Consensus-Orientation and the Indirect Style of the Japanese Press

LYDIA N. YU*

IT seems that there is a gap between the Japanese reading public's assimilation of and reaction to the information contained in the Japanese press. Although they are commonly observed as regular readers of newspapers, they usually say *wakaranai* when asked about what the press is driving at and what they think of the day's news. A non-Japanese reader of a Japanese newspaper in English is not in a different situation. After being engrossed in a particular column with a generous amount of information, he still asks himself what the columnist is saying.

This article is an attempt to relate the style of the Japanese press to its weak and uncertain impact on its readers. It is an attempt to answer questions such as: How does the Japanese press convey and interpret news to its readers? How does a Japanese newspaper communicate its stand, if any, on particular issues?

"The Japanese press" in this article refers to the newspapers in Japan, both in the Japanese and English languages. The newspapers in the native language may have more news and may be more detailed than the English newspapers, but the manner of writing the news, as well as the commentaries, is the same, whether it is a Japanese or an English paper. The newspapers in English are foreign only in the aspect of the language. Their news reporters and commentators are mainly Japanese. They are still written and published in the Japanese system.

It may be necessary to stress at this point that this article is not concerned with the position of a certain newspaper, whether conservative, rightist, leftist, or whatever. It is concerned with the *style* by which the Japanese press conveys its stand on a particular issue or topic. It is difficult to label the political leaning of any Japanese newspaper because the manner by which it gives its stand is very vague, indirect, and calculating.

To prove more emphatically the sameness of the Japanese newspapers as far as style is concerned, an English newspaper and not a Japanese newspaper is used here as the source of illus-

* Instructor, Department of Political Science, Ateneo de Manila University; currently a Japan Foundation Research Fellow.

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trative examples. By doing so, it would be shown that the foreignness of the language of the English newspapers does not make its style different from the newspapers in Japanese. Moreover, this approach would dictate that the communication is vague not because its medium is by nature vague. On the contrary, it would show that even through a relatively precise language such as English, the Japanese press can persist in being deliberately indirect.

Of the many newspapers in English, it is the *Japan Times* that is heavily quoted here because it has the most number of pages and more regular bylines. In other words, it has more materials that can be used for the purpose of this article. Limiting the reference materials to the *Japan Times* also frees the article from repetitious and long footnotes. Due to the sameness of the Japanese newspapers, the columnists quoted here could be any writer behind the columns, signed or unsigned, of any Japanese newspaper, in Japanese or English.

In the attempt to visualize the otherwise elusive process that results in the indirectness of the Japanese press, the chain of newspaper reports and comments surrounding the "Tanaka-boom" is traced here. The "Tanaka-boom," or "Kaku-san boom" refers to the phenomenal rise of Kakuei Tanaka to popularity in the last election of the president of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and consequently, of the successor of Eisaku Sato as Prime Minister of Japan. It is a very recent event and yet it has already been concluded. The brevity in terms of time, without the poverty of materials for analysis, makes the "Tanaka-boom" a convenient and interesting material for constructing what, on the surface, would appear fragmentary and isolated pieces of comments in the Japanese press.

Indirect Style of the Japanese Press: Some Examples

The *Japan Times* editorial of January 3, 1972 mentioned the speculation that Prime Minister Sato would resign after Okinawa had been returned to Japan. Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeo Fukuda and Minister of International Trade and Industry Kakuei Tanaka were mentioned to be the strongest candidates most likely to succeed Sato. Between the two, Fukuda was reported to have a larger faction, but the editorial commented that "the size of the clique itself is not the determining factor." As a matter of course, the editorial wrote, Mr. Sato, should he choose to do so, could use his influence to sway the final decision.

The editorial considered the normalization of relations with China as one of the factors that could not be ignored in the resignation of Sato and the choice of his successor. It noted that the pressure for Sato's early retirement had been "coming especially from the pro-Peking elements who have taken to heart Chinese Premier Chou En-lai's arrogant statement that his country will only deal with a new prime minister, but never with Prime Minister Sato, in normalizing Sino-Japanese relations."

On January 6, Minoru Shimizu, a columnist, centered on the China question and the choice of Sato's successor. Considering that the normalization of relations with China would have to be the first task of the next government, and realizing the strong attitude of the Chinese leaders against Sato, he was of the opinion that "the next regime cannot be a 'second Sato' set-up in matters of its China policy."

He described Fukuda as the strongest candidate, and Tanaka as a powerful candidate *"also"* (italics mine). Either, he wrote, could not come to power without Sato's backing, and therefore, they would not be able to ignore Sato's wishes. "Nevertheless," he concluded, "the situation today requires a new leader who is capable of responding to a rapidly changing world."

The conclusion of this column could mean two things. First, both Fukuda and Tanaka, if they wanted to succeed in their candidacy, must find other means of getting into power aside from depending on Sato's support. Second, since the column also mentioned that the other three hopefuls for the presidency, namely, former Foreign Minister Takeo Miki, Masayoshi Ohira, also an ex-Foreign Minister, and Executive Board Chairman Yasuhiro Nakasone, were explicit in their pro-Peking attitude, one of them could be the "new leader" of Japan in the "rapidly changing world."

The conclusion was vague, and the guess calculating. It would be observed later on that the columnist would make his position clearer when the political situation became more stable and predictable.

The editorial of January 21, again took up the issue of Sato's successor, this time criticizing the failure of the aspirants to make known their policies. It identified the aspirants as Fukuda, who, "no doubt," had "at the moment the inside track;" Tanaka, who also had strong ambitions; Miki; Ohira; Nakasone, who was described as using this election as a mere stepping stone to a future candidacy for the top post; and a late-comer, Finance Minister Mikio Mizuta.

It is concluded that the candidates' widely opposed views on the China issue would make it difficult for the LDP to unify views in their own party if anyone of them was elected. This remark could be interpreted as an indirect criticism of the LDP, in addition to the direct statement in the beginning of the editorial that the presence of many candidates was a reflection of the absence of a "single individual capable of winning the majority support of the LDP Diet members and regional delegates."

The editorial categorically ended with the statement that "what is needed is a candidate who will be courageous enough to present a comprehensive policy and express his willingness to stand or fall on the merits of his vision for Japan not only of the present but also of the future."

It would be noted that the editorial failed to state what policy would be

best adopted. It stopped with the cry that the candidates must state their policies. This particular editorial could be regarded as typical of Japanese editorials. They do not feed ideas. They clamor for ideas to be fed to them, for them to comment on. Not only do they wait for ideas; there are factors commonly held as hindering the promotion of people's interest, which the newspapers seem to accept as an inevitable evil. They seem to indulge in making political analyses and predictions based on these inevitable evils, some of which are factionalism, bribery, and the use of personal influence to further one's political ambitions.

The detailed analysis made by Shimizu of the factional tactics involved in the presidential election in his column of March 23 could be taken as an example of a newspaperman's seemingly passive acceptance of the realities of factionalism in Japanese politics and a matter-of-course analysis of political dealings and projections based on factionalism.

In the said column, the strategy of Miki and its impact on the LDP election was analyzed in this manner: Miki's faction was the second largest in the LDP. However, unlike Fukuda, Ohira, and Tanaka, he had little support from the neutral factions. In order to remedy this weakness, the Miki faction recruited Former Labor Minister Hirohide Ishida, hoping that the acknowledged abilities of the latter as an organizer and campaigner would attract votes from the neutral factions, as well as from the factions of Fukuda, Ohira, and Nakasone. Ishida gained his fame as an organizer and campaigner in the 1956 LDP presidential election in which he supported Tanzan Ishibashi against Nobusuke Kishi who was generally regarded as a sure winner. Ishibashi "miraculously" won, for which Ishida was given the credit.

In the presidential election of 1970 in which Miki challenged Sato, Miki garnered one-hundred eleven votes. This figure included many votes cast by members of the Nakasone faction. Since Nakasone himself was a candidate this time, the one-hundred eleven votes should not be cause for Miki's optimism.

The columnist's concluding remarks are quoted at length below to further illustrate the observation described above:

> As far as the other major candidates are concerned, Miki and his supporters will be a decisive factor in deciding the ultimate outcome of the forthcoming election even though Miki's own chances of walking off with the prize are regarded as rather slim. In the run-off which seems virtually certain to follow the first balloting, Miki and his followers could tip the scale in favor of either Tanaka or Fukuda.
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> Aware of Miki's antagonism toward Fukuda, the Tanaka camp has already begun to count second-ballot support among the Miki forces, and supporters of Fukuda are busy wooing Takashi Hayakawa, a known pro-Fukuda member of the Miki faction.
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> Fully aware of these moves, Miki and his followers are actively engaged in intraparty maneuvers of their own, in or-

der to enable them to react with flexibility under any circumstances.

While this writer still believes Miki's chances of being elected LDP president remote, should this intraparty reassessment of his abilities translate into votes in the coming presidential contest, the eloquent party pro may send some surprise ripples through the LDP.

Throughout the column, there was no trace of judgment against factionalism. The whole article was based on the assumption that the candidates worked through intraparty maneuvers. The prevailing tone of the article was a passive acceptance of whatever would be the outcome of these maneuvers.

In the article of March 24 by Kazushige Hirasawa, it was mentioned that it was an "open secret that Sato want Fukuda as his successor." This was followed by the same detached and resigned analysis of factional tactics. Briefly, his analysis was as follows:

In order for Fukuda to win the election, Tanaka should decide not to run so that the former would be supported by the whole Sato faction. Should Tanaka decide to run and Fukuda won the first place in a run-off election, Tanaka should support Fukuda in the final balloting. Both conditions were dependent on whether Sato would be able to persuade Tanaka to support Fukuda.

The columnist made a guess that Tanaka would run and therefore, Sato should persuade him to support Fukuda in the final balloting. "I believe this is a convincing approach to take because it agrees with the principle of fair play that the first winner should always be respected as such," opined the columnist.

Consistent with the carefulness of a Japanese columnist already observed in Minoru Shimizu, he ended with the following words: "However, Tanaka has declared he will keep his alliance with Masayoshi Ohira. If Tanaka sticks to this position, what will happen? Or suppose that Tanaka decides to run. Who can tell he will not place first in a run-off election?"

Such a remark put the columnist in a position that could not be proven wrong, whatever the actual outcome of the election was.

The March 30 column of Shimizu was about another candidate, Ohira, whose main strategy was to weaken the intraparty position of Fukuda. He was reported to have "urged" Tanaka to run for the presidency, in order to split the Sato faction and thereby, deprive Fukuda of a sure victory. He had been a close associate of Tanaka since the days of the Ikeda Government. In this election, they had agreed to combine their strength in the second balloting to support whichever of them got more votes on the first ballot.

This "stop-Fukuda" strategy of Ohira might result, the members of his faction feared, not in his victory, but in the victory of the "personable" Tanaka. "A sign of the pro-Ohira group's concern over the greatly enhanced position of Tanaka can be detected in the

recent moves by Zenko Suzuki, a leader of the Ohira faction to cement relations with Tanaka."

The column ended with a speculation that the LDP might turn to Ohira as a compromise candidate when the intra-party leadership free-for-all was over.

These few examples of the newspaper's passive description of factionalism, particularly the use of money to influence voting, however, do not in any way mean tolerance by the press. Taking into consideration the characteristic Japanese dislike for open antagonism, it is not surprising that only the opposition parties openly attacked the money deals and factional maneuvers of the LDP in the last presidential election. It is not also a surprise that the columnists took up the topic, without attacking it openly. The mere fact that it was written about could be interpreted as a mild criticism of these evils. The aspect in which the press could be considered to have failed was in neglecting to propose measures to minimize these evils.

The passivity and indirectness of the press could be attributed to its desire to be in harmony with the general consensus.

Consensus is commonly recognized as the Japanese way of making decisions, in contrast to the Western concept of the majority rule. Such system, however, encompasses not only decision-making, but many aspects of Japanese life. Here we have been concerned with how it affects the newspapers' role in Japanese society.

Since consensus avoids open confrontations, a clear statement of opinion, or more specifically, an open criticism by the press is unusual. Rather, it is usually merely informative. In place of the open and frank statement of issues, "feeling" of another's yet unexpressed opinions and "sounding-out" of one's own views take place. If one thinks that he has rightly "felt" someone's views and they are in agreement with his own, then he translates these common views into words. In case he found his own views to be different from what he "felt" was the other person's, he either modifies his own views before translating them into words, or he "sounds out" his own ideas, hoping that the other person would "feel" what his stand was and come out with an opinion harmonious with his. It is a complicated internalized process of "feeling" and "sounding-out," waiting and calculating. The process is finalized only when the object of discussion has assumed an obvious condition — when everybody concerned is of the same opinion as to the shape of the topic. The result is a lengthy commentary on what is already obvious. It is obvious that factionalism, money, personal influence, more than the interest of the people, dictate the results of elections — particularly party presidential elections — and the press indulges on these subjects without going into the less obvious means of minimizing them.

To illustrate the "feeling" and "sounding-out" process, the writer will identify below the stages in which the press and the politicians "felt" and "sounded-out" in the treatment of the so-called "Tanaka-boom."

There were three intertwined indicators of the trend in the news reports surrounding the Tanaka-boom: the issue of normalization of relations with China, the switch from Fukuda to Tanaka in terms of popularity with the party and the press, and the demand for a cabinet free of the Sato influence.

The press was explicit that the China issue and the demand that the new government must not be a neo-Sato cabinet were inseparable. It was the press which sounded out, and it was the politicians who picked up the message. China made clear that it would not deal with the incumbent Prime Minister, nor with a successor who belonged to the Sato school of thought. In order to realize the normalization of relations with China — if only for this reason, and not necessarily to give in to the demand of China — the new government should be a government that would pursue a China policy different from that of the Sato government.

Inasmuch as the press was sure of its stand on these two issues, it would be consistent for them to be against a candidate with the Sato stamp and to be supportive of a candidate free of the Sato color. But this was true only towards the last few days before the actual election, and only to a certain extent. The crystallization of the stand of the press was late because in this case, it was the press that tried to "feel" who could be the likely winner. When it had felt that Tanaka, as a result of the factional maneuvers, would win the presidency, the latter became the favorite of the press. The favorable attitude of the press towards Tanaka reached its peak in the so-called "Tanaka-boom."

The China Issue and Sato's Unpopularity

In the case of the normalization of relations with China, the press was convinced that the next government must give it primary importance. Such a stand was consistent with the international mood which followed the Nixon visit to the Mainland. The press could not doubt that it had felt rightly that the international mood was gradually growing in favor of China. In international relations, needless to say, normalizing or establishing relations is normally more welcome than breaking of relations, or maintaining a hostile relationship. The year started with the press calling for the normalization of relations, persistently discussed it in connection with the LDP presidential elections, praised and credited the Tanaka cabinet for its realization, pointed to it as one source of Tanaka's popularity, and mentioned it as one of the main political events of the year, in its year-end review of events. It was the press, in this case, that sounded-out, and the politicians who felt the message.

All the major candidates promised that the normalization of relations with China would be given primary attention should they be elected president. Among them, the most vocal was Miki. Consistently, he was also very explicit in his attacks against the Sato cabinet. Another candidate, Fukuda, in his official declaration of candidacy, promised normalization of relations with China and conclusion of a peace treaty with Russia while keeping the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. He said he would surely visit Peking if elected LDP President. Miki, on the other hand, had already visited China as early as April. Three days before the election, Miki, Ohira and Tanaka promised cooperation in the expected second balloting, and agreed to adopt the campaign platform of holding negotiations with Peking for the purpose of normalizing relations with Japan.

Fukuda and Tanaka, however, were not as explicit as Miki in criticizing Sato. Being members of the Sato faction themselves, and realizing that they would need the support of the faction, at the same time wanting to dance with the tempo of a government free of Sato's influence, all they could do was to utter vague promises such as the following:

Fukuda: "Party unity" and "modernization" of its structure in order to cope adequately with future political developments.

Tanaka: Policies designed for a new Japan and a new LDP.

However, it was not Miki whom the press guessed would win the election. The bet was either Fukuda or Tanaka, ironically, the two "wheels" of the Sato government. It was only after the factional maneuverings had settled down — after the press had "felt" that Tanaka was the stronger candidate — did the press start analyzing why his cabinet, should Tanaka win, would not be a neo-Sato cabinet.

The Shift from Fukuda to Tanaka

The editorials and columns of January mentioned earlier as examples of the passive and vague Japanese style had more than suggestions that Fukuda was stronger than Tanaka. The editorial of January 3 described the two as the strongest candidates, while Shimizu's column of January 6 described Fukuda as the strongest candidate, and Tanaka "also" a powerful candidate. The editorial of January 21 observed that there was no doubt that at the moment Fukuda had the inside track, but that Tanaka also had strong ambitions.

After these few comments, the press was silent on the race between Fukuda and Tanaka, until it became obvious that Sato's prestige was declining.

On April 6, Shimizu commented that the declining prestige of Sato made his support of Fukuda more of a liability than an asset to the latter. He observed that Fukuda was vulnerable to critics who were sensitive to China's refusal to deal with any "second-Sato" regime.

The following month, May, he discussed the same topic in his column, where he clearly wrote that China's dislike of Sato and of a second-Sato cabinet implied the disqualification of Fukuda as the next Prime Minister. Fukuda, he mentioned, had already been branded as undesirable by Wang Kuo Chuan, deputy chairman of the China-Japan Friendship Society, at a party hosted by Miki in Peking. Being the most consistent pro-China LDP candidate, he concluded that Miki would be the most likeable to China. But he also realized that the intra-party strength of Miki was not enough to win the election. Tanaka's strength was growing, he noted, and China was closely watching if Tanaka would be able to dissociate himself from Sato.

Tanaka was trying to free himself of the Sato-label, observed Masaru Ogawa in his column published three days after Shimizu's column. He also noted that Fukuda carried the neo-Sato label, and that Miki was pro-China.

On June 1, Shimizu came out with a column that turned out to be the only column in the *Japan Times* throughout the year, which took up the topic of the intervention in politics of the business leaders. (This was also mentioned by a certain Nawa Taro in the morning edition of Asahi Shimbun, July 6, page one). Shimizu wrote that Fukuda *used* to be their candidate, but now, they were taking a new look at Tanaka, described by the columnist as the *most powerful candidate.* It seemed that the business leaders liked what they saw, but due to the intense party struggle, they were at least trying to appear neutral so that they would not jeopardize their position and relation with whatever cabinet would be formed.

On June 22, Shimuzu made a long description of Fukuda, proving that he was very much like Sato. He also observed that Tanaka was closer to Sato than Fukuda if one looked at the positions held by the former. However, there were factors which would not make Tanaka's cabinet, should it come about, a second-Sato cabinet. They were: his not being a bureaucrat, and his extroverted personality which made him popular among the general public. He seemed to be supporting Tanaka, until he concluded his column with the following remarks:

> Many critics argue that power should go to someone who adheres to policies different from those of Sato. Takeo Miki and Masayoshi Ohira are said to be such men.

In this column could be gleaned a columnist's suppressed attempt to "sound out," while "feeling." In not more than one article did Shimizu appear to be backing Miki, but he could not go beyond mere mild hints, for he was trying to "feel" what results the factional struggles would bring out. At this stage, it was clear that it would be either Fukuda or Tanaka, and it was becoming clearer that Tanaka's strength was growing stronger. Hence, the appearance of many columns supportive of Tanaka, and yet hesitant in coming out clearly for him because the

unpredictable party arrangements had made "feeling" difficult and inconclusive.

By the start of the month of the actual election, Ogawa came out with a clear statement that the LDP's need for a leader that would give it a new image would be answered by Tanaka. He followed this with a favorable description of Tanaka as a "self-made man, without even the benefit of a university degree." His being a non-bureaucrat was mentioned, and his being young at fifty-four was considered to present a "new departure" from precedents.

This column was published on July 2. Three days after this — on the day the LDP would vote for its president the news of the holding of the election carried the sub-title that Tanaka was favored as the next Prime Minister. July 6, the news was out that Tanaka won the election.

The Tanaka Boom

The *Japan Times* of the same day carried an article on Tanaka's biography and three more news items on him. One news item reported the opposition party's feeling that Tanaka would follow Sato's footsteps. This short article, however, was overwhelmed by the other articles praising Tanaka and hoping for change: "Tanaka Rated Highly by U.S. Government," and "Tanaka Seen Altering Bureaucratic Politics." The latter title of samples of views on Tanaka was misleading, for it also carried pessimistic and cynical opinions of Tanaka's abilities.

The editorial, too, was full of praises for Tanaka: his election had met LDP's pressing need for change; he was a man of the people; he had known poverty, he had worked as a common laborer, he had been a small entrepreneur, he had come up the ranks through hardwork, and thus, would be able to identify himself with the common man; he represented a break with the past in the sense that he did not possess a university degree and he was not a former bureaucrat; and his youthfulness would help break the popular impression of the LDP as a party of senior citizens.

There was a sustained admiration towards Tanaka's personal attributes for sometime. Almost everyday, for two weeks following the election, there was either a news item, a column, or an editorial about him. It was not, however, all admiration. It was mixed with some cautions on the dangers of quick, sometimes, impulsive decisions characteristic of Tanaka. On the whole, however, the press was, at this stage, fanning what was generally felt as the Tanaka boom. Shimizu wrote of this boom in July, two months ahead of the poll taken in September by the *Asahi Shimbun* which rated Tanaka's popularity at 62 per cent.

In the analysis of Shimizu, the factors leading to Tanaka's popularity were his effective handling of national affairs, the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations, and his policies in line

with his *Japanese Archipelago Reconstruction Plan.*

Although it was often mentioned that the plan of remodeling the Japanese islands did not have concrete guidelines on how it would be implemented, it was treated as a contributory factor to Tanaka's popularity. It was only after the council created to discuss the plan had pointed out its shortcomings did the press echo the same criticisms. But it did not go to the extent of suggesting alternatives.

The actual discussion of the Remodeling Plan, followed by the defeat of the LDP in the gubernatorial election in Okayama Prefecture, plus Tanaka's actual performance in the Diet debates, cast some doubts on the wonder of the Tanaka boom.

In his column of November 2, Hirasawa bluntly described Tanaka as unpersuasive, and went to the extent of illustrating how Tanaka could have answered the questions directed to him in the Diet.

Ogawa, however, in his column of November 5, defended Tanaka from the low rating given to his Diet performance. The two points that he stressed were:

a) It is obvious that his remodeling project . . . has not yet gone beyond the preliminary stages and is certainly not in sharp focus. In all fairness, however, it should also be pointed out that the opposition leaders who launched a concerted attack on the plan made no real effort to propose an alternative.

b) The tension in Asia, contrary to Tanaka's critics' point of view, had not yet been relaxed just because Japan and China had normalized their relations. We agree rather with the Prime Minister who gave a straight forward answer that it is still too early in the game to consider all tensions to have disappeared from the Asian scene.

At this point, I want to reiterate the observation that the press was vague and passive. Surely, these two columns by Hirasawa and Ogawa were exceptions to this generalization. But the political situation in which they were writing was also unusual. Here was the political phenomenon of a prime minister to whom a booming popularity was attributed amidst the increasing dissatisfaction of the people in politics as a whole. (While his popularity was rated at 62 per cent, dissatisfaction with politics was also rated 60 per cent in the *Asahi Shimbun* public opinion survey). In spite of some strong doubts on the Tanaka boom, the press continued to cling to what it had felt and explicated as the popularity of Tanaka.

Hence, when the general election came around, it was generally guessed that the Tanaka boom would help the LDP increase its seats in the Diet. Even the opposition parties, the Socialist Party in particular, were supposed to be alarmed by the high popularity rating of Tanaka. As a counter-strategy, they played down the foreign policy issues and concentrated on the weaker points of Tanaka's policies, namely, the acute problem of environmental pollution. They claimed that Tanaka's remodeling plan would worsen the problem.

The result of the general election was a victory only in the sense that it retained the LDP's majority in the House of Representatives. But the LDP pre-election seats of two-hundred ninety-seven were decreased to two-hundred eighty. The Communist Party, which challenged the LDP the most during the election campaign, increased its seats from fourteen to thirty-eight.

An unsigned article which appeared on December 28 entitled "Tanaka's Image Seen Losing Its 'Glamour'," took the general election as an indication of Tanaka's declining popularity. The unidentified writer traced the causes of the decline to the "inflationary mood," and external problems, including balance of payments. The article, however, sounded more sympathetic to, than critical of, a Prime Minister faced with formidable problems.

The press was, again, "feeling" for how long the Tanaka boom would last. The year ended with the press reviewing the events of the year, and hesitating to state categorically whether the Tanaka boom had already collapsed or not.

Conclusion

The Japanese press is a good source of information for it gives not only all sides of the question, but also its background and analysis. However, the press seems to be afraid to take the initiative of injecting fresh ideas into the people. Rather, it feels the tendency of the times, and swings with it. The press can, therefore, be a good instrument for keeping the public informed, but could not be an effective weapon for radical change. It can fan what is an already existing mood, but it cannot direct that mood to a definite direction.

An informed public and well-circulated mass media are admittedly aspects of a culturally modernized country. In the more particular field of political development, however, these are only bases of a more substantial mark of political development, which is political participation. It has been observed not more than once, that Japan has a relatively low level of political particicipation. The gradually decreasing turn-out of voters is one indication of this.

Serving a population which is almost 100 per cent literate, the Japanese press could play a more positive role by presenting alternatives to the highly informed Japanese. They already have enough information: the question now is to do something with this information.