others of his associates who shared in lesser degree some of his views but did not declare themselves as vociferously. Konomi quit the Los Angeles newspaper scene in 1939, packed up and left for New York.

A flash on the Southern California horizon for an even briefer spell was May Tanaka, also a native of Japan and an extremely capable journalist. Her column in the Japanese section of the Rafu



Shimpo was regarded, during its short appearance, as one of the paper's most-read and most popular features. A physically attractive woman who found herself completely at ease on a staff where everyone else was male, she commanded the respect of her colleagues despite views that came to be labelled as "Aka" after a few weeks. Emancipated from the traditional Japanese role of inferior status for the woman, May Tanaka lashed out in condemnation of the Japanese political system. She emphasized the unjust inequalities of that system. She lasted less than a year, then went on to New York where she subsequently wrote a book ("Restless Wave") under a nom de plume of Haru Matsui and married a Japanese artist.

There is evidence to indicate that the political ideology of Japan in the late thirties found reflection in the controlling leadership of the vernacular dailies in Los Angeles. Konomi and Tanaka in a sense were symptoms of an unsuccessful revolt against the tide; but their fellow travelers who remained silent became repositories of the seed of intellectual rebellion which came to fruition in the topsy-turvy reorganization of the newspapers after Pearl Harbor.

On July 7, 1937, Japan launched her military expedition into North China, instituting what her press referred to as the "Ni-Shi Jihen."<sup>1</sup> *Japan-China Incident* This event had as one of its repercussions the beginning of an ideological split among Los Angeles' Japanese newspaper fraternity. There were differences at first only in the intensity with which individual staff members espoused the cause of Japan as against China. < But soon the less enthusiastic

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1. "Japan-China Incident."



sympathizers began to express their doubt as to the wisdom of the Japanese government's prosecution of the campaign against China. Occasionally, a slight note of mild criticism crept into printed comment. But it was only the exceptional Issei newspaperman who did not fully and completely identify himself with Japan, who even ventured to hint at the possibility that Japan could not be completely and absolutely in the right in China.

A strong, conscious identity with fortunes of Japan in the military venture in China was the keynote of front page editing. Two years after the July 7 "incident," however, as the Sino-Japanese conflict assumed more and more the aspects of an American-Japanese issue, differences within the staffs of these publications came into sharper focus. The marks of an ideological split among the staff produced some news editing that undoubtedly confused readers from time to time. Differences of views made for contradictory editorial comment ~~wh~~ within the pages of the same newspaper.

#### The Rafu Shimpō Japanese Staff

As the largest and oldest<sup>1</sup> of the three language newspapers, The Rafu Shimpō employed from eight to eleven full time news and editorial workers on its Japanese section staff. Final decision in their hiring and dismissal rested with Publisher H. T. Komai. Unlike his two fellow publishers, however, Komai took little active part in initiating editorial policy; he mediated in staff controversies, administered personnel, kept a business eye on company solvency, and sat in high council among local civic organizations. He wrote no editorials or articles himself. He personally differed on frequent occasions with his managing editor but refrained

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1. Established in Los Angeles, 1904



from interference on the theory that, within reason, his staff should "enjoy free exercise of editorial opinion." In the constant maneuvering between the Japanese and English sections for favorable allotment of news space and for budgetary considerations, it was the feeling of the Nisei editors that he displayed partiality toward English section requests.

Directly responsible to the publisher was Managing Editor Hiroshi Suzuki. An Issei of university training in Japan and a long-time resident of Los Angeles' Boyle Heights, Suzuki influenced to a large degree the tone and emphasis of news treatment in the Japanese section. He was regarded as a competent writer and editor of Japanese; however, he was deficient in English, able to read and understand to some degree but unable to write or speak it fluently. In the division of work on the daily, he assumed personal responsibility for page three. This was the local news section, corresponding to the front page of the City section of metropolitan dailies. Suzuki's duties made him a central figure in contact with the local civic organizations and their leaders, with the Consulate and Tourist Bureau. Concurrently with his managing editorship of the Rafu Shimpō, he represented two of Japan's largest newspapers, the Tokyo Nichi Nichi and Osaka Mainichi. To these overseas dailies, he relayed news items printed in the Rafu Shimpō which had any international significance. He likewise tracked down stories assigned to him from Tokyo. On these occasions he invariably asked some English staff member to accompany him as interpreter. A plodding and conscientious worker, he was regarded by his subordinates as an editor of substantial but average talents.



His language deficiencies precluded hope for much current understanding or interest in the goings-on of the larger American community of which Little Tokio and Boyle Heights were but small parts. Suzuki was a family man, his wife also an Issei, their only child a teen-age journalistically-inclined American-born young woman attending Los Angeles City College at war's outbreak. He was quite satisfied with both his position as Managing Editor of the Rafu Shimpo and his status within the Southern California Japanese community. He was neither an enthusiastic promoter of, nor an active opponent of the English section. He seldom read it, though his daughter followed it closely and contributed to it. At times he seemed to attach greater importance to the Tokyo Bureau of the newspaper. This was located across the Pacific, and the Rafu Shimpo was represented there by Shogo Muto, who had been managing editor before Suzuki. Muto relayed news dispatches from Tokyo to the Rafu Shimpo; these items were in addition to the daily Domei agency releases. This service was generally recognized by the Japanese reading public as endowing the Rafu Shimpo with a superior edge in news-gathering facilities over its competitors. As the father of an American-born daughter who was extremely outspoken in her preference for doing things the way she had learned in Los Angeles public schools, Suzuki tolerated and refrained from criticizing points of view expressed in the English section even though he may not have agreed wholeheartedly with them. At times he commented disparagingly on editorial views which were peculiarly Nisei in contrast to Issei opinion, but he never sought to muzzle the younger editors.



In the three years preceding war, increasing editorial attention was paid by English editors to the fact that the Nisei owed his allegiance and loyalty to the United States. The assertion that the "Nisei is an American" was not accepted completely without an occasional Issei challenge in Little Tokio. There existed a vocal point of view that the Nisei was also Japanese, if not more so than he was American. But Suzuki, like most Issei parents faced with the realization that America had endowed his offspring with citizenship, even though she had denied this to him, took the position that the Nisei was different from the Issei in this respect. The Nisei owed his loyalty to the United States. However, he invariably asserted the Issei was a subject of Japan.

Despite his intellectual commitment to the statement that the Nisei was an American, Suzuki could not refrain from hoping to equip his daughter with the education and experience which would qualify her to be as much at ease among Japanese as among Americans with whom she had grown up. After his daughter had graduated from high school, Suzuki sent her with her mother on a trip to Japan. Her reactions as expressed in letters to the English staff of the newspaper were typically Nisei; the old country was a strange place where people did things in "a manner to which I am an unaccustomed foreigner." She returned "starved for a choc malt and a juicy hamburger and a place where I can spread out and enjoy myself without being called down as unladylike." Suzuki bore with indulgence his daughter's occasional expressions of uninhibited breeziness, though it is probably safe to say he did not always understand some of the things she said. Nevertheless, there seemed



to be a warm and close and happy relationship in the Suzuki family of three.

Delegated second in point of authority to Suzuki on the Japanese section staff was Kokichi Shimosuma whose title was "telegraph editor." An Issei in his fifties, he was considered a scholarly, forceful writer in the Japanese. He was the newspaper's acknowledged top political commentator who seldom signed his articles but who edited the front page. It was Shimosuma's function to select from the day's shortwave wireless dispatches from Domei the items which would go into each issue's front page; in addition to this Tokyo source, he made fairly extensive use of Transradio Press, to which the Rafu Shimo subscribed, as well as to other American syndicated services rewritten from the morning metropolitan newspapers.

In his political preferences, his background and training, his associations, his leanings and outlook, Shimosuma was completely Japanese; he regarded himself always as a sojourner in America, never a permanent resident. He was known to have a wife and family in Japan whom he planned some day to rejoin. He lived by himself in a small apartment in the Bunker Hill section overlooking Little Tokio from the west; outside of newspaper staff associates, he had few social acquaintances or friends. He spoke little English, though he read and understood English publications which he frequently translated. He subscribed regularly to Time and Life Magazines, read Harper's, the Atlantic, the New York Times and kept abreast of the best-selling book lists. He was well-liked and respected by his associates on the newspaper staff



and was known to have several standing offers from other west coast Japanese language dailies to take over their front pages.

A student of political science specializing in the Far Eastern field, Shimozuma interpreted events in that area strictly from the Japanese point of view as expressed in official dispatches and releases from the Tokyo Foreign Office. He admittedly used Transradio and other American dispatches in some measure as reports to be printed for the purpose of inserting an appropriate rebuttal. For instance, as the Sino-Japanese conflict expanded over all of North China and talk grew in this country about pressing a silk boycott against Japan, U.S. news services, including Transradio, carried frequent accounts of organized movements condemning the Japanese military adventure. Publication of these items invariably occasioned an effective journalistic antidote intended to furnish readers with plausible reasons why a silk boycott, for instance, would be as harmful to America as it would be to Japan and wouldn't have much effect on the Far Eastern situation anyway.

Shimozuma had strong convictions about the Eastern Asiatic political situation. He felt that Japan's bolting from the League of Nations was an act fully justified and necessary for the "establishment of permanent peace in the Far East." He admired the ability, he said, of Yosuke Matsuoka, whom he regarded as a capable exponent of Imperial Japanese hegemony in Asia. As a student of history, Shimozuma felt moved to condemn strongly the performance of the European imperialisms; he pointed to the British rule in India, the Opium Wars in China, French control of Indo-China, Dutch exploitation of the Indies, Australia's ex-



clusively "white" immigration bars as evidence of need for a "new deal" in Asia under Asiatic leadership. He deplored especially the heavy weight of sympathy for Chiang Kai-shek's regime in this country as the Sino-Japanese conflict flared into the headlines after July 7, 1937. He sincerely believed that this American sympathy was more the product of effective Chinese propaganda rather than the expression of a nation's sense of moral right and criticism against injustice and aggression. He had read American history, he said. How did this country grow to its present great size and power? By military conquest largely of inferior or less developed peoples, he asserted. That's what Japan is doing in Asia. When the American people are given the real facts and see the parallel in Japan's present activities with their own history of the past century, they will regard Chiang Kai-shek something in the light of how they looked upon Pancho Villa the Mexican bandit, Shimozuma reasoned.

The Nisei's most useful role in history, he felt, would be in their effective assumption of responsibilities as spokesmen to the American people of "Japan's true mission in China." He had only slight passing interest in the endless articles appearing in the English section reporting on Nisei dances and social events, football and baseball games, church and club bazaars; but a properly interpreted editorial or commentary by a Nisei writing about a "bridge of understanding across the Pacific" invariably brought praise from him.

Shimozuma no doubt influenced quite strongly the English section's editorial policies on the Sino-Japanese Conflict. It was



his responsibility to select for the English editors each day the dispatches culled from the day's Domei Japanese Agency releases those items of likely interest to English section readers.

In spring of 1938, as Japan's conquests on the Chinese mainland assumed proportions of a bloody and large-scale modern war, and public sentiment condemning Japan mounted proportionately in this country, the inflow of literature and propaganda from Tokyo began to reflect the Japanese government's self-consciousness of the fact it was losing the battle of public opinion in America. The tenor of Japanese section reporting from this point on strikes but one note: American people generally have been misinformed about the China Incident; they have been taken in, gullible as they are, by the glib tongue of So-bi-rei (Madame Chiang Kai-shek). The relationship of the Japanese-reading public with America becomes fairly well defined through the late thirties to outbreak of war. Those who followed the front page news of all the vernacular dailies with any regularity could not escape a feeling of identity with the fates and fortunes of Japan and a developing resentment against the encroaching and meddlesome hand of the United States in the Far East. For fairly obvious reasons, the average Issei Japanese to whom Shimozuma directed his editorial efforts, was a strong pre-war isolationist.

A powerful factor in leading most Issei to identify themselves with Japan, quite apart from the influences of vernacular newspaper reporting, however, was the singular fact that all Issei, with the exception of several hundred U.S. World War veterans, were ineligible to American citizenship.



In this connection, it is interesting to note that Shimozuma frequently found space for quoting such American newspaper commentators as Boake Carter and Karl von Wiegand, both Hearst men, and the outstanding pre-war isolationist Senator Burton Wheeler of Montana. Perhaps above all other American writers, Shimozuma was impressed by Charles A. Beard's views on America's role in world affairs.

In March, 1938, Shimozuma furnished for the English editors a series of pamphlets prepared for American reading by the Japan Pacific Association of Tokyo. The series was entitled "Japan-China Pictorial Primer" with the sub-headings "How About Giving Japan a Break?" and "Truth Will Out." This latter phrase subsequently made repeated appearances in the English sections of the local dailies, especially in editorial comment about the unfortunate ignorance of the American public about the China conflict. The first two pages of Primer No. 2 summarize briefly the attitude of the Rafu Shimpo's telegraph editor and the congealed outlook of the vernacular dailies generally, on the burning front page issue of the day:

"How about giving Japan a break?

"The sensational and blood-curdling news broadcast by those masters of propaganda, the Chinese, have given Japan a trying time the world over.

"The Japanese have tried to show the truth in a dignified way, with that natural restraint of theirs, by prim, starched sorts of statements and declarations which have had very little effect against the insidious fabrications playing on American sympathy.

"What about checking these news reports with a more critical eye?

"Those news reports were certainly shocking news!



"Some of them were really too melodramatic to be true.  
"Some reports were proved to be downright falsifications.  
"Many were found to be hysterical flights of imagination;  
others, sensational sob-sister write-ups.

"But the impression was created that the Japanese were a  
'heinous gang of bloodthirsty villains.'  
"You wouldn't like to be called that, would you?  
"Neither do the Japanese."

In his interpretation of the Japanese military campaign in China, Shimozuma emphasized the Domei and other dispatches reporting humane treatment of the conquered people in occupied territory. Marching columns of Japanese troops in China were invariably represented as crusaders for justice, as civilized policemen restoring law and order out of China's bandit-ridden chaos. The occupation of Nanking, as reported by American observers, shocked public opinion in this country; the event soon became known as the Rape of Nanking. Yet Japanese vernacular dailies printed none of these more widely circulated details of a gory nature. Nanking was a major landmark in the successful accomplishment of Japan's holy mission in China. It meant that the end of the corrupt Chiang Kai-shek regime was near. To the majority of the Issei readers of Japanese language newspapers, relying with almost slavish confidence upon Domei dispatches, the dribblings of atrocity stories emanating from Nanking via European and American sources were just "so much Chinese propaganda."

In occasional discussions with inquiring English section staff members, Shimozuma created the impression that he sincerely believed the Japanese as a race to be incapable of the barbarities charged to their soldiers in China. The record of the white man in Asia, he would point out, shows plainly the low, inhuman depths of



savagery to which they are capable of sinking. But Japan's record of civilized conduct, he declared, gave him implicit faith "in the justice of Japan's claims; Japan is best qualified to lead the oppressed people of Asia in throwing off the shackles of the white man."

Both Managing Editor Suzuki and telegraph editor Shimozuma appeared to see eye-to-eye in their interpretation of the Far Eastern political situation.

In this they found common bond in challenging and questioning the opinions and beliefs of the staff member generally regarded as third in command (though this was never officially recognized by publisher or business department)--Yoneo Sakai.

Younger in age than either Shimozuma or Suzuki, Sakai was also an Issei. His primary duties on the staff were those of a reporter, and he usually drew the most important assignments. While Shimozuma and Suzuki spent almost all their time at their desks, Sakai was out more than he was in. In his late thirties, married to a Nisei wife and the father of a Los Angeles-born daughter, he travelled to the left in his political ideology as contrasted to the extreme right of his two superiors on the staff. He shared with them the conviction that European and American imperialism in Asia was at the root of much of that part of the world's political chaos, but he parted company with them in the assertion that Japanese imperialism should replace the status quo. Sakai said he believed military rule in Japan, carried to its logical conclusion, would inevitably bring disaster to the Japanese people. He declared that the fascistic trend of



Japanese political affairs in the thirties, characterized by the ruthless extermination of independent, liberal forces and the emasculating of parliamentary growth, would only lead to the imposition of an imperialism by Japan in Asia and would not solve the basic problems of peace and progress in the Far East.

Sakai was an insatiable reader; his speaking knowledge of English was little better than Suzuki and Shimozuma, though he pursued his studies and practiced more diligently than either. But he had a good grasp of reading, and he had a Nisei wife to help him. When war broke out, he had been a newspaperman of some 17 years standing. He was well versed in headline events not only in Tokyo, but he kept a weather eye on news sources in Washington, London, Moscow, Berlin, Rome and Paris.

Fellow members on the Japanese staff were unanimous in declaring that Sakai's style of writing was exceedingly clear and penetrating. They said also that he stifled for some time before Pearl Harbor, his private feelings and barbed criticism of control of Japan's government by the extremists of the right wing. In so doing, he came into frequent editorial desk duels with Suzuki and Shimozuma.

Before coming to America, Sakai had once served in the Imperial Japanese Army, as had Managing Editor Suzuki. And while Suzuki represented the Tokyo Nichi Nichi and Osaka Mainichi newspapers as Los Angeles correspondent, Sakai held down the job of correspondent for the rival Tokyo Asahi and Osaka Asahi which he claimed had the largest daily newspaper circulation in the Far East. In 1938 he took a leave of absence from the Rafu Shimpo to ship off



to Europe as a war correspondent for the Tokyo and Osaka Asahi covering the situation in Spain. He included in his itinerary most of the major European capitals, failing after several efforts, to get a visa to Moscow, then continued on eastward to China, Manchoukuo, Japan and across the Pacific again to Los Angeles. He returned full of foreboding about the potentialities for spreading war. He had apparently been offered fairly lucrative journalistic posts in Tokyo but had rejected them all. He never stated explicitly his various reasons; some of his associates merely assumed that considerations of his American-citizen family which he left behind in Los Angeles and the possibility that he found the political climate of Japan too oppressive for one of his leanings were largely responsible.

Not only through his by-lined articles in the Tokyo and Osaka Asahi which reached over 3,000,000 subscribers daily, but also through articles which he contributed to influential magazines, Sakai was reputed to be fairly well-known in Japan. One of the publications for which he was a regular contributor was "Kaizo," which he compared with "Fortune" in the American publications field.

After his return from his global jaunt, Sakai maintained that an eventual linking of Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo in military alliance constituted a great probable threat to the continuance of "the world state of limited hostilities." He had been impressed, he said, by the alignment of forces in the Spanish civil war as "a pattern in miniature of a bigger war that can come." In writing editorial comment and interpretive articles on the world situation for Issei readers of the Rafu Shimpo, he soon gained a reputation



on the staff for being the most consistent advocate of political and economic cooperation between the United States and Japan. Sakai held out grimly, for instance, when the government of the then Premier Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai, exponent of Anglo-American cooperation, was threatened with collapse in the face of the Matsuoka-inspired, military-led thrust for signing of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo military treaty.

Sakai frequently characterized typical Issei thinking on Far Eastern political affairs as "stereotyped, dogmatized, and congealed in the mould of the Tokyo Gaimusho Johobu."<sup>1</sup> He asserted that the extreme nationalism of the right wing which had perverted ancient Japanese ethical values to 20th century military philosophy of "might is right" had spread its ideological poison overseas. He said he was ashamed that vernacular Japanese dailies were being instrumental in this process, for they, being geographically removed, were endowed with the physical atmosphere in which they might be emancipated. He felt that he himself and the members of the immediate Rafu Shimpo staff who believed and wrote as he did, were doing a service which, though sneered at by some, would in time come to be recognized as far-sighted and constructive. He implied that the right to criticize government and governmental policies should be reserved as a fundamental right of all human beings, a point of view radical to the right wing controlling Japan and the school of thought which dominated the very newspaper staff of which he was a member.

He regarded the writings of the editor and publisher of the rival Kashu Mainichi as "a good example of the so-called patriotic

① No footnote  
m.w.



jingoism of nationalistic Japanese militarists," and he admitted that even if all the three vernacular dailies interpreted Tokyo headlines as he would like to see them do, it was questionable as to how much good they could accomplish in the face of the flood of magazines and other publications from Japan which were sold in the numerous book stores and stationery shops of west coast Japanese business districts.

It was the feeling of the English section staff members with whom Sakai came into frequent contact that, unlike Suzuki and Shimozuma, he had gradually come to dissociate his identity away from the government of Japan to which he was technically tied as a legal subject. In some respects he regarded himself as a political refugee. He was wont to remark that he could measure each step that Japan was travelling toward complete military domination by the increasing extent to which his articles and news dispatches to the Japan publications for which he wrote were edited, deleted, or censored. He gave the impression too that, were the opportunity extended him, he would like to have applied for naturalization as a citizen of the United States.

Sakai found sympathetic exchange of views and sharing of gripes over editing in the company of two fellow Japanese section staff members, Shiro Takeda, an Issei, and Joe Inouye, A Kibei Nisei, and son of a former publisher of the Rafu Shimpo. Inouye exerted an influence on general policy through title to shares in the company's stock; he was an American citizen, married to a Nisei wife, and the father of an American-born third generation child.



In the post-Pearl Harbor reorganization of the Japanese editorial staff, Inouye assumed the responsibilities of managing editor of that section. Educated in both American public schools and in Japan, he was fairly proficient in both English and Japanese. In journalistic ability he admittedly fell far below the standards of either Sakai or Shimozuma, but he injected into the newspaper an awareness of the fact it was an institution of an American community, that its future rested in its ability to adapt itself to a subscriber list preponderantly made up of American citizens. A major share of his daily tasks were tied up with reporting local events for the city news page edited by Suzuki. He knew community organizations. He was familiar with the role of the Consulate office. As a matter of fact, he had come to the Rafu Shimpo from a position held for a brief period at the Consulate office. He was close to the English section. He was not, however, a forceful personality and preferred to be led rather than lead. The convictions of Sakai and Takeda seemed to give direction to his efforts.

Inouye took a sympathetic interest in the activities of the Japanese American Citizens League and was responsible for much of the Japanese section coverage of that organization. He attended public meetings of the J.A.C.L. with regularity, interpreted the American position of the Nisei to an extent which the managing editor at times found not altogether acceptable in view of space limitations.

Despite the growing split between two schools of thought on the staff, the Japanese section editorial office was a fairly congenial workshop. The major portion of the daily newspaper's



space was devoted, not to items of international affairs, but rather to local news, the immediate city and county and the rural areas. Not until war flared and long simmering issues congealed--and the newspaper's departmental heads were taken into custody by the Federal Bureau of Investigation--did this jockeying and maneuvering drop the reins of editorial control into different hands.

Before that time, however, other members of the same Japanese section staff stood by, taking more or less active parts in throwing their support either to the expressed views of the Suzuki-Shimozuma leadership or the Sakai-Takeda-Inouye brand of thinking.

In personal hopes that developments on the Pacific would never produce an American-Japanese war, all members of the staff seemed unanimously in agreement. But on the likelihood that hostilities would not eventually break out, the two factions again parted company. The Shimozuma-Suzuki reasoning followed the then prevailing isolationist pattern of viewing as unjustifiable and unsupportable any United States military undertaking in the Far East. It won't happen, so we might as well dismiss all talk about its possibility as alarmist and jingoistic, they opined.

Sakai, Takeda, and Inouye, on the other hand, insisted from midsummer of 1939 that an American-Japanese conflict, far from being impossible, could conceivably develop out of a global war. Hitler's invasion of Poland in the fall of that year brought predictions by Sakai that repercussions on the Pacific would be anything but favorable to resident Japanese Americans.

The staff interest in the topic at this stage, and the divergent points of views, reflecting in some measure the concerns



and reactions of the Japanese community, found expression in an article published in the Friday, December 22, 1939, edition of the Rafu Shimpo English section. The article was printed at the suggestion of publisher H. T. Komai, following several heated sessions of the news writers:

"THE PACIFIC'S PAST  
Speaks Its Future

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"Reminding Ourselves in These Troublous Times That  
America and Nippon Have Always Remained At Peace

-----

"Will America and Japan ever fight?

"Today this question has taken on a timely significance to 145,000 American citizens of Japanese extraction residing on the United States mainland and in Hawaii.

"For we compose that part of the American citizenry which has felt most acutely the effects of a two and a half year wave of public antipathy meant for Japan.

"In our efforts to find a port in the storm, we have come upon a simple, yet eye-opening discovery. And that discovery is that the most effective and telling anti-Japanese expressions of public sentiment today find their root neither in sympathies for China, nor in appeals for boycott of silk, nor in the field of economic competition by Japanese.

"They spring from the dogmatic assertion that a war between this country and Japan is inevitable.

"To us it is something of a dull shock to witness the transformation of what was once considered a jingoist's pipe-dream into a situation that skirts the borders of remote possibility.



"The United States and Japan are the only two major powers which have never been engaged in actual conflict with each other attaining the proportions of war.

"We are now told, however, on high authority of men who are entrusted with the job of directing the operations in any war involving the United States, that Japan, of all hypothetical enemies, stands practically at the top of the list.

"Such ominous warnings, occurring with greater frequency in these tension-laden days, add a fearful, albeit zestful, uncertainty to the outlook of the American-born Japanese.

"But the situation today and the predicament we may face inspire a feeling of obligation to exert on our part every effort for the continuance of the longest period of peaceful relations between any two major powers in the world. For that, in the indisputable records of history, is the chronicle of American-Japanese diplomacy--1853 to 1939--Pacific relations without a single rupture."<sup>1</sup>

An article expressing similar views was also printed in the Japanese section. While, as some members of the joint staffs pointed out, it said nothing particularly significant, it made comfortable reading for most Issei as well as Nisei.

There were other members of the Japanese section who gathered and reported the news: Mitsuzo Yamada, who specialized in editing rural correspondence and farm news; Jiro Tani, Kibei-Nisei who was assigned to sports events and served as staff photographer in addition to the desk routine of Domei translations; Shinaichi

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1. The Rafu Shimpo, Friday, December 22, 1939, p. 9, cols. 2-3 No. 11848 Part II Holiday Issue.



Tanbara, who covered the wholesale produce terminals as his daily beat and severed as liaison man with the downtown farm federations. Yamada was a younger Issei, a family man and father of four children; Tani formerly was employed as advertising manager of the Rasha Mainichi and transferred to the Rafu Shimpo in 1938. Tanbara, in point of service with the Rafu Shimpo, was one of the oldest employees, having joined the staff in the early twenties; he was an Issei.

Of the three key positions in the business, advertising, and circulation departments, two were held by Issei, one by Nisei. Itaro Nagai, as business manager and cashier, occasionally was pushed into the role of arbiter in departmental tilts for appropriations. An Issei, he was the father of a Nisei daughter in elementary school in Boyle Heights, was a daily reader of the Los Angeles Times and the Evening Herald and Express in addition to the Japanese language newspapers. He kept well informed of developments and lent critical attention to the editing of both Japanese and English sections. In his interpretation of international affairs, he tended to be a middle-of-the-roader, on occasions attempting to reconcile, it seemed to English staff members, the extremities represented in the views of Yoneo Sakai on the one hand and Hiroshi Suzuki on the other.

The advertising manager, Thomas K. Shindo, worked closely with the business manager and seemed to share the latter's interest in the editing of both sections. Shindo also was Issei, the father of three Nisei children, and also a resident of Boyle Heights. As the man responsible for maintaining and adding to



regular accounts on which the newspaper depended for the income which kept it out of the red, Shindo had personal contacts outside the Japanese community as well as intensively within it. As a consequence, his concept of the Rafu Shimpō's function and place included an awareness of its relations with the larger Southern California community; he felt that the trend was in an increasing emphasis upon local news coverage through larger expenditure of staff time and money and a reduction of expensive Tokyo date line features.

Circulation manager was Akira Komai, eldest son of the publisher and a Los Angeles-born Nisei, who assumed the responsibilities of acting publisher after Pearl Harbor.

Neither Nagai, Shindo, nor Akira Komai injected themselves into editorial policy-making of the Japanese section; but each contributed to the formulation of it indirectly in conversations with individual writers.

Eighteen persons were usually employed in the Japanese composing department and print shop, and they were mostly Issei and Kibei. Employees of the circulation department, usually numbering over 35 on a part-time basis for the majority, were almost all Nisei.

#### The Kashu Mainichi Japanese Section

Without a shadow of doubt, Little Tokio recognized the Kashu Mainichi (the Japan-California Daily News) as a one-man-dominated publication reflecting the personality and influence of its publisher and editor, Sei Fujii. A somewhat colorful career as roustabout, farm laborer, schoolboy, labor contractor, legal interpreter, business man, and community leader was capped by his



emergence as newspaper publisher in 1932 with his launching of the Kashu Mainichi. The newspaper was born out of the turbulent dissolution of the Rafu Nichi-Bei, Los Angeles arm of the San Francisco Japanese American News, as the result of a press room and editorial employees' strike.

Fujii's editorial and news staff, from the outset to its pre-evacuation disorganization, never exceeded five or six members including himself. Journalists of trained professional ability seldom stayed with him long; he usually lost them to the other publications of the coast. Among the language fourth estate, he had a standing reputation for devaluing journalistic ability; he preferred to surround himself with assistants who enhanced his own stature. He placed personal loyalty to himself above intellectual integrity, and he regarded his newspaper possessively as an instrument of personal prestige and power. In all his missionary crusades on behalf of numerous causes which he espoused, he injected his first person singular on nearly every page of his daily. He wrote the headlines on page one, colorful, bold, humorous, un-journalistic and unorthodox captions; he edited local news with a keen eye for promotion of his friends, followers and fellow Kenjin; he wrote several columns in the Japanese section, and finally made his daily appearance before his Nisei readers in the English Section under the self-named title of "Uncle Fujii."

When Pearl Harbor burst into the dusty second floor newsroom of the Kashu Mainichi, it shattered with deathly silence the loud, vocal, adamant news and editorial campaign that editor-publisher Sei Fujii had waged for nearly all the years of the Kashu Mainichi's



life. That campaign, on the strength of evidence printed in the columns of the Kashi Mainichi, was dual in nature: on one hand, there is a consistent effort on the part of Sei Fujii in all his wide assortment of editorial excursions to instill an intense pride in the Japanese race and achievements of that race. On the other hand he sought as consistently to vigorously convince his readers that the United States and Japan would never go to war; he was absolutely positive of it, his faith remained unshaken to the end--until December 7, 1941. He was then a man in his sixties.

Nearly seven years earlier, in a signed editorial on the front page of his Sunday English section, Fujii had set forth his credo. It was a statement of his "abiding belief in the inviolability of Japanese-American peace," as he told his then English section assistant who corrected his grammar for final publication. In the editorial captioned "Newspapers Must Respect World Peace Movements," he said in part:

"... There is no problem existing between Japan and the United States which has any danger of becoming a potential war making issue. It is unfortunate that the public is not always informed of the real relations between the two countries.

"The general public is given the impression too often through the medium of the newspaper that war is inevitable between Japan and the United States. Such statements, because of their so-called 'news value' to jingo journals, are featured much too often. When the United States proposes a plan to establish an aviation base for her army and navy in the Pacific area, such a plan is readily reported in all the newspapers throughout the country on the front pages under conspicuous and blazing headlines. This news never fails to take advantage of using the "opportune" news. In the same manner, such news from Japan finds its way into the heart of America.

"This creates agitation in the minds of the peoples of both countries and 'war talk' naturally follows.



"Such is the nature of the so-called 'war talk' between Japan and the United States. It is rooted no deeper than the thin pages on which it is printed. Any one, if informed correctly, will have no difficulty in realizing the utter foundlessness and ridiculousness of such talk.

"When prominent figures as Secretary Hull or Foreign Minister Hirota release public statements and peaceful movements between the peoples of both countries are advanced, the average newspaper carries the news on an inside page in some obscure corner which fails to attract the readers' eye.

"This tendency on the part of modern newspapers hinders the course of international peace and understanding. As a consequence the public seems to be attracted to sensational news of the 'war talk type.' Such spectacular and fantastic newspaper tactics have often been rewarded with large circulation for the jingo newspapers. However, newspapers can do a priceless service to mankind by conducting their editorial policies on a different type of news with more balance.

"Let us not be hesitant to give more space to more news that will help to promote the brotherly feelings among peoples of the world. This newspaper is always prepared to take the lead and render as much as possible to the cause of world peace and closer relations between America and Japan.

"Through the leadership and efforts of the more enlightened elements of both Japanese and Americans it is hoped that a real and permanent friendship will flourish between Japan and the United States of America."<sup>1</sup>

Fujii himself was a tireless worker who devoted himself to his tasks through long hours. He had numerous managing editors, none of whom, with one exception, stayed with him for any duration. The exception, an equally tireless and journalistically more capable man, was a Kibei writer, Akira Itami who served on the Kashu Mainichi staff for most of its nine years of publication, except for a few months leave of absence he once took to try out a position in Washington, D.C. with the Japanese Embassy, from which he returned in short order. Like Fujii, Itami wrote in both Japanese and English. In his writings, he shared some of the racial ideology of his chief but seems to have parted company--

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1. The Japan-California Daily News, Sunday, Jan. 3, 1935, No. 1130 p. 1 col. 2-3



largely through silence--in a number of significant issues.

Fujii's own personal life was such that he found himself free to center most of his waking hours on his newspaper activities. Reputedly a married man and father of adult offspring, his whole family had been returned to Japan; he lived a bachelor in a six-room bungalow in Boyle Heights where he entertained his friends and built a tennis court in his backyard for exercise.

Few individual staff writers on the Japanese section editorial desk made any lasting impress upon the Kashu Mainichi policies; for the most part, they remained nonentities who performed the routine leg-work and errands revolving around "Uncle Fujii." They came and went, never rising above the ceiling imposed by the publisher. Jiro Tani, Ujinobu Konomi, Richard Iwatate went on to the rival Rafu Shimpo. Taijin Tsuda departed in the late thirties to pursue voice study in Florence, Italy. Managing editor Matsui in 1937 left in a huff, accepted an offer from a newspaper in Japan. These shifts in personnel left Sei Fujii unperturbed; he regarded them, not as losses of capable journalists, but the necessary elimination of men whose loyalty to him could not be depended upon.

In contrast to the other two Los Angeles dailies, the Kashu Mainichi epitomized personal journalism with a Capital I. It was remarked in rival newsrooms almost daily that the most frequently printed name in the Kashu Mainichi was that of "Fujii Sachoo" (Publisher Fujii).

#### The Sangyo Nippo Japanese Section

The newest of the vernacular dailies on the Little Tokio scene was but four year old when war and resultant disruption of



the community ended its existence. Financially wobbly from the outset and never quite completely out of the red, the Sangyo Nippo represented for the most part the ideas and influences of two men, publisher Koh Murai and managing editor Shinichi Kato.

It was essentially a farm publication, growing out of a weekly financed by southern California Issei agricultural interests, developing into a thrice-weekly issue and finally into a daily newspaper. As such, it competed primarily with Sei Fujii's Kashu Mainichi. One of its first editors, Rihei Numata, went directly to the Sangyo from the Japan-California Daily News. While the Sangyo's publisher Koh Murai and the Rafu Shimpo's publisher H. Toyosaku Komai were known to be on fairly cordial terms, Sei Fujii was known to stand aloof from either.

The Sangyo was modelled on the same format as the two larger dailies. Its Japanese section front page was made up chiefly of Domei Japanese News Agency short wave releases from Tokyo; editorial and news treatment followed fairly closely the Rafu Shimpo pattern, as two former staff members of that publication served in key positions. While the <sup>two</sup>/older sheets were afternoon dailies, the Sangyo Nippo was a morning newspaper and had no Sunday edition. It gave a larger proportion of space in its Japanese section to farm news than either the Rafu or the Kashu.

Until outbreak of war, when its remaining staff seized what appeared to be a golden opportunity to win popular support among Issei readers, the Sangyo Japanese section took an inconspicuous backseat in moulding Little Tokio opinion.



Dual Character of the Dailies

The Japanese vernacular newspapers were both Japanese and American; and being partly both, they were neither wholly one nor the other. Instituted at a time when they were almost totally bereft of evident American character (The Rafu Shimpō of 1904), they had developed in later years an English section and a Nisei staff. And with but little conscious awareness of the changes occurring from within, they bore definite marks of earlier years.

By 1941, the English sections of all three dailies had been established as permanent departments of the Japanese language press; but not one of them was yet financially self-supporting. Despite this fact, the degree of independence in reporting and editorializing manifest in the printed record of the English sections indicates that there was little coordination, collaboration, or control exerted as between two parts of the same newspaper. The exception to this, in most instances, is the Kashu Mainichi where publisher "Uncle Fujii" dominated both departments. But even in the Kashu Mainichi, there were differences in emphasis on news treatment as between the Japanese and English sections. Actually, the one edition was read by two different reading audiences. While the one newspaper went into a single home, the parents turned to the Japanese section, the children to the English. The Rafu Shimpō circulation department estimated that approximately 17,000 adult Issei and some 38,000 Nisei read the two sections. While the part read by the larger group was smaller in size, it was regarded by publishers as potentially productive in the years to come.



An examination of the editorials, columns, and articles of opinion written by both Issei and Nisei in all three dailies over the period of four years prior to outbreak of war reveals numerous contradictory as well as changing points of view among them. ~~Generally, however,~~ two distinct phases mark the period. From July 7, 1937, when Japanese and Chinese troops clashed at Loukiachow Bridge in North China, bringing Japan's invasion and the start of the conflict in the Far East through July two years later when the United States State Department announced intent to denounce and abrogate the Treaty of Trade and Commerce of 1911 with Japan, there is fairly close cooperation between both English and Japanese sections of the vernacular dailies. The Japanese sections fed the English departments with dispatches from Tokyo. It was taken for granted that the Nisei would be sympathetic to Japan's cause against "bandit-ridden, chaotic China," and they were. The English section's function in this period came to be well defined: (1) interpret properly for Nisei the true aims of Japan in her efforts to establish permanent peace and justice in Asia and (2) help the "American newspapers" understand this point of view by giving them the facts, pointing out to them that they were being "flooded with clever Chinese propaganda."

From sometime in August, 1939, after American-Japanese tensions had culminated in the historic announcement of treaty abrogation, however, the Japanese vernacular newspapers of Los Angeles began to acquire character traits of a dual personality. The ideological gap between Japanese and English sections, imperceptible at first, gradually widened until, by fall of 1941,



the two departments were editorially committed on differing sides of two potential belligerents. The Japanese sections had stuck by Japan, the English sections had gone American.

In the earlier period, moreover, when the Issei leadership of the Southern California Japanese community became overwhelmingly absorbed in the progress of Japan's "mission" in China, Nisei interests centered closer to home. Reflecting not only this comparatively detached Nisei outlook but also the influences of the larger American community, the English editors of the Rafu Shimpō in fall of 1937, several months after the China-Japan war had started, published an editorial mildly lukewarm in support of Tokyo. It was seized upon as being "too neutral" and even "pro-Chinese" by publisher Sei Fujii of the Kashu Mainichi who wrote a scathing denunciation in his Japanese section but omitted a translation from his English section.

An alert Nisei reader and supporter of the Rafu Shimpō, writing to Publisher H. T. Komai, included a carbon copy of a letter he had sent to the Kashu Mainichi Publisher Sei Fujii. Both letters portray the reasoning processes of many Nisei in that period:

"Los Angeles, California  
September 19, 1937

"Mr. T. Komai  
Publisher, Rafu Shimpō  
104 No. Los Angeles St.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Mr. Komai:

Allow me to present a copy of the letter which I wrote to Mr. Sei Fujii, publisher of the Japan-California Daily News for your perusal.



Will you be so kind as to permit your English editor to read it also, so that he may know the dangers to which the nisei is confronted and thus be better prepared for any undeserved attacks.

It is my pride as an American of Japanese blood that arouses me to take this action. I believe that for us nisei, we will benefit Japan many times more by being a loyal and reliable good American. I love Japan even though I have never seen that country because it is in my blood and I am confident that deep down in the hearts of every nisei that feeling is present. Have faith in us and you can be assured that the nisei will be a credit to both Japan and America!

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

James Kazushige Otani."

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"Los Angeles, California  
September 19, 1937

"Mr. Sei Fujii  
Publisher, Japan-California Daily News  
339 East Second Street  
Los Angeles, California

Dear Sir:

First of all, I am an American-born Japanese -- a Nisei.

Thanks to my parents' foresight, I know enough of the Japanese language to read the Japanese newspapers and understand it nearly as well as I do the English language.

My object in writing you is to obtain a reply through the columns of your English page by publishing this letter in full in order to clarify a few things that I and a large number of nisei would like to know. I am told that you are an ardent advocate of American 'justice and fair play' which we nisei feel is one of the great attributes of the American people. I know you will agree with me when I say that you have always boosted that good American policy for the second generation Japanese.

I was somewhat startled by your recent outburst against the nisei and the English section editors of your rival newspapers in which you accused them of being 'traitors to



the Japanese race' and that their attitude as Americans under the present circumstances was not proper. You even accused the editors as being 'propagandists for the Nanking government.' I must admit that I could not agree with you, although I felt that it was within your personal privilege to express whatever opinions to fit the contingency of your newspaper policy.

What puzzles me most is the fact that you carried the attacks ONLY in Japanese and NOT a single word in your English page. May I be permitted to ask you WHY? Of course, the issei readers of your newspaper were startled and some even felt alarmed--that is, those who have no knowledge whatever of the nisei's true position. Why didn't you direct your warnings directly and squarely before the nisei public--through the medium of your English pages? Or were you seeking that vain glory of an applause from the issei alarmists--a grandstand play, so to say. In other words, it was not intended for the nisei public.

I also read that very classic comment of yours in which you brought your tirades to a close by inferring that because of your 'timely advice' there has been a sudden 'change in attitude' by the nisei in general and the English section editors in particular. Yes, that must have impressed a few of your fanatic followers, no doubt. But for the nisei, like myself, it is disappointing to discover that a man of your position and influence should betray his very own people when they need him most in such critical times as these. It is all too evident that you had resorted to the insidious trick of using the nisei as a tool for the advancement of your personal glory as the expense of sacrificing all the efforts made by our elders and ourselves to secure for ourselves a stronger assurance of our future as RELIABLE citizens of America! If there is anyone who is so adept at trickery so similar to that of the Chinese propagandists I have yet to find one that could excel yours.

However, it may interest you to know that it was only through the comedy of the situation which you created that finally prompted me to write this letter.

I refer to your English section editorial of Sunday, Sept. 19 on THE NISEI STAND ON THE WAR in which your very own English Editor has seen fit to support the nisei 'neutrality' which you so vigorously opposed and 'dictated' to your rival English editors in your malicious crusade.

Either you are ignoring the proverb of the men in the glass house throwing rocks at other people OR you are deliberately pursuing a double-faced policy and thus betraying both the nisei as well as your issei readers.



I shall anticipate the courtesy of a reply in the pages of your English section at an early date -- with the full text of this letter. Incidentally I am sending a copy of this letter to the Rafu Shimpo and the Sangyo Nippo for their reference.

Hoping that you will clarify the whole situation for the welfare of all concerned.

Yours truly,

JAMES KAZUSHIGE OTANI"

The letter was never published in any of the three publications; it was filed in the records of the publisher of the Rafu Shimpo. It was ignored by Sei Fujii of the Kashu Mainichi and apparently overlooked by the Sangyo Nippo. It was, for one thing, hardly a typical letter reflecting average Nisei thinking. It had the earmarks of having been hatched in some vernacular daily's English section office. James Kazushige Otani, signer of the letter, wrote in it that he could read and understand Japanese as well as English. Most Nisei could not read Japanese.

On the face of the record, however, inconsistencies in news and editorial presentation were not peculiar to any one of the three vernacular dailies, but rather to all of them. Nor were they confined to the Japanese section, for they crop up time and time again in the English sections as well.

[ By 1941 the editors of the English sections had grown into the conviction that the American-born Nisei would far e better by dissociation from their earlier role of "spokesmen" and "interpreters" of Japan to the United States. The record of English section inconsistencies in the treatment of American-Japanese international relations reveals the painful processes



by which the Nisei were to discover that the Sino-Japanese "Incident" of July 7, 1937, would eventually erupt into the American-Japanese War of December 7, 1941.

Commenting upon hopes for improved relations between Washington and Tokyo, one of the English editors of the Kashu Mainichi, under a headline "New Deal in Nipponese-U.S. Relations Foreseen for Future," wrote in 1935:

"Underneath the mass of propaganda which has been piling up with surprising rapidity....the problem facing Washington, D.C. in the Orient is becoming gradually one less perplexing than once seemed.....

.."The Manchoukuo-Nipponese expedition into the Chahar region, which for a time has brought Japan's activities on the Asiatic mainland once more before the limelight of international scrutiny and attention, has served more to clear up misunderstandings between Tokyo and Washington and establish relations on a sounder and more realistic basis.

"While Washington denies any intention of disavowing the Stimson doctrine involving the non-recognition of political states established by force, the tendency of the present administration has been toward an active policy in support of it. For while America, with interests only one tenth as great as Britain's in the Orient has been bearing the brunt of the responsibility for trying to block Japanese aims, her relations with Japan have suffered to her disadvantage as well as to Nippon's.

"The principle of the Stimson doctrine is one based upon high moral grounds, but the fact that it was enunciated at a time when international relations between the two countries would have fared better on a practicable basis undoubtedly accounts for the attitude of the present Washington government. For Washington is becoming more practical in the conduct of American foreign relations."<sup>1</sup>

Some six years later, the same editorial writer, viewing with misgivings the printed record of earlier years in his

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1. The Kashu Mainichi English Section, Sunday, Jan. 3, 1935, page 1, cols. 6, 7, 8.



interpretation of international political events, wrote in the Rafu Shimpō editorial column on October 19, 1941:

"Secretary of War Henry Stimson has asked American-born Japanese for an all-out severance of ties with Japan.

"You are either an American or you are not. There is no middle of the road for any of us today.

"Occasion for his message is the War Department's proposed amendment to the Nationality Act which will clarify the dual citizenship problem.

"Dual citizenship among the nisei has no justification, moral, legal, or otherwise. If and where it exists, let's get rid of it immediately.

"American-born Japanese have welcomed Stimson's message.

"As a matter of fact, they have been years ahead of him as far as their decision to be loyal Americans.

"If action speaks with any authority, their record in every field of endeavor proves their qualifications for Americanism in the highest sense.

"Two thousand of their number now serve in the U.S. Army, faithfully with the conviction that they are every bit a part of America. They are not blind to the imminent possibility that Japan may be the country against which they shall bear their arms.

"Despite an occasional hysteria-monger or foreign propagandist, the truth is that American-born Japanese are doing their level best to be good Americans.

"It takes more than nisei effort alone, however, to achieve lasting results.

"It requires a better understanding of their position and an acceptance of their loyalty to America by the vast body of fellow Americans.

"It calls for an end to unwarranted witch-hunting, to persistent calls for race-baiting and hysteria-mongering.

"In another sense it means that the older generation of Americans of European descent, who comprise the American majority, ought to take the lead in extending a guiding hand to these new Americans in process.



"It means that, instead of adopting policies of discrimination against the nisei 'because you're a Jap,' more enlightened attitudes of acceptance as Americans ought to be adopted.

"It implies that when Secretary Stimson calls proper attention to signs of dual allegiance among the nisei, one means of inspiring an end to the situation would be to also call attention to the proven loyalty of other nisei.

"In a word, there is a responsibility resting on the shoulders of ALL AMERICANS today.

"We are striving for a national unity in the greatest crisis we have ever faced as a nation.

"We can well afford to expend still greater effort to include all residents into the circle of loyal Americans. Treat a man as a loyal American, he will respond and act as one."<sup>1</sup>

In the same October 19, 1941, edition of the Rafu Shimpo English Section, on the front page, appears a feature article emphasizing a point of view to which the Nisei generally had attached themselves:

"This is A m e r i c a !

"IN LOS ANGELES a recent induction center brought out this racial mixture: (l. to r.) Front row--Arnold Lewin, Swiss; Maurice Kamenier, French; James Messina, Italian; Second row--Ben Baldi, Italian; Kiyoshi Oda, Japanese; Alex Mechikoff, Russian; Adolf Meyer, German; Third Row--Walter Henryson, Swedish; Abraham Stone, Jewish; Bill Comerford, Irish; Roy Scott, Negro.

"INTO THE RACIAL MELTING POT, as Americans devoted to a single loyalty and setting the record for having the largest proportion of volunteers in ratio to their total number are the young men of Japanese ancestry. Approximately 2000 American-Japanese have been inducted and now serve the Stars and Stripes.

"THEIR RECORD IS GOOD, their morale high. Their volunteering has been a spontaneous demonstration of their faith in, and loyalty to, the institutions of America.

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1. The Rafu Shimpo English Section, Sunday, Oct. 19, 1941, page 4 cols. 1,2. Both this editorial and the Kashu Mainichi article of 1935 written by Togo Tanaka.



"THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE, representing 150,000 Americans of Japanese extraction and their parents, subscribes sincerely to the belief and faith that America is a land of but one people gathered from many countries.

"AT THE ALTAR OF AMERICA, we have sworn ourselves to a single loyalty. We have bound ourselves to sacrifice and struggle, to plan and work for this land. We have given that we may gain, we have surrendered that we may have victory. We have taken an oath that the world will have a chance to know how much good can be gathered from all countries and how solid in its strength, how wise, how fertile in its yield, how lasting and sure is the life of a people who are one."

In the editorial behavior of the English sections of the Los Angeles vernacular dailies during the decade preceding Pearl Harbor, there are certain marked trends which, upon examination, may be traced to the fact that Nisei writers, like Nisei generally, were in the process of (1) being weaned away from Issei patterns of behavior and thinking or (2) imbued with them, were looking toward Japan for their future. In this analysis, at any rate, one discovers an explanation for the position taken by all English editors, almost without exception, in the mid-thirties. The contradictory nature of this position may be described by pointing out that the record shows most Nisei writers and editors made some positive efforts to identify the second generation as Americans. This was a conscious effort. It was an insistent message that soon drowned out every other theme in the editorial mill. But while proclaiming the American citizenship of the Nisei, most English editors of the mid-thirties seem to have unconsciously identified Nisei interests and welfare with the political fortunes of Japan.

There was nothing harmful in that situation so long as one accepted the prevailing view that the Nisei's mission in life was to properly interpret Japan to the United States, and vice-versa, and thereby build that "bridge of friendship and under-



standing" across the Pacific. Nothing short of war between America and Japan could turn such a position to disaster, it was reasoned.

Some insight into the attitudes and thinking of articulate Nisei can be gained by a re-reading of the numerous articles on American-Japanese relations in issues of the English section for the ten-year period before Pearl Harbor. Dissertations which sought to justify the Japanese military invasion of China are not infrequent. One enthusiastic contributor, apparently a college freshman who had pored over his American history lessons, produced a vehement denunciation of Chinese banditry and drew the analogy between American conquest of the West and Japanese conquest of Manchuria. Another self-defensively criticized U.S. acquisition of territory by force of arms; the criticism, however, was directed less against the use of armed might to gain the territory than it was against American condemnation of Japanese utilization of the same means.

In the English edition of Friday, December 24, 1937, the Rafu Shimpo's contributor of political comment, Masaru Ogawa, writes in a vein almost characteristic of Nisei feeling about the troubled world situation. A Los Angeles-born Nisei who went from the city public schools to the University of California at Los Angeles, Ogawa trod the path that most Nisei collegians followed except that he turned in a far better-than-average performance along the way. But like other Nisei, he too found himself at the crossroads upon graduation. At U.C.L.A., as a major in



political science, he had achieved scholastic distinction by receiving membership in Pi Gamma Mu, Phi Beta Kappa, and Pi Sigma Alpha. He had been editor of the Belmont High School Sentinel in his prep school days. He had two ambitions, journalism and politics. The only child of parents who had both the means and intentions of returning to Japan, he had acquired a better-than-average Nisei knowledge of the Japanese language. Following completion of undergraduate work at U.C.L.A., Ogawa travelled eastward to take his Master's degree in political science at Columbia University. From New York, he wrote regularly for the Rafu Shimpo. His observations no doubt were influenced by his classroom work, yet they seemed to express studied attempts to be objective about American-Japanese relations. In many respects they were typical of Nisei attitudes of the day. Underlying all comment in the English section press of the time appears, in more or less degree, an implication or assumption that the Nisei at least should have some understanding of and sympathy for Japan's stake in the Far East.

Ogawa's story in a sense became symbolic of the failings of American democracy among those Nisei newspapermen who knew him intimately. After over 15 years of continuous exposure to an American upbringing and public school education, from the point of achievement of a Master's degree in political science from Columbia University, this Los Angeles-born Nisei decided to seek his future and his life's career in Japan. The parental factor loomed large, of course; but in the last analysis a deep-seated belief that the barriers of race would forever block him from a



career in either of the two goals he had set for himself turned him toward Japan. "When I leave the United States," he wrote to the editor of the Rafu Shimpō once, "I think it will be with the firm intention of becoming a Japanese citizen." This was shortly after he had submitted the following article for the 1937-38 Holiday edition of the Rafu Shimpō:

"S h a r p   C l a s h   A m o n g  
W o r l d   P o w e r s   S e e n  
I n   D i p l o m a c y   o f   '37

By MASARU OGAWA

"The year 1937 has proved a very trying one from the political point of view. Incead, 1937, as it passes into history, might have been the turning point of world politics.

"One of the most important events, in the passing year, as far as the public was concerned, was the Sino-Japanese conflict and the abortive restort to the Nine-Power Pact for its settlement. Of far greater significance, however, was the focusing of the issue as between the "Tokyo-Berlin-Rome" Axis and the return to the pre-war practices of secret diplomacy and balance of power.

"The year opened inauspiciously enough with war in Spain; Germany demanding her 'place in the sun'; and with China preparing war on Japan. With world attention riveted upon the conflict in Spain, few were the people cognizant of the growing militarism of China under the younger generals.

"The significance of the kidnaping in December of last year of Chaing Kai-shek and his subsequent release on condition of a war on Japan and compromise with the Chinese Communists was minimized by the press of the world. In January, Chang Hsueh-liang, captor of Chiang, was summarily tried and released.

"And the world should have known that a conflict was inevitable.

"A new spirit has been born of the Chaing kidnapping," drilling for war, war on Japan. In July, China thought she was ready, and the Marco Polo "bridge" incident is now history.

"In contrast to this hysterical war preparation in China



were the sagacious attempts of Japan toward conciliation with the Chinese. With the fall of the Hirota Cabinet over an impasse on the budget bill, General Ugaki was named Premier-designate. His failure to form a cabinet saw General Hayashi, a moderate, heading the new government. This was in the waning days of January. The dissolution of the Lower House and the proroguing of the Upper House by Hayashi brought on the April 30 elections which resulted in a complete victory for the political parties and as far as the policy towards China was concerned, one of conciliation.

"When Prince Konoye took over the government after the resignation of Hayashi on June 3, everything was pointing towards happier relations with China. Throughout Japanese political circles, desire was being expressed for a final rapprochement with the Chinese. This in face of a growing desire of military Chinese of China for war. Unprepared and surprised were the Japanese at the provocations of the thoroughly aroused and over-confident Chinese militarists.

"The progress of the war proved Chinese optimism unfounded. The fall of Shanghai and Nanking and the rout of the Chinese armies from North China have captured the headlines for the past six months.

"Growing out of the conflict in China came the Nine-Power Conference which convened in Brussels, under the direction of the League of Nations, inspired by the now-famous Chicago Speech of President Roosevelt in which 'a quarantine' was proposed on the 'ten per cent' by the peace-loving 'ninety-percent' of the world.

"Unable to induce Japan to attend, and thus doomed before the first delegate had taken his seat, the Brussels conference dragged on for three miserable weeks and produced only a mild rebuke to Japan before it dissolved itself before the ridicule of a practical world.

"This diplomatic farce carried on at Brussels, a failure as far as the accomplishment of its purpose was concerned, nevertheless, may prove to be one of the landmarks of world history.

"Out of it grew significant events. Of great import was the drawing together of Japan, Germany, and Italy, those nations who would expand or else perish, in a closer, more well-defined alliance.

"It was Brussels that cut the line clean between the two opposing forces in world politics. Appeals made to the so-called 'democracies' of the world as against the fascist countries and Japan, made the latter countries realize more clearly the



essentiality of their unity of action. Thus did Italy speak for Japan and Germany at Brussels. Thus was the Anti-Comintern Pact extended to include Italy in those harried days of November. And finally was one of the contributing factors to Italy's decision to quit the League of Nations.

"Indeed as the year 1937 goes into history, it will be remembered as a tragic year. The days of terror in 1917 were recalled in the brutal purges in Russia; Spain is still engaged in a relentless civil war; Central Europe is in a state of uncertain anticipation as Germany threatens to spread her wings; the League of Nations has lost its last vestige of universality; and in the Far East China continues her futile, misguided resistance.

"And in this scene of international chaos, the shadow of secret diplomacy is again hovering over the capitals of the nations.

"With intrigues and counter-intrigues, with secret alliances and counter-alliances, with suspicions and counter-suspicions, with fears and counter-fears, the world is rapidly being divided up into three armed camps, grouping them arbitrarily as "democracy," "communism," and "fascism."

"And all because in 1937 the world was afraid, afraid as in the years past since the War, to face the basic problems, preferring to deal with effects rather than their causes. Nowhere in the postwar instruments for peaceful relations can be found provision for peaceful change. Nations rise and fall; economic needs become more stringent; but a political straitjacket has been applied by the satiated nations, preventing the growth of other, less fortunate nations.

"The effects of the necessity of a nation have been condemned; the causes of the necessity have not been considered. And because of this, the world has floundered about for another twelve months, no nearer the solution to a happier relation between nations, and infinitely farther away.

"Many have hailed the 'balance of power' made definite by the withdrawal of Italy from the League of Nations as having averted a certain clash, but a balance of power is not a solution. It merely postpones an inevitable clash. It makes that clash so much more horrible.

"In the political sense the year 1938 must come tip-toeing in, ever so careful not to upset that delicate balance of power now existing. The most daring tight-rope walker never faced such a hazardous task as that which faces the coming year, so delicate the balance, a slip will mean destruction even more terrifying than that of twenty ~~ay~~ years ago.



"But 'hope springs eternal in the human breast' and with a chord of optimism, the world faces the New Year, optimism which even the foibles and insanities of nations cannot dim."

An analysis of this outstanding Nisei English section contributor's views reveals without question an identity of interests and sympathy for the official Japanese position on the "China Incident." This was typical of the English sections of southern California in 1938.

Furthermore, the years 1935-40 were marked by the departure for Tokyo of several Nisei, both editors and writers who had established some reputation for community leadership.

George Hideo Nakamoto, as English editor of the Rafu Shimpo until 1936, was highly regarded in Little Tokyo for both his coverage of Far Eastern reporting and his editorial and column writing. In many respects, he was held to be the outstanding Nisei editor in southern California in 1936. Fresno-born, he had studied journalism at Columbia University and had never been to Japan. However, attendance at Japanese language school and an aptitude for language <sup>had</sup> ~~and~~ equipped him with a bi-lingual vocabulary of more than average proportions. A bachelor in his early thirties, he decided in 1936 to "see Japan." Opportunities for a man of his ability were apparently open to him in Tokyo. He returned, however, to the United States and the Rafu Shimpo uncertain as to whether he would make his choice in Tokyo or Los Angeles for a permanent career. A brief tenure of newspaper work for the Domei Japanese News Agency at Shanghai had soured him on offers of work in China. In 1939, however, after renouncing his Japanese citizenship and establishing himself as an American citizen



without dual allegiance, he accepted an offer of a position as director of the North American division of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (Radio Tokyo).

The factors which entered into Nakamoto's decision to strike out for a career in Tokyo appeared to his associates to be different in degree from those which prompted Ogawa. Nakamoto, it seemed to his friends, would have been content to remain in Los Angeles as an English editor of the Rafu Shimpo; the field, however, had become crowded for him since his first trip to the Far East. That he had no initial intentions of burning his bridges behind him was amply indicated by his action in securing his United States citizenship. For several years before his leaving the Los Angeles English section scene, he had campaigned vigorously for: (1) renunciation of dual citizenship by the Nisei in favor of single United States citizenship, (2) elimination of such "unnecessary" organizations as the Junior Kenjin Kai on the ground that they did not materially contribute to the "Americanization" of the Nisei, (3) active participation of Nisei in voting and in political campaigns.

Two among perhaps a dozen Nisei of southern California who had contributed toward the making of Nisei opinions and attitudes through the English sections, Masaru Ogawa and George H. Nakamoto seemed to represent at the time of their sailing for Japan the fulfillment of unspoken wishes of many Nisei dissatisfied with their lot in America. Ogawa enrolled at the Tokyo Imperial University, furthering his studies and pointing hopefully toward



a career in diplomacy or, failing that, newspaper work. Nakamoto, older and more experienced, assumed his duties with Radio Tokyo. The reactions of both men, somewhat in contrasting veins, are expressed in their correspondence from Tokyo during 1940. Ogawa, enveloped in his classroom work and the comparatively isolated life of the university student in Japan, reported in September, 1940:

" .... I love this country and if I can find a suitable position after my studies at Teidai are over, shall stay. I say this although realizing that living conditions will become increasingly difficult. If the people here believe that the termination of the war will mean the end of restrictions and privations, they are going to be terribly disappointed. This is but the beginning. It is safe to predict grave crises in the very near future, but we are confident of the emergence of greater Japan and a greater East Asia. My year and several months here has given me a new confidence in Japan and because of that confidence I wish to remain here... It seems to be a natural tendency among nisei males here--to marry Japan-bred girls. It's not that nisei girls are lacking; we could name you a dozen 'old misses,' and dozens more who will qualify in a year or two. It's not that nisei girls are less charming or minus beauty. It is man's desire to conform to his environment and it is that calculative genius in man to take a woman to enhance his opportunities to success. It is that man is only secondarily a creature of romance. Marriages are made to meet the requirements of our bread and butter. And most certainly, to a nisei man planning to live in Japan, a Japanese frau would be just the thing. A nisei girl with a sound Japanese education would be the ideal match for the nisei man. But nisei girls here seem to prefer pounding on the typewriter....A question often asked of us in our correspondence with Americans is, what are the Japanese thinking about? To put it clearer, what are the intellectual currents in Japan today? With a Gallup poll that would be easy to answer. But in Japan there is no effort nor even a desire to measure public opinion. What then should be our criteria to judge intellectual currents in Japan today. Of the many that could be suggested, literary trends might prove the most accurate. In other words what sort of books are the Japanese reading, and who are the most popular writers? Today's best sellers reflect that which the people desire, feel, and think. Rightist writers are indisputably popular,



and modernized versions of ancient Japanese writings are selling well. Among them are the Tales of Genji, Nihon Shoki, and Nippon Gaishi. Advocating a return to the purity of Japan's historical past, this school of writers is violently opposed to the bondage of occidentalism; some are chauvinists to the extent of blindly opposing everything western.... Western books are being widely translated, so much so that complaint was recently lodged that hasty translations were lowering the standard of Japanese literature. Gone With the Wind, Grapes of Wrath, The Yearling are recent translations which have found great public favor...."

A few weeks later, following the signing of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo military treaty, Ogawa penned another note from Tokyo analyzing the event:

"Whatever be, it is certain that Japanese American relations shall become increasingly strained. The Americans will have to admit, however, that a Nipponese tie-up with Germany at this point is very good politics and it isn't stabbing a friend in the back for Uncle Sam has proved himself anything but a friend during the past few years."

George Nakamoto's letters, written during the same period, reflect a somewhat different reaction to the new environment. Whereas Ogawa appears to have identified himself with the fortune of the country for which he had discovered a love, the experiences of the former editor of the English section, Nakamoto, were related thus:

"...The work is interesting and the fellows are really very fine. Quite a contrast from that damnable outfit at Shanghai. I hope to answer your lengthy letter after I can separate an article I've written on my observations of this country and the people that make up Japan. One will be for your private consumption and the other for print. In substance, the Japanese are a very difficult people to understand...nothing strange about the rest of the world dismissing them as impossible. By the way I got a letter from that El Monte correspondent. Her name just slipped my mind, but you know the girl that always brings in a pile of ads from San Gabriel Valley. She wanted to know if she could get a job at Radio Tokyo or anywhere so that she could remain here with her mother. I told her that life would be much more



easier and happier back in the U.S. And that goes for all the rest of the nisei. The Orient will ever be the ancient East. They're putting quite a bit of steam in the 2600 years of Japan, but I think that the Japanese certainly have taken a heck of a while to be what they are now and still be so amazingly deficient. Maybe I'm wrong, but I'd rather be wrong than lose that spark of originality, initiative, and the orneriness to refuse all and any orders without knowing what it's about. They certainly have a system here of regimentation with the guys on the top rung knowing not the whats and whys...."