



# Witness to a nation in transition

The Japan Times expands its Digital Archives to include valuable English-language records dating back to the 1860s

**“The Japan Times of the 1860s”**

- 📅 **Release date:** April 27, 2018
- 📅 **Period:** September 1865-June 1866
- 📄 **Contents:** 223 pages, weekly paper, 4 to 8 pages per issue, information on foreign incoming and outgoing ships, domestic and foreign news, news on court trials, commercial ads, ads on embassies in Japan
- 🔍 **Specification:** IP address recognition
- 🔑 **Access plan:**
  - ① Optional purchase with “The Japan Times Archives”
  - ② independent purchase



The year 2018 is a big one that marks the 150th anniversary since the Meiji Restoration. The Japan Times will digitize content of the similarly titled The Japan Times published during the turbulent years of the end of the Edo Period to the birth of the Meiji government and add it to the archives.

The Japan Times will digitize the content of The Japan Times, founded by a British publisher on Sept. 8, 1865 (July 19 in the first year of Keio). This separate newspaper preceded the launch of today’s The Japan Times. The additional content — “The Japan Times of the 1860s” — contains contributions from Ernest Satow, a British diplomat who is said to have deeply influenced Japanese history, and other valuable information. Satow’s contributions include articles later referred to as “British Policy,” as well as translated diaries of Japanese delegates to Europe. It’s believed that Satow’s British Policy, submitted when he was only 22, was a major influence on the Meiji Restoration.

# the japan times

## THE JAPAN TIMES ARCHIVES

Publisher: The Japan Times, Ltd.  
Media Enterprise Dept., Circulation Division  
Tel: 03-3453-2337 | email: jtarchives@japantimes.co.jp | http://jtimes.jp/archives

# One of few resources to show Japanese society in the 1860s

The Japan Times will add some of the content from the original Japan Times, launched in 1865, to the Digital Archives. The publication is arguably one of the few remaining newspapers from that era that enables us to experience society at that point in time. To mark the release of “The Japan Times of the 1860s,” Sayuri Daimon, managing editor of The Japan Times, interviewed Sophia University professor Yuga Suzuki, who specializes in the history of journalism, about the early paper’s value as a historical source and the characteristics of its contents.

**Yuga Suzuki:** Professor in the Department of Journalism, Faculty of Humanities at Sophia University. Suzuki specializes in journalism and its history, international communication and mass media in Australia. He served as the head of the journalism department from April 1997 to March 1999. He obtained a doctorate of philosophy (journalism) degree from Sophia University in November 2001. Outside Sophia University, he is in charge of classes on mass communication, the history of newspapers, modern Japanese history, regional studies on Oceania and other subjects.

**Sayuri Daimon:** Managing editor of The Japan Times since October 2013. Daimon joined the company in 1991. She covered various fields ranging from politics to business as a staff writer and also worked as a desk editor before serving as domestic news division manager in 2006. She became deputy managing editor in 2008 and executive operating officer from July 2013.

**Daimon:** What do you think is the significance of the early Japan Times (1865-1866), the newest addition to our Digital Archives?

**Suzuki:** The fact that British diplomat Ernest Satow (1843-1929) contributed his “British Policy” articles to the paper, rather than to a Japanese-language publication, is proof of the newspaper’s significance.

**Daimon:** Why did Satow contribute his articles to The Japan Times in the first place?

**Suzuki:** The Japan Times was published in Yokohama. At that time, the foreign settlement in Yokohama was a small community with a couple of hundred people. Satow mentioned in his autobiography “A Diplomat in Japan” that he was an acquaintance of the publisher. I speculate that he was asked to contribute his articles, as he had expressed a variety of opinions on various occasions. The largest role of newspapers such as The Japan Times or The Japan Herald, which was launched a little earlier than the former, was to convey things without restraint. That was something valuable.

**Daimon:** Did the publisher manage to run articles written in an open manner because the paper was published in a foreign settlement?

**Suzuki:** Indeed. The paper could be published because its base was in the foreign settlement during a period leading to the opening of Japan’s borders, although filled with the battle cry, “Revere the Emperor and expel the barbarians.” It would have been

subject to a crackdown if it were a Japanese-language newspaper running similar articles, or a foreign language newspaper published in an area other than such a settlement.

**Daimon:** Satow contributed his articles in English, but do you think he expected that his articles could be leaked and shared over time among the general Japanese-speaking populace across Japan?

**Suzuki:** I assume it exceeded his expectations when his articles were translated into Japanese and became widely available, as opposed to him expecting a leak. I suspect that there were people behind the scenes who found his articles interesting, or somebody thought their contents could yield influence.

**Daimon:** Additionally, the paper carried Satow’s translations of records of Japanese delegates who traveled to Europe.

**Suzuki:** I found them quite interesting, but I’m not so sure why the paper ran them. Was it because of (publisher) Charles Rickerby’s request? I suspect Satow’s title as diplomat and his affiliation had a certain level of influence. However, I don’t know for sure.

**Daimon:** We managed to include this version of The Japan Times because the actual copies remained.

**Suzuki:** The fact that copies of The Japan Times from 1865 remain and, despite several missing issues, span a little less than a year means they have historic value as a source. There remain very few copies of The Japan Commercial News, which was published around the same time, and the same goes for



Sophia University professor Yuga Suzuki (right) and The Japan Times Managing Editor Sayuri Daimon

BY YOSHIAKI MIURA

earlier issues of The Japan Gazette.

**Daimon:** As for the characteristics of the paper, part of what I read included a shipping-related story featured on the front page. It stated something along the lines of, “we discuss commercial issues through this publication,” so I guess the publisher intended to focus on such an aspect.

**Suzuki:** I’d say the newspaper’s distinguishing aspect is that they carried economic news from the beginning. It’s unique in comparison to other papers such as the Gazette or The Japan Herald, also published in the 1860s.

**Daimon:** Didn’t other papers have economic features in their content?

**Suzuki:** No, they didn’t have such features. The fact that The Japan Times placed importance on commercial issues means that such topics held significance during that time. What did Yokohama or the foreign settlement mean to the people involved in publishing the paper? A port was used as a place to connect with the world and its



people. The most effective means to have a connection with the world is through commerce.

**Daimon:** In the Meiji Era (1868–1912), Japanese-language papers began to be published. Do you think Japanese people were inspired by The Japan Times when publishing their own newspapers?

**Suzuki:** Yes. I think English newspapers in the 1860s in their early days created runways. They planted what a newspaper is in the minds of the Japanese, including article content, English aside.

**Daimon:** From The Japan Times' content, we could grasp what the society was like back in those days. For example, we could see what the most committed crime was at the time.

**Suzuki:** Exactly. I read an article reporting something was stolen from The Japan Times office. I'm very interested in how much a newspaper depicts a society. In this sense, a newspaper is a tool used to mirror society. As a researcher, I find historic value and significance in newspapers as a source in this sense.

**Daimon:** The Japan Times also ran some local stories.

**Suzuki:** There were some articles on sports, including horse and boat racing. Britain placed a regiment in Yokohama to protect its citizens, and it was military personnel who started those races. The paper also ran reports on cricket and riflery. We can see from a report in the paper that a soccer club was created around 1866. These articles were pieces of information for a local community, rather than sports coverage. In a sense, The Japan Times was positioned as a local newspaper.

**Daimon:** Additionally, trade was another topic in the paper; silk was extensively covered.

**Suzuki:** At that time, silk was what was mainly reported on. The large amount of coverage meant there was a social need there. Raw silk was transported to Yokohama from Gunma Prefecture, a major production area.

**Daimon:** That silk was exported abroad from Yokohama.

**Suzuki:** Right. That was why the coverage was relatively larger, regarding articles that mentioned when a ship entered the port. Much of information carried in Yokohama Mainichi Shimbun, the first daily newspaper in Japanese, was about that in its earlier days.

**Daimon:** I also got the impression that the writing style that we see today was not yet established at the time, so I felt that the writers expressed their opinions in the articles. "We" was often used and it is interesting to know what kind of opinions they had.

**Suzuki:** I see. People engaged in the printing industry started these publications at that time because they could receive subscription fees, creating new revenue. They gradually learned people would read



Professor Yuga Suzuki shows his research materials at his university during an interview.

BY YOSHIAKI MIURA



Abstracts of records of a Japanese delegation to Europe, translated by Ernest Satow, published in the Sept. 29, 1865 issue.

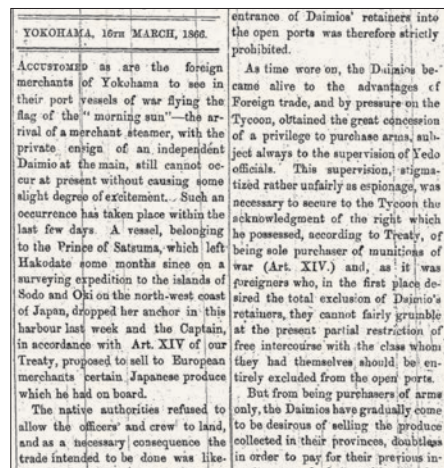
and buy the paper if articles were written in a certain way, with such a discovery leading to the creation of journalists.

**Daimon:** Meanwhile, do you think The Japan Times was used as a tool to understand Japan?

**Suzuki:** Yes. The Japan Times was also delivered abroad about twice a month, in conjunction with ship departures on foreign routes. Such editions were a collection of compiled articles from The Japan Times, chosen especially for overseas readers. Editors were conscious to run many articles on Japan's culture and society. The Japan Times indeed played a role in conveying Japanese society and culture by publishing editions for overseas readers.

**Daimon:** We'd be happy if many people were to look at the early Japan Times in the archives. Again, could you tell us what the historical value of this newspaper is for researchers?

**Suzuki:** It is one of a few sources that helps us understand Japan and its society back in the 1860s when the country was moving



Ernest Satow's formerly anonymous article, published in the March 16, 1866 issue, that would later be part of a compilation known as "British Policy."

toward its opening around the end of Edo Period (1603–1867). There were some Japanese newspapers launched in the latter half of the 1860s, but they were under the Tokugawa shogunate and thus were published in a restricted environment to a certain degree.

**Daimon:** So, would you say The Japan Times was not under the shogunate's control, and so its articles were written with few constraints?

**Suzuki:** I think what should be noted is that articles in English newspapers were created in an unrestricted manner. Those articles were written in a subjective fashion, showing the viewpoints of the people and representing a contrast to what was recorded as "factual" in official government documents. Furthermore, we can observe a journalistic procedure being gradually established through these papers. We are able to see actual copies of The Japan Times spanning a certain time period, so they are indeed important documents.

## Words of recommendation

# Digitalization of valuable sources enables us to look at the society in the mid-1860s

## Sending out information on Japan from Yokohama

YUGA SUZUKI

SOPHIA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR  
(SPECIALIZING IN THE HISTORY OF JOURNALISM)

The earlier and homonymous Japan Times, the most recent addition to the Digital Archives, was initially launched on Sept. 8, 1865, as one of the first English newspapers in Japan. It was located in Yokohama's foreign settlement and published by British banker Charles Rickerby, who was the former manager of The Central Bank of Western India's Yokohama branch. It was published weekly with four to eight pages.

Information from overseas had begun flowing into Yokohama following the opening of its port in 1859, thanks to the launch of The Japan Herald in 1861, The Japan Punch in 1862 and The Japan Commercial News in 1863, followed by the publication of the 1865 Japan Times.

Carrying shipping information, commercial advertisements, domestic and international news and trial records, the early Japan Times was a valuable resource, showing Japanese society through the eyes of foreigners during changing times at the end of the Edo Period (1603–1867) around the opening of the country's borders. It's very interesting that we could get a glimpse of a foreign settlement in the middle of the 1860s via not only trial records, chamber of commerce records and consular public notices, but also auction information and telegram advertisements published in the paper. The Japan Times (1865) dispatched correspondents to London and Paris, allowing the paper to send out information from Yokohama to the world.

The newly digitized Japan Times has 42 valuable issues, from the inaugural edition dated Sept. 8, 1865, to the June 30, 1866, issue, which enables us to more clearly grasp the society and its surroundings at the end of the Edo Period.

The 1865 Japan Times had a motto, "A Commercial Political and General Weekly Newspaper," claiming to place the utmost

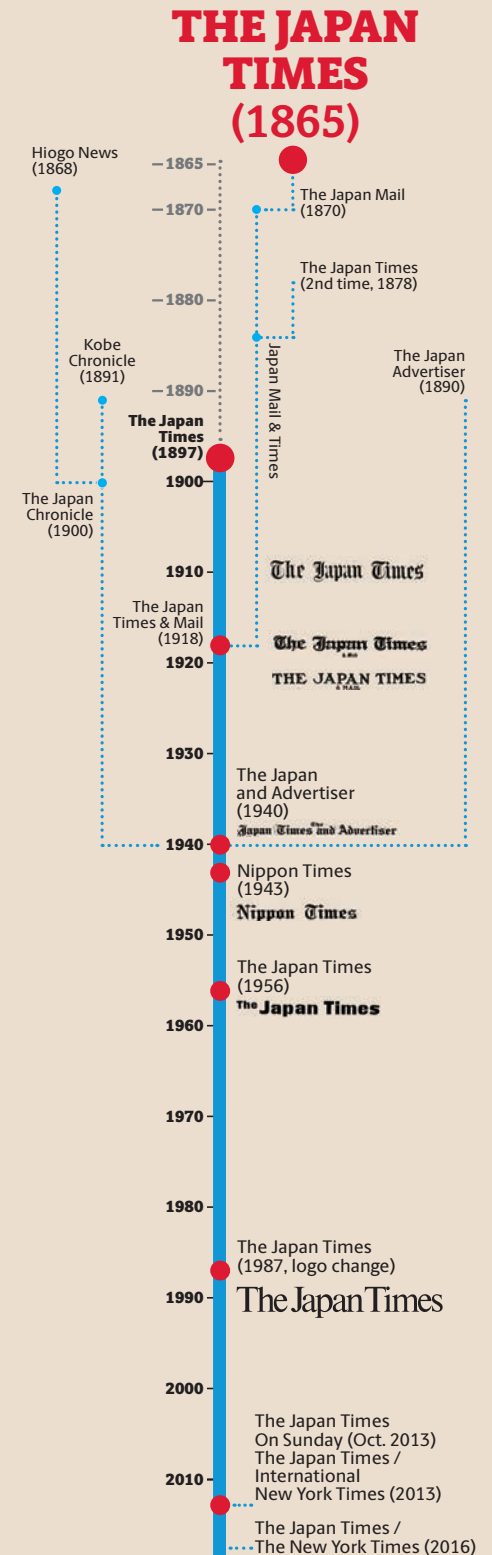
importance on trade. The paper carried many economic stories, including the export and import status of trade goods and market information. At that time, the opening of Yokohama Port heralded the emergence of a giant Jardine Matheson & Co. trading house branch (similar to the establishment of Glover Trading Co. in Nagasaki), while the Kobe Port was slower to open. I assume the paper sought to call for issues surrounding the Japanese economy.

At the same time, the paper also ran translated abstracts of records of a Japanese delegation to Europe (from the second issue) by Ernest Satow, an interpreter in the British Japan Consular Service, and his "British Policy" articles as well, which were carried three times in the 28th issue and others. The latter saw a great deal of reaction after its translated editions in Japanese circulated in the country.

Probably thanks to these contents, Kaiyakusha translation organization (successor to Bansho Shirabesho, or Institute for the Study of Barbarian Books) published translated editions of the paper as Nihon Shimbun. Some Japanese language newspapers often carried translated articles of the paper, cited as "translated from Yokohama's Times newspaper."

Besides The Japan Times (1865) included in the Digital Archives, the publisher used to publish The Japan Times' Daily Advertiser, a daily that mainly featured advertisements, and The Japan Times' Overland Mail that ran almost every two weeks that was produced in accordance with the schedule of outbound ships.

The Japan Times from 1865 that is now part of the Digital Archives enables us to understand aspects of the foreign settlement at the end of the Edo Period from various perspectives, so I can say that these issues are a valuable English medium that enable us to learn about politics, the economy, society and culture from those days.



the japan times

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