



# The Japan Advertiser.

TOKYO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1913

月曜日外刊毎周一回發行

## THE JAPAN TIMES ARCHIVES

### Toward global 'Japanese' information history

**Takumi Sato** (Professor, Kyoto University Graduate School, president of Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication)

At a time when information is increasingly globalized, many historians find benefit in researching how information was gathered and disseminated before World War II from a global viewpoint. A Japanese slogan during the war, "Hakko ichiu," or "All the world under one roof," can be interpreted today as Japanese globalism. The Japan Advertiser, an English newspaper founded by an American, is a valuable resource that shows Japan's lack of recognition of the world at large around the time led the country into the war against the U.S. Journalists Hugh Byas, Wilfrid Fleisher and Joseph Newman wrote extensively about their experiences in Japan and their writings in The Japan Advertiser are now digitally archived. I am delighted that this window has opened to shine a light on the history of global information from Japan.

# Journalists who worked at The Japan Advertiser

B.W. Fleisher (1870-1946) became the owner of The Japan Advertiser in 1913 and used his connections in the U.S. to make a strong team. In time, The Japan Advertiser became a place with novice international journalists and experienced American and European journalists. How was The Japan Advertiser perceived? What kind of people worked there?

## How was The Japan Advertiser perceived? (Reflection by Joseph Newman)

“I was later hired as a staffer of The Japan Advertiser, which means a milestone for American reporters to be successful in the Far East, and later in the world.”

“The typical course for Americans who wanted to be international reporters began their career in Honolulu, then moved to Tokyo or Kobe (where high-quality newspapers owned by Britons were published), and then to Shanghai or Beijing.”

“U.S. ambassadors changed from time to time, but Ben Fleisher and the paper he began publishing seemed to last forever. The Japan Advertiser was considered voice of the U.S. in Japan and the Far East. And that was created by a small group of people including editor-in-chief Wilfrid Fleisher, who was a son of the paper owner, news editor Don Brown and some competent Americans and Japanese.”

“Goodbye Japan,” authored by Joseph Newman, translated by Shigeiko Shinohara, published by Asahi Shimbun. Translated from “Goodbye Japan.”

## Journalists who worked at The Japan Advertiser

### Doubling as correspondents of high-quality European and American papers



#### Wilfrid Fleisher (1897-1976)

A son of B.W. Fleisher. He was editor-in-chief of The Japan Advertiser as well as a correspondent of The New York Herald Tribune. He authored “Volcanic Isle,” whose Japanese translated version was published by Tosui Shobo, Publishers & Co. in 2006, among others.

Wilfrid Fleisher Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

#### Hugh Byas (1875-1945)

A journalist from Scotland, who contributed to The Times in London from 1926 to 1941 and The New York Times from 1929 to 1941. He served at The Japan Advertiser as an editorial board member for about 10 years. After returning to the U.S., he authored “The Japanese Enemy” and “Government by Assassination.” Japanese translated versions of both books were published by Tosui Shobo, Publishers & Co. in 2001 and 2004, respectively.

### Historically famous unique journalist

#### Burton Crane (1901-1963)



He was a pioneer as a non-Japanese who sang in Japanese as he had a hit, “Sake ga Nomitai” (“I want to drink sake”) in the beginning of the Showa era. He was an American journalist savvy in the economy and Japan, who was in his prime before, during and after WWII. At The Japan Advertiser, he was in charge of “A Sango” Six pence.” His wife, Esther Crane, was a personal secretary for the U.S. ambassador and a reporter in charge of Tokyo Society Notes in The Japan Advertiser.

J.B. Harris, whose Japanese name is Hideo Hirayanagi (1916-2004), was a lecturer for “English for a million people,” a radio program on English conversation, after WWII. He had worked for The Japan Advertiser before WWII and for The Japan Times during the war.

### Japan expert involved in propaganda about Japan and governance of Japan after WWII

#### Donald Beckman Brown (1905-1980)



He was a Japan Advertiser reporter from 1930 to 1940. After returning home, he worked on propaganda about Japan, working for the Office of War Information. After the war, he came back to Japan as head of the information division of the Allied occupation forces’ General Headquarters, engaged in various democratization measures via media.

Photo courtesy of Sachiko Mutsu

### Analyzing Japan via reporting experiences in the country

#### Joseph Newman (1913-1995)

Born in Massachusetts, he graduated from Williams College, Massachusetts. He came to Japan in 1937 after working for a wire news agency in New York. After working for The Japan Advertiser, he became a correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune in Tokyo from fall 1940 to October 1941, shortly before the beginning of the Japan-U.S. war. After returning home, he authored “Goodbye Japan,” which analyzes Japan, in 1942, based on his reporting that lasted for about four years.

### Journalists from the University of Missouri

The prestigious Missouri School of Journalism at the University of Missouri is America’s oldest journalism school. In the early half of the 20th century, one career path chosen by its graduates was to work for an English-language newspaper in East Asia, including The Japan Advertiser. The Missourians in Japan, mentored by advisers such as Glenn Babb, J. Morris Harris, Duke N. Parry and Vaughn Bryant, formed a network with their fellow alumni serving in China, creating a platform that enabled them to wield considerable influence over newspaper production. In 1933, The Japan Advertiser was bestowed with the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism from the School of Journalism.

[Main references] “Biographical Notes on Burton Crane,” by Harumichi Yamada in 2002, in “Communications Science Vol. 17” published by the Department of Communication Studies, Tokyo Keizai University.  
“Supplement on Burton Crane,” by Harumichi Yamada in 2008, in “Communications Science Vol. 28, 119-140” published by Department of Communication Studies, Tokyo Keizai University.  
Goodbye Japan, authored by Joseph Newman. A version translated into Japanese by Shigeiko Shinohara was published by The Asahi Shimbun Company in 1993.  
The English-language Press Networks in East Asia, 1918-1945, authored by Peter O’Connor and published in 2010 by Kent: Global Oriental.

\*Written and compiled by **Tomoko Matsunaga** (Associate Professor of Tokyo Keizai University)

# Comparison of articles in The Japan Advertiser and The Japan Times

American Robert Meiklejohn launched The Japan Advertiser in 1890. B.W. Fleisher and his son Wilfrid, also Americans, played central roles in The Japan Advertiser, which was reputed as the Far East's best-quality paper thanks to a wide network of American journalists based in Asia. While The Japan Times then was under the influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Japan Advertiser provided American views. It remains a very important medium as a source of information on how the U.S. viewed Japan's diplomacy, especially Japan's aggressive advancement into Asia.



Sept. 14, 1918 (front page)



July 31, 1919 (front page)

## Dispatch of editorial board member to Vladivostok Siberian Intervention (1918-1922)

The Japan Advertiser dispatched editorial board member Frank H. King, who later became an AP correspondent in London, to Vladivostok. ❶ The paper published King's detailed on-site reports with photos. ❷



March 5, 1919 (front page)



March 5, 1919 (front page)

## Photos with strong impacts March 1st Independence Movement in Korea (1919)

For example, photos of the March 1st Independence Movement that broke out in Seoul on March 1, 1919, depict local police apprehending student demonstrators.



June 5, 1928  
(Page 4)

## Swift response to development in China Huanggutun Incident (1928)

"Japanese, Blamed for Mukden Bomb Plot, Ordered to Seek Safety in Railway Zone; Wu Reported Dead and Chang Badly Hurt" (by Rengo, Dentsu, Tokyo Asahi and writer Frank H. Fedges.) is a lengthy article on the bombing incident that ran on the June 5 issue's front page. An editorial titled "Japan's Diplomacy in China" also ran. On June 6, an editorial "Hazards in Manchuria" warned against Japan's potential aggression in Manchuria. Meanwhile, The Japan Times published an editorial, "The Future in Manchuria" on June 7. The Japan Advertiser beat The Japan Times in the information gathering race.



Dec. 14, 1937 (front page)

## Euphemistic criticism of Japan in the midst of media control

### Race to slash 100 Chinese (1937)

In this infamous act, Japanese army officers Tsuyoshi Noda and Toshiaki Mukai allegedly competed to see which of them could kill 100 Chinese first in Nanking (Nanjing), which was on the verge of collapse. This page carries an article, "Contest to Kill First 100 Chinese With Sword Extended When Both Fighters Exceed Mark," for which The Japan Advertiser used Tokyo Nichi Nichi as sources. The Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun, which reported the killings, was praised domestically. However, American and European readers may have interpreted The Japan Advertiser's article as symbolizing the Japanese military's brutality. It can be presumed to be a euphemistic criticism of Japan when the country's mass media was strictly censored. (The Japan Times also reported this incident on the same day.)

# The Japan Advertiser offers views from the past

Tai Kawabata (Former chief editorial writer of The Japan Times)

Newspapers offer a window into how historical events that had significant impact on later generations were reported then, and what kinds of interpretations were given at that time to such events.

In Japan, reading English-language papers offers an interesting experience since their reporting and treatment of what is happening are often quite different from Japanese-language papers.

It is worth reading The Japan Advertiser, published by American journalist Benjamin Wilfrid Fleisher, and a rival paper of The Japan Times.

The dozen years preceding the paper's absorption in 1940 by The Japan Times saw such important events as the 1928 bomb explosion along the tracks of the Japanese-operated South Manchurian Railway in the outskirts of Mukden (Shenyang) to assassinate Manchurian warlord Chang Tso-lin (Zhang Zuolin); the 1931 Manchurian Incident; the 1932 establishment of Japan's puppet state Manchukuo; Japan's 1933 withdrawal from the League of Nations; and the 1937 start of the so-called China Incident — a series of precursor events that eventually led Japan to its devastating war with the U.S. and other Allied Powers.

A glimpse into The Advertiser's treatment of these events shows that while it generally took a rather detached stance on Japan's actions, it sometimes showed attitudes to Japan that cannot be subsumed under that characterization.

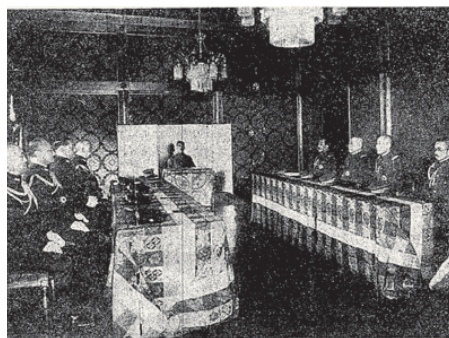
While the fate of Chang was unknown immediately after the June 4, 1928, train explosion, for which an officer of the Japanese Kwantung Army was later found to be responsible, The Advertiser in its editorial five days later said, "If Japan were to annex Manchuria, not only would she be sowing the seeds of a future conflict with Russia and of probable troubles with other Powers as well; but she would also be faced with the task of controlling large masses of hostile elements."

When the Manchurian Incident started in Mukden on Sept. 18, 1931. The Advertiser said, "Anti-Japanese sentiment in China may grow so strong as to endanger the lives and property of Japanese nationals in other localities of China," forcing the Japanese government to face "the almost impossible task of affording military protection to its nationals in scattered points of China."

To report the League of Nations' Feb. 24, 1933, decision by a vote of 42 to 1 to adopt the report and recommendations

of the Committee of 19 led by Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer-Lytton, 2nd Earl of Lytton, on the Manchurian problem following the Manchurian Incident, The Advertiser carried the full text of the Japanese delegate Yosuke Matsuoka's speech at the assembly starting from page one.

Its editorial on Feb. 26, 1933, praised Matsuoka by saying, "Although the outcome at Geneva is discouraging in so far as this country is concerned, a special tribute is due to Mr. Matsuoka, Japan's delegate at this critical juncture, for his admirable presentation of the Japanese case ... speaking clearly, boldly, straightforwardly, with first-hand knowledge of his subject."



**The Emperor Showa is seen presiding over a meeting of the Imperial Headquarters in a 1938 New Year photo appearing in the The Japan Advertiser.**

The Advertiser used a three-line four-column headline on page one when fighting took place between Japanese and Chinese troops on July 7, 1937, at Lukoukiao (Marco Polo Bridge) outside Peiping.

Its July 21, 1937, editorial appears to correctly predict what magnitude the hostilities between Japan and China would eventually assume. It said at its outset: "The Chinese situation has come to a most critical pass. At no time in the past six years, since the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, have relations between Japan and China been so strained as they are now, or the danger of a major conflict developing so great."

On Jan. 16, 1938, Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoye issued a notorious statement that said that since the Kuomintang Government, not understanding the true intention of Japan and instead pursuing a resistance war against Japan, does not consider establishing peace in the Far East, the Japanese government henceforth will not deal with it. When looked at from the viewpoint of later generations,

this statement represented a gravely misguided step that caused Japan to be further deeply bogged down in the war with China.

The Advertiser in its editorial three days later focused on another aspect of Konoye's statement — Japan's intention "to deal in the future with a new regime in China" — and only said in the conclusion, "That is the important policy which the country has fixed and which will orientate Japan's future activities in China."

In addition to correspondents to cover Japanese and Asian affairs, the paper had its own correspondent in Washington, Frederic William Wile, who regularly wrote a column "A LETTER FROM WASHINGTON," dealing with the American scene, including the activities of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The paper also had columns "A LETTER FROM LONDON" and "THE WEEK IN ENGLAND," written by various writers. It used bylines and foreign newspaper articles dealing with topical issues, including Hitler's Germany, the Spanish Civil War and Stalin's Russia.

The Advertiser from time to time carried articles written by Japanese government officials and military officers and well-known people from the private sector. On Sept. 22, 1933, it carried a long article written by Ryohei Uchida, a leading nationalist activist, with a headline "RYOHEI UCHIDA MAKES AN APPEAL FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH U.S." and an underline "Wants American Immigration Bill Amended, Free Hand for Japan in Asia, and Naval Parity for Japan."

The paper's "Readers in Council" carried letters from readers that sometimes reflected the prevalent social situation and atmosphere. A July 24, 1937, letter from the National Christian Council said that it was raising a ¥10,000 fund to comfort Japanese troops through such means as comfort bags, a religious film and dispatch of Christian messengers. Sanki Ichikawa, a well-known English philologist, then chairman of the Institute for Research in English Teaching, complained in his Nov. 6, 1937, letter that the Advertiser's report headlined "English Teachers Critical of Britain" on the Sino-Japanese situation did not correctly reflect a decision made by the annual conference of his institute.

Reading pages of The Advertiser will help the readers not only get the feel of the days when The Advertiser was robustly competing with The Japan Times, but also gain detailed knowledge of events happening in those days.

# Recommendation for The Japan Advertiser A valuable resource for reexploring Japan

**Tomoko Matsunaga** (Associate Professor of Communication Studies, Tokyo Keizai University)

Once hailed as “the Far East’s premier English-language newspaper,” The Japan Advertiser was a hub of news written by and for people on the move – missionaries, diplomats, merchants and journalists – who were based in Japan in the early half of the 20th century. Many of its reporters also worked as correspondents for American and British newspapers and wire services, including The London Times, The New York Times, AP and UP, enabling them to draw upon the experience and networks of contacts they had built up covering stories in the West, China and other parts of East Asia. Even after they left Japan, they continued to write as experts on all things Japanese and a fair number returned to this country during the Occupation, including alumni such as H.V. Redman, Burton Crane and Don Brown. Over the years from

before to after World War II, they shaped Western perceptions of Japan through their writings and other activities.

Today, we may wonder how they lived their lives in Japan and how they viewed the world. For answers, we can turn to The Japan Advertiser, which also served as a channel of lifestyle information for its globetrotting reporters and readers. Inside its pages are vivid records of the contemporary expatriate community – their social scene, life with their families and activities spanning church events, sports, fashion, cuisine, cinema, music and more. As a window to the day-to-day communication among these people on the move, the digital archives of The Japan Advertiser are a valuable resource for reexploring how early 20th century Japan appeared in the eyes of its foreign community.

## The digital archives are a helpful reference for various fields of study, including:

- Media history
- Journalism studies
- History of international relations
- East Asian studies
- Political/economic history
- Comparative cultural studies
- Japanology

## The paper reflected various readers’ needs.

Content ranged from information aimed at American and European residents to global news

The characteristics mentioned above are visible on the July 27, 1924, issue’s front page. At the top of the page, a Japanism-style photo shows movie stars in kimono cooling off at the waterfront. **1**

Below it is a list of summertime events in Karuizawa, a popular leisure destination for American and European residents. **2**

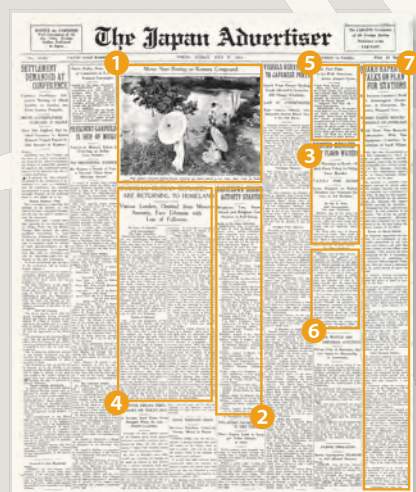
To the right is an article by Beijing correspondent Ben G. Kline. **3**

To the left is an article by Shanghai correspondent George E. Sokolsky. **4**

The page also carries wire news articles, including UP’s articles from Pisa, Italy, and Amsterdam, the Netherlands **5**,

as well as articles sent from London by Kokusai, a Japanese wire news service. **6**

Furthest to the right is an article arguing for the establishment of an earthquake research institute in Japan. **7**



# Valuable insights on Japan's past.

**Reiji Yoshida** (The Japan Times staff writer)

The Japan Advertiser, published from 1890 through 1940, was once touted as the top-quality-newspaper in the Far East and provided valuable information and views for English-reading people in Japan.

The paper, which was destined to later be acquired by The Japan Times, also served as a key training ground for many Western reporters, some of whom later became renowned journalists and were regarded as influential experts on Japan and the Far East when diplomatic tensions kept rising ahead of the breakout of the Pacific War in 1941.

"In addition to the vernacular press, Tokyo has several dailies printed in English. The best known of them, The Japan Advertiser, built up for itself an enviable reputation for the reliability and impartiality of its news," wrote John Morris, a British scholar who taught English literature at universities in Tokyo from 1938 through 1942.

"It's circulation was by no means confined to the foreigners in Tokyo. It has been the training ground for many journalists who have specialized in Far Eastern affairs and now enjoy world fame," he wrote in his book "Traveller from Tokyo," which was published in 1943.

Many of those reporters concurrently served as a Tokyo correspondent for major Western media, such as The Times in London, The New York Times, Associated Press and United Press.

Among them are Hugh Byas (1875-1945), who served as the chief editor at The Japan Advertiser and later wrote for The Times and The New York Times; and Joseph Newman, who had close contacts with a key member of the Soviet spy group headed by Richard Sorge in Tokyo. Newman thereby wrote a top-secret scoop for New York Herald Tribune in 1941.

"If you read an English-language newspaper published in Japan, you will find how it reported on a certain event is often quite different from that of Japanese newspapers. That's very interesting," said Tai Kawabata, former chief editorial writer of The Japan Times.

He indicated The Japan Advertiser repeatedly pointed out Japan's advancement into Manchuria and other parts of northern China could eventually lead to grave consequences for Japan - a warning that later turned into a harsh reality for the country.

Media experts meanwhile say The Japan Advertiser was also a precious hub for Western expats seeking lifestyle and community information in Japan.

Thus today's readers of the digital archives, provided by The Japan Times, will find vivid records of events and information for the foreign community from the late 19th century to mid-20th century, such as those regarding church events, sports, fashion, cuisine, cinema and music for Westerners living in Japan at that time.

## The Japan Times adds The Japan Advertiser

**Release date:** April 2019

**Period:** Oct. 1, 1913-Nov. 9, 1940

**Contents:** 72,657 pages, daily paper

**Specification:** IP address recognition

**Access plan:** 1) Optional purchase with "The Japan Times Archives"  
2) Independent purchase

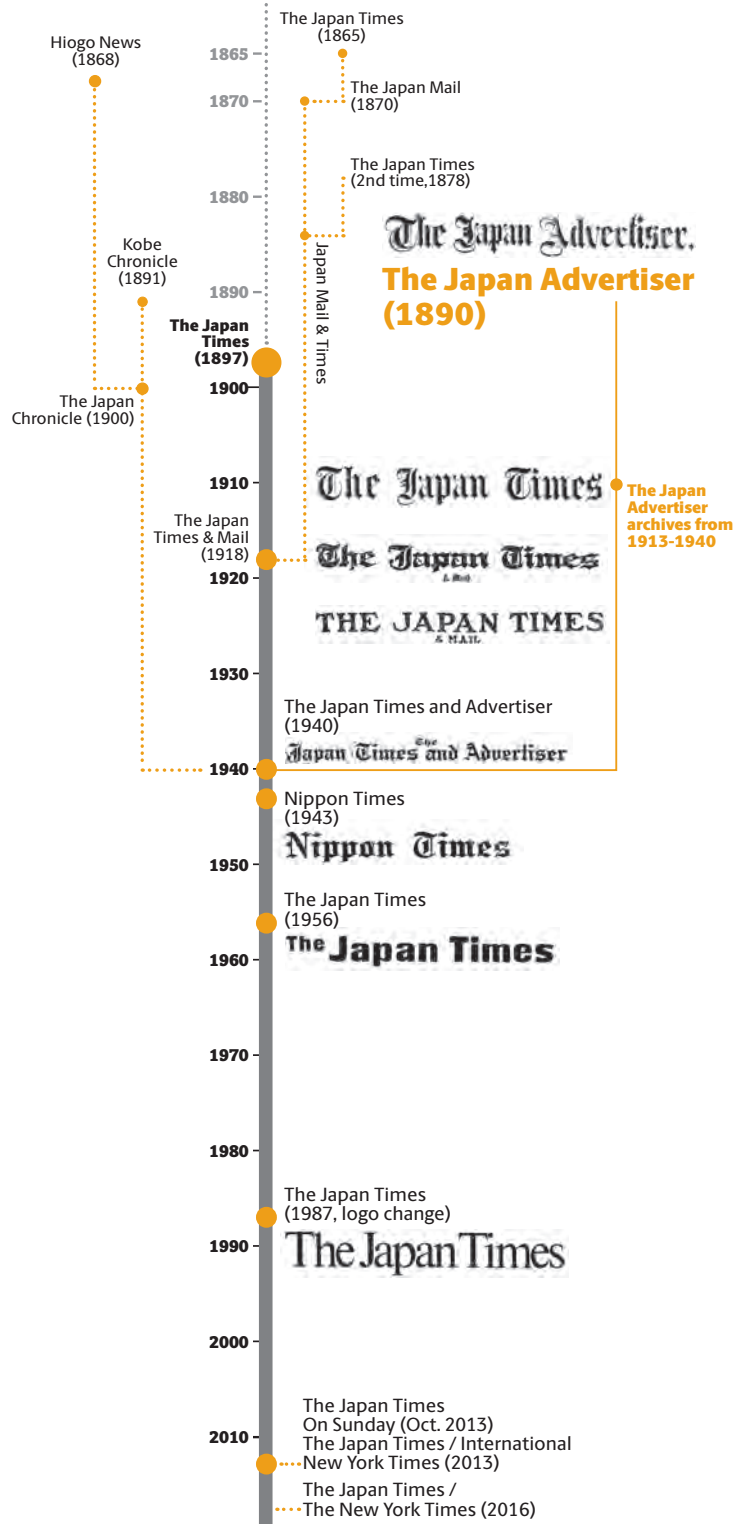
**Publisher:** The Japan Times, Ltd.

Circulation Sales Division

email: jtarchives@japantimes.co.jp

<http://jtimes.jp/archives>

### Timeline of English newspapers in Japan



**the japan times**

The Japan Times (2017, 120th Anniversary, Redesign)

