

Rutherford Alcock's *The Capital of the Tycoon*

Seen from Ryunosuke Akutagawa's *Japanese Women*

Hiromasa HAMAJIMA

One of the famous novelists early 20th century in Japan, Ryunosuke Akutagawa had much knowledge of British culture, especially British literature because he studied it at the University of Tokyo. He wrote some works by using the knowledge. One of them is *Japanese Women*. To write this work, Ryunosuke used Charles Mac Farlane's *Japan* and Rutherford Alcock's *The Capital of the Tycoon*. In this work, Ryunosuke regarded the latter as more important and correct than the former, and from his experience as well as from *The Capital of the Tycoon*, he concluded that women themselves should lead the women's liberation movement.

However, *The Capital of the Tycoon* showed the status of Japanese women in the Edo era, so the status of *Japanese Women* could be regarded as an anachronism. Nevertheless, Ryunosuke used *The Capital of The Tycoon* as the base of his discussion. There are two reasons he used Alcock's work. One is that Alcock had been in Japan for three years while Mac Farlane had never. The other is that he had much knowledge, for example John Stuart Mill's philosophy.

In *Japanese Women*, Ryunosuke could have a radical view of the status of Japanese women, because he knew about the status in the Edo era by reading works which were written by famous novelists in that era and he used Alcock's analysis of Japanese society, especially the status of Japanese women. This means that Alcock's analysis is quite correct and that *The Capital of the Tycoon* is one of the most important sources about the Edo era from foreigners' view.