

Bungei Shunju

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Keisataro SHORIKI Profiled

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Department, Waseda University; Born, Hyogo
Prefecture, 1895]

Brief History of SHORIKI:

Was born on April 11, 1885, in a village near Takaoka, Toyama Prefecture.

His father and forefathers were contractors. Graduated from Takaoka Middle
School, ^{the} Fourth High School and the German Law Department, Tokyo University.

His school record was not on the good side. Was a judo champion during his

high school days. Having passed the higher civil service examination, he

immediately entered the service of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Board.

After serving as the head of the Horidome and Kagurazaka Police Stations,

the chief secretary and the Chief of the Police Affairs Division, he retired

from the government service in 1924. While in office he played a big role in

controlling the bomb incident of the Foreign Ministry, the students' riot

at Waseda University and the rice riot. Immediately following his retirement

from the government office he assumed the presidency of Yomiuri Newspaper

Company which was on the verge of collapse, and displayed an unusual talent

in the management of the newspaper company. He also held the chairmanship

of the Japan Baseball League. During World War/He was appointed director of

the "Yokusankai" (Imperial Rule Assistance Association), and on that account

he was purged after the war. In 1953 he established the Nippon Television

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Network and assumed its presidency.

A Businessman

The first question you may want to ask me is whether or not Shoriki is a businessman. If a businessman is a man who buys raw cotton, manufacture cotton goods out of it and sell them to domestic and foreign customers, or a man who earns money by offering traffic convenience, or a man who manufactures and sells paper and cement, he is not a businessman. Nor does he lunch at the Industrial Club, chats with other businessmen there, nor does he hold the membership of "Keidansen" (Federation of Economic Organizations) or "Nikkeiren" (Japan Federation of Employers Associations). I have never heard that Shoriki is interested in paintings and writings or in tea ceremony or "kouta" (Ballads). At first sight it is hard to classify him as a businessman.

Since he is not engaged in politics, he cannot be called a politician. Being the owner of the Yomiuri, he is closely related with the organ of expression. But he is not a journalist. Then what is he?

He is not so clear as Hirobumi ITO is clear as a statesman, Arimoto YAMAGATA as the leader of a military clique and Ritschi SHIBUSAWA as a businessman. But to run a newspaper company is a business. Although some people denounce the commercialism of a newspaper, is there any newspaper which does not follow commercialism? Unless a Government newspaper, no newspaper can continue its existence even for three days. Some newspapers pretend as if they were the incarnation of the good sense of community and ~~shame~~ keep away from

commercialism, but tactfully follows it, while others openly display their commercialism. Purely non-commercial newspapers may well denounce or laugh at commercial newspapers. But as there is no non-commercial newspaper, if one newspaper laughs at the commercialism of other newspaper, it is just like "the pot-calls-the-kettle black".

Recently, the American magazine Time, under the caption "Newspaper King Matsutaro SHORIKI", described him as follows: "Throughout Japan no daily paper sells as much as the Yomiuri's Tokyo edition (circulation 2,100,000),

and Japan's press circles has no character as outstanding as 69-year old bald-headed ~~anarling~~ /Matsutaro SHORIKI, proprietor of the Yomiuri which owns big eight magazines and a sole commercial television network of Japan in addition to the daily newspaper, who is always ready to ~~do anything~~. He is recognized even by foreigners as an outstanding owner of a newspaper and a television network. A chief editor or an executive editor of a newspaper is by no means a businessman. But one who runs a newspaper company with responsibility is a businessman. Shoriki who took over in 1924 the management of the Yomiuri which was on the verge of collapse with a circulation of 50,000 of which 40,000 were fee-charging, and re-tered it into today's big Yomiuri is a fine businessman.

Waseda Riot and Shoriki

Shiro OZAKI's novel "Human Theatre" deals with the riot of the Waseda University students which broke out in 1916. This writer was a Preparatory Course student of the ^{same} university in those days. Although the situation was

-4-

critical, he returned to his native place for ^{the} summer vacation. If he had stayed in Tokyo, he might have sided with the rioters like Ozaki and ^{been} expelled from the university. At that time Shoriki was a district inspector. The rioting students occupied the school building just like trade unionists occupy a factory today. At the report that 1,000 Waseda students occupied the school, the Metropolitan Police Board dispatched 500 policemen, to the mansion of OHIUMA in front of the university to stand ready for action. At midnight a number of the university employees ran into the mansion, smeared with blood, for help. Policemen prepared to dash out. But Shoriki held them in check and he alone proceeded to the school.

Interesting enough, the leader of the Amano faction and the central figure of the riot was Tanzan ISHIBASHI who then was a staff member of the Toyo Keisai Shimpo (Oriental Economist). Shoriki interviewed Ishibashi, and both of them talked in quiet. Shoriki learned that the rioters did no violence, that the blood-smeared employees were hurt because they attempted to run away from the window in dismay and that the rioters were merely putting up demonstrations by speeches.

Ishibashi highly praised Shoriki's attitude at that time and said that he would make a name in the future. He was well spoken of by the students as a man with a good understanding. But he was not known as a district inspector but as the Chief of the Kagurasaka Police Station or the Waseda Police Station.

The Takat. faction propagandised as if Shinpei GOTO had been behind the Waseda riot. It appears that the same faction wilfully misrepresented Shoriki's quiet attitude toward the students.

When I met Shoriki recently and happened to talk about the Waseda riot he asked me whether I had been one of the rioters. I replied I had been too good a boy to participate in the riot and that Ozaki was one of the rioting students. He said that he had met the students by himself because he had thought that if the 1,000 students and ^{the} 300 policemen had clashed at midnight it would have entailed a serious trouble, and that his step had been praised not only by the Metropolitan Police board but also by the rioting students.

The rice riot broke out in the summer of 1918. I was then in Himeji to spend my summer vacation there. I still remember that one of my friends ^{asked me} to go with him to see the Suzuki & Co which had been attacked with fire by mobs. In Tokyo Shoriki again went alone and had the political lecture meeting discontinued which had been under way at the Young-Men's Hall, Kanda, participated in by Kanichi OHTAKE, Matajiro KOIZUMI and others. It was again his one-man show before mobs ^{were} and 200 policemen who /breathlessly pitted against each other. He has been ^{thought} dauntless like this ~~and known~~ since he was in his 30's that talk will make the matter clear if he talks directly and with sincerity. He practiced this knowledge even at the risk of his own life.

He changed his strategy as occasion may demand. When rice rioters mobbed at Hibiya Park and were giving speeches at the Bandstand, more than 60 policemen

had been dispatched there from the Haraniwa Police Station, Honjo. Shoriki had the policemen bind up their swords so that they would not draw them--for the fear that if they had drawn their swords, it might have caused a trouble later. He rushed to the Bandstand at their head and arrested the leaders of the mobs. Within the jurisdiction of the Hisamatsu Police Station he was stoned by mobs when he attempted to control them. But mobs offered their towels to bind up his bleeding head. The scene might have looked dramatic with Shoriki standing in his white uniform smeared with blood. But it was not a drama but the reality.

The wound on his head which he received in this disturbance seems to ache sometimes even now.

Shoriki is associated with heroic episodes. Sure, he is a judo expert and swordsman and is fierce by nature. But he is by no means a Jutaro IWAMI (a hero in a Japanese battle story). Sometimes he rushed into mobs at the head of policemen but other times he would ride into his enemy by himself to talk calmly. At present there are few persons in political and business circles who are courageous enough to risk their lives. Most of politician and businessman prepare their last resorts or shelters before they cross swords. They are full of the "salaried man spirit" and have hardly pluck to risk their lives. Even gamblers don't take upon themselves the guilt of their bosses at the risk of their lives unless they are promised a reward for it.

Chivalrous as he is, Shoriki is not a street knight. He is a Bachelor of Laws graduated from the German Law Department, Tokyo University. Despite his long

life as a government official he stakes his life. Bureaucratism is not to take responsibility nor risk one's life. It is admirable and unusual that he was not imbued with bureaucratism. If he had been a clever bureaucrat, he would never have done such a folly as risk his life.

Super-talented Shoriki

He was born in a village along the Sho River, Toyama Prefecture.

He was graduated from Takaoka Middle School, the Fourth High School at Kanagawa

and the German Law Department, Tokyo University. Mamoru SHIMIZU, ex-President,

of the defunct Progressive Party, was one of his school mates at Tokyo University.

He was graduated from the middle school at the third from the bottom. At the

high school and the university he was not a diligent student either. People

of Takaoka wondered why such a backward pupil as Shoriki could rise to distinction

and concluded that a school record would not matter in rising in the world.

The reason why ~~his~~ his school record during the middle school was not good

was that he joined the students' strike and on that account he was labelled as

ill-conducted. There were three boys including Shoriki who won the mark D

for conduct, and he was at the top of them. Hence the third from the bottom.

While he was away from school to attend his aunt's funeral services, his school

mates staged a strike. Upon returning to school, he was told to join the strike.

The ringleader of the strike yielded to the school authorities when the latter

assumed a stiff attitude against the students. But Shoriki, being foolishly

honest by nature, held out to the last. Two boys were expelled from the

school as the punishment. Shoriki was exempted from this punishment for the reason that he joined the strike not from the beginning. Instead he was given the mark D for his conduct.

When Shoriki's nephew called on him recently he insisted that his uncle was a backward pupil and that he was graduated from the middle school at the third from the bottom. He told his nephew to see many citations which he had^{won} while he was at the primary and middle schools and which he has kept at his home in his native place. The citations said that Shoriki excelled in scholarship. This evidence convinced his nephew that his uncle was a bright student.

During his high school days he was a judo champion and was hero whenever his school had matches with the Third High School. At the university he prepared for examinations by borrowing note-books ^{from} his friends. He suffered from osena and could not read books even for an hour. That was why he was a lazy boy.

He failed in the higher civil service examination at first, and entered the ~~Statistical~~ Bureau of Statistics. He again sat for the higher civil service examination. This time he passed it, and entered the Metropolitan Police Board.

But he could not be respected because of his bad school records and also of his bad record in the civil service examination. In officialdom no man can have influence unless he has good school records. However, while he was the Chief of the HORIGUCHI, Horidome Police Station he astonished the then Chief of the Police Affairs

Division, there was a criminal which the preceding chiefs of the Horidome Police Station could not round up. A police detective asked Shoriki whether he might accept an invitation from a certain man to a feast. Shoriki told him to accept it. Next time the detective asked him whether he might accept a monetary gift from the said man and also ~~an invitation~~ an invitation to an entertainment with a woman. Shoriki approved the monetary gift but disapproved the entertainment with a woman. He kept in a safe the money which the detective received. In the meanwhile he got the understanding of District Public Procurator KANAYAMA of all these transactions. Soon the criminal was arrested. Learning that Shoriki received money from the criminal, Chief Noguchi of the Political Affairs Division was embarrassed. Shoriki revealed that he had ~~not~~ received the money on purpose. This fact was confirmed by District Public Procurator Kanayama. Since then Noguchi began to trust Shoriki as a man of strategy. Through the riot of Waseda University, the rice riot and the control of general election campaigns, obscure police official Shoriki gradually distinguished himself.

Takes Over the Iomiuri

Shoriki retired from the Metropolitan Police Board on account of the Daisuke KAMEA incident which broke out at Toranomon. He was the Chief of the Police Affairs Division then. The then Home Minister was Shimpei GOTO. Believing the rumour that Goto was a braggart, Shoriki did not trust him. He had preferred the post of the Chief of the Police Affairs Division

to that of the Chief Secretary which he thought had too much political coloring and ~~that~~ was more apt to be utilized by Goto. Goto, however, treated Shoriki impartially. Impressed by Goto's personality, Shoriki came to have a better opinion of him.

When he resigned from the Metropolitan Police Board, Shoriki had already been associated with the Bancho-kai Club sponsored by Seinosuke GO.

It was told at the club that the Yomiuri was in a difficult position financially after the Great Earthquake and that its President MATSUYAMA was going to put the company on sale. The Club members agreed that Shoriki would be the best candidate to take over its management. This account is detailed in "Shimbun Taiheiki" (Blessed stories of newspapers) authored by Tatsuo MITARAI.

The name of the Bancho-kai Club stemmed from the fact that Go's house located in Ban-cho. It was not a club created purposely by laying down rules. Because of Go's generous and frank nature his friends frequented his house. Go called NAGANO and KAWAI with "kun" (i.e. "Nagano-kun" and "Kawai-kun"). But he called Shoriki alone with "san" (indicating of respect and formality). Chubei ITO who was interested in paintings, writings, pottery and cookery had many common topics with Go. On the contrary, Shoriki had no hobby but eating. Nevertheless, Go and Shoriki could get on well. Go missed Shoriki

when he could not see him. They resembled each other in that they were large-minded and yet careful and mathematical and that both of them were not the men of ~~the~~ the prodigy type. It is well-known that Shimpei Goto raised 100,000 yen.

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by mortgaging his estate in Azabu as the fund with which Shoriki would take over the management of the Yomiuri. Shoriki increased subscribers by publishing the radio edition, ~~and~~ sponsoring "go" matches between HOINBO and KARIBANE and inviting American base-ball teams. He devoted himself to the betterment of the newspaper. The financial condition was by no means good. But he did not do ^{any} shady transactions to borrow money. He always borrowed money from ~~them~~ trustworthy quarters and repaid both principals and interests.

Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Yasuda, Okura and other concerns lent him money for the fear that he might speak ill of them in his newspaper. They were surprised when he repaid them the principal and interests, and they refused to accept them. Itsutaro SUEHICO was impressed by the fair management of the Yomiuri at the time of its labor dispute immediately after the end of the war. Because of Shoriki's manly nature, his paper has ^{done} nothing shameful in sale competition, purchase of newsprint and management. This is ascribed to his unselfishness. He still lives a humble life. He himself is a common person, and his character is built by his common people-like nature, sense of justice and passion. So, if he does as he thinks, his newspaper can meet the demands of the populace. He has no need of wondering what the populace demands and cudgeling his brain on how to ~~max~~ meet it.

If he wants to make his paper quite different from the Hochi, Jiji, Asahi and Mainichi, all he has to do is to do as he likes. Then his paper will

be loved by the populace. Because he himself is one of the populace, and the populace find their sympathizer in him.

Man of Justice

Secondary school students always have a strong sense of justice. But as the time passes, their sense of justice grow dull because of their worldly wisdom. Shoriki, however, still retains his sense of justice with which he joined the strike ~~in his middle school days.~~ When his friend Mamoru NAGANO had a hard time with his deficit-suffering bank, Shoriki borrowed 1,000,000 yen from Kaichiro NEZU for the sake of Nagano. One million yen in those days may ~~great~~ be equivalent to some 400 million yen in terms of the present monetary value. Nagano brought 100,000 yen to Shoriki as a token of his thanks. Although his company was badly in need of money, Shoriki declined the gift with thanks. Nagano bought a house worth 10,000 yen for Shoriki, but he still refused to accept him. Then Nagano presented him with a motor-car. Shoriki rode it once and returned it to Nagano. Shintaro OHASHI, too, presented him with a motor-car to appreciate Shoriki's effort to settle the laborers' strike at the Hakubunkan's factory. But Shoriki again declined it.

He is believed to be a ~~high~~-handed wild person, but is not necessarily so. He may make money in business. But he never seeks a reward for what he has done out of mercy or friendship. So far as business is concerned, he himself works very hard and shows no mercy ~~to~~ lazy workers. If his employee embezzles the company's money, he not only discharges him but also ~~takes~~ a legal action against him.

He may look cold-hearted. But this is because he has so strong a sense of justice that he cannot forgive unlawfulness of other persons. One who roars out is often an upright man. An immoral person never roars.

As he himself is a hard worker, he cannot tolerate other persons' laziness. He is too frank to say in a roundabout way. This is the way of doing of not only of Shoriki but also of other able people. But he well takes care of others. He was often deceived by one of his school mates, but he never discarded him, because he taught Shoriki a technique of judo while they were high school students. During the war German Ambassador OTTO summoned Shoriki and demanded that he discharge Tomio SUZUKI who had a German Jew wife. He did not discharge Suzuki. Furthermore, he sheltered Suzuki, as the authorities brought more pressure to bear upon him. After the war Suzuki returned evil for good by rising against Shoriki. And yet he never ceases to take care of others. If his friend asks for a loan, he lends him what money he has and never asks for its repayment.

Being a son of a contractor, he might have inherited the chivalrous spirit of his forefathers. His grand-father, Rin SHORIKI, invented a tool to extract a pike. It appears that he ~~was~~ also inherited originality of his ancestors.

Firmness of his character is typically illustrated by his unbending ~~is~~ during the war opposition/against the fascistic plan to merge all newspapers. At the suggestion by Chief MATSUMURA of the Army Press Section, Vice-President OKUMURA of the Information Board and President SUENONO of Domei News Agency, the national

control of the press was envisaged. This writer was defeated in his fight against the national control of electric power. I warned ^{the public} that fascism might dominate not only the electric power industry but all other industries. But many people approved fascism and blindly followed it. I was indignant with people's indifference to my warning. Consequently, when the plan to control the press was proposed I felt it served them right.

Okumura declared that he would materialize the control of the press at the risk of his life. Shoriki replied that he, too, would stake his life to thwart the plan. The fascists were defeated after all. Anyhow, Shoriki's fight against militarists and fascists was admirable.

His Ability to Persuade

Memoru Nagano, a friend of Shoriki's once said, "When talking, we start with an introduction and then proceed to the main subject and the conclusion. But Shoriki directly goes to the conclusion. Hearing him persuade other persons, I cannot understand what he is talking about. But he can persuade them. He has an extraordinary persuasive power."

By this method he got more than 60 subscribers for the stocks of his television network, each subscribing ~~average amount of~~ 10 million yen. Nagano said that he felt uneasy at Shoriki's way of persuading. His way of persuading might have looked illogical to logical-minded Nagano.

And yet, Ataru KOBAYASHI and HANEKATA who died recently were impressed by Shoriki and immediately agreed to subscribing 10 million yen. Especially

Hamakata was so impressed that he praised Shoriki before his employees.

Shoriki is now planning an enterprise of microwave. He may accomplish it with his usual persuasive power. The intrepid spirit, strong sense of justice and sincere friendship are the characteristics of his nature. But there is no denying that he is an unrefined rustic. It was fortunate that he left the officialdom soon. He is a man for a newspaper or a television industry and not for bureaucracy.

No enterprise owner like a lazy worker. Generally speaking, it may be all right. But as Bertrand RUSSEL wrote in his "Philosophy of Idleness", it is ^{wrong} to hate idleness unconditionally. There are many instances of seemingly idle persons made good inventions.

Shoriki is said to be so broad-minded as to associate with men of all shades. Then can't he be more broad-minded to tolerate other persons' laziness? A lazy man who has no talent is out of question, but there are people who look lazy but have talent. To distinguish them from ordinary lazy people and allow them to idle away is the magnanimity of a business owner. There are idle persons who are always thinking, and such people are necessary to this world.

Munehide TANABE, President of the Korakuen Stadium and a good friend of Shoriki's, once aptly commented him as a man who hurls himself at the universe.

No explanation is needed. He is exactly so. He hurled himself at the enterprises of newspaper, television and microwave, and he is certain to accomplish what he planned.

One thing on which no agreement of views reaches is the question of whether or not to send Shoriki to the political world. When Yoshinari KAWAI decided not to participate in politics, Shoriki's friends suggested him to enter the political arena. But Shoriki refused it, for the reason that his television enterprise was still in a nebulous state. Being a man with a strong sense of responsibility, it might be natural that he refused the suggestion. But the situation is different now with his television enterprise having been placed on the right track. Some of Shoriki's friends say that although they trust his political ability they have no heart to see him struggle for money in the political world and smear his spotless character, while others say that they should send Shoriki to the political world by fully preparing his political funds because Japan's political world is badly in need of characters. There is no telling which view is right, for both of them appear to have no objection to sending him to the political arena by taking precautions not to smear his spotless career.

The present political situation is compared to that in the early years of the Meiji era when the imperial rule was restored. Whether the present day is another Meiji Restoration or something like the latter part of the Ashikaga period and enters into an age of civil wars again, we don't know. Whichever it may be, it is short-sighted to say that the present political world lacks politicians in personalities. There are people who can be called politicians though they are not in the political arena. If things go on smoothly in Japan, these

unknown politicians will have no need of joining the political world.

However, no smooth path is predicted for Japan. It may face more serious crises. If so, all able men will have to be mobilized, and there is the strong possibility that Shoriki who is courageous and has a sense of justice will be the first to be mobilized. If things turn out like that, he will hurl himself at universe once again.

(Ky.K) (22 hrs.)