

早稲田法学部

THEME 16 春

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THE IDEA OF JAPAN [I] WEEK 5

The Foreign Ministry and the Image of Japan

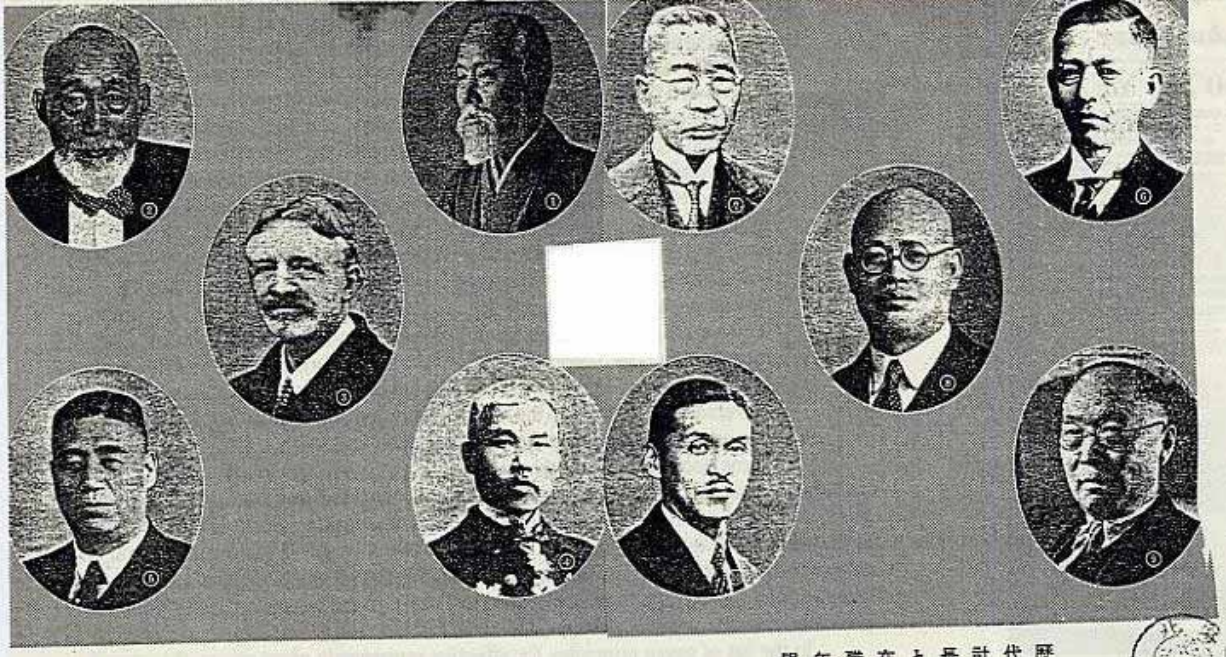
- The Gaimushō Jōhōbu* takes charge
- The Japan Times* and the *Gaimushō*
- Japan's dual image in the West
- Japan's self-image in picture postcards

Reading 1: The *Gaimushō Jōhōbu* and its successors: changing time frame

THE *GAIMUSHŌ JŌHŌBU* [外務省情報部] began operations in April 1921 as a department within the *Gaimushō*. Its purpose was to present a favourable image of Japan to the world, and within Japan. Its institutional successors were the *Naikaku Jōhōiinkai* (1936) and the *Naikaku Jōhōkyoku* (1940). During the twenty years 1921-1941, Japanese propaganda and the organisation and collection of Japanese news became increasingly professional and effective, extending the Japanese viewpoint into East Asia and beyond. At the same time Japan's international relations came under increasing strain, and a more aggressive 'young Officers' group came to dominate the *Gaimushō*.

Situation	Propaganda agency	News Agency
1890s-1921 Informal arrangements in China, Korea and the USA	<i>Gaimushō</i> : but no propaganda dept.	Reuters and, after 1913, Kokusai
1921-26 Shidehara diplomacy: Japan makes her case through well-financed propaganda and economic foreign policy, with some takeovers	<i>Gaimushō Jōhōbu</i>	Kokusai Tsūshinsha
1926-1932 Cold War: Newspaper takeovers, subsidies for journalists and Japanese news agencies. After 1931 Manchurian Incident, a huge increase in propaganda and the China news effort. But in October 1932, the Lytton Report rejects the case made in Japanese propaganda and questions Japan's national integrity.	<i>Gaimushō Jōhōbu</i>	Nihon Shimbun Rengōsha (Rengō)
1933-1941 Endgame: In 1933 Japan walks out of the League of Nations, begins takeover of all news operations in China, amalgamates Japan press and tightens press control in Japan. In 1936, Dōmei sets up and the <i>Gaimushō</i> cedes control of propaganda to the cabinet. By late 1940, there are no independent press organs in any language in Japan, China or Korea and cabinet control of news and propaganda	Naikaku Jōhōiinkai (1936); <i>Naikaku Jōhōbu</i> (1937); Naikaku Jōhōkyoku (1940)	1936: Dōmei Tsūshinsha (Dōmei).
1941-1945 Wartime press: Total press control in Japan and East Asia but failure to establish Japanese-language press abroad.	Naikaku Jōhōkyoku (1940)	Dōmei

Reading 2: Government and the 4th Estate: **The revolving door at the Japan Times**



Presidents of the *Japan Times* 1897-1945 1. Yamada Toshiharu March 1897-January 1911 2. Zumoto Motosada January 1911-April 1914 3. John Russell Kennedy April 1914-September 1916, and March 1918-December 1921 4. Miyabara Jirō September 1916-March 1918 5. Hattori Bunshirō January 1922-February 1923 6. Tanaka Tokichi March 1924-April 1925 7. Itō Yonejirō April 1925-December 1929 8. Date Gen'ichirō January 1932-December 1932 9. Sheba Sometarō "Representative" January 1922-January 1933 [period when JT was an 'anonymous association'] 10. Ashida Hitoshi January 1933-December 1939 11. Gō Satoshi December 1939-August 1945

IN JAPAN'S PROPAGANDA NETWORK, there were frequent exchanges of senior personnel between the *Gaimushō Jōhōbu* and its successors, the news agency Kokusai Tsūshinsha and its successors, and the *Japan Times*. Some examples:

1. **Tanaka Tokichi** headed the *Gaimushō Jōhōbu* from 1922-24, moved to the *Japan Times* from 1924-25, returned to run the Chūgai Shōgyō, became President of Dōmei Tsūshinsha in 1936, and in 1943 headed the Nihon Shimbunkai and the Dai Tōa Shinbun Renmei.
2. **Date Gen'ichirō** went from editing the Kokumin Shinbun to working under Kennedy at the Kokusai Tsūshinsha in 1913. In 1919 he accompanied Kennedy to Versailles to study western news management, returned to edit the Yomiuri Shinbun, helped set up the *Gaimushō Jōhōbu* in 1920, ran the Shin-Tōhō Tsūshinsha from 1921-26, then moved to the *Gaimushō Jōhōbu* until 1932, when he became President of the *Japan Times*.
3. **Ashida Hitoshi**, Date's successor at the *Japan Times* from 1933-40, was an ex-*Gaimushō Jōhōbu* official who simultaneously served in the Diet as a Seiyūkai member, and the *Naikaku Jōhōbu* from 1937-40.

Reading 3: The Dual Image of Japan and Japan's propaganda aims

THE HISTORIAN ANTONY BEST HAS WRITTEN:

...from the time of the Great War onwards, British policy in East Asia was characterized by a profound ambivalence about Japan and especially its potential threat to British interests. This arose because the policy makers within Whitehall held a double-sided image of Japan. On the one hand it was portrayed as a nation bent on regional domination, but on the other was seen as a backward power that lacked the resources necessary to achieve its goals. This dual image had its foundations in the Foreign Office's day-to-day experience of Japanese diplomacy and the observations made by the embassy in Tokyo about the political, economic and social life of Japan. In addition, it was influenced by commonly held racial assumptions about the inability of non-white nations to confront the modern Western states. The effect of this dual image was that Britain did not seek Japan's friendship, but at the same time did not view it as an irreconcilable enemy. This in turn helps to explain why Britain was prepared to see the end of the alliance in 1921, why it prevaricated about appeasing Japan in the 1930s, and finally why it underestimated the Japanese threat in 1940–41 (Best 2002: pp.3–4).

NATURALLY, JAPAN SOUGHT TO COUNTER the impression that it represented a threat, (a 'Menace'), to Western interests in East Asia. Few ordinary Japanese saw their nation as anything like the aggressive power pictured in the West, and the effort to dispel this aggressive image is one of the most consistent threads in the fabric of Japanese propaganda.

Similarly, while few Japanese would have agreed with the notion of Japan as a backward nation, it is interesting that there seems to have been little effort spent on correcting this picture and that, if anything, Japanese propaganda in the modern period emphasised the weight that Japanese traditionalism carried in the affairs of state. Japanese postcard propaganda seemed to highlight the threat to Japan from abroad, and Japan's weakness compared to the West (see below). These comparisons fostered a sense of national emergency among ordinary Japanese, but the subtext of national weakness crept into much that was written about Japan by foreign observers.

At the same time, the growth of a nationalism based on unarguable, theistic ideas and sentiments and of a militarism that saw no need to apologise for itself or to explain itself in terms palatable to Western readers, merged fitfully with this image of backwardness and weakness and, by the actions of its advocates and the consequences of their ideas, frequently contradicted the propaganda that was produced. Like British foreign policy, Japanese foreign policy and therefore Japanese propaganda were confined within the parameters of this dual image.

Reading 4: Picture postcards: Talking up the national emergency



JAPANESE POSTCARD PROPAGANDA regularly showed Japan lagging behind the other powers in military readiness, coming off worst in international relations, running the least productive colonies, the smallest merchant shipping tonnage and the paltriest commercial aircraft strength. Japanese were often shown as weaker than the other races (below), and more prone to wasteful lifestyles, such as expensive weddings.



Combined with a strong emphasis on the threat from abroad (above), such invidious comparisons helped foster a sense of national emergency among the Japanese people, the primary target of postcard propaganda, but the subtext of national weakness crept into writings on Japan by foreign observers.



(left) Japan's commercial air and merchant shipping fleets compared to those of Western nations. The tiniest plane and the smallest ship represent Japan.

QUESTIONNAIRE	CLASS NAME	WEEK NO.
NAME	STUDENT NO.	DATE
1. WHAT WAS THIS CLASS/FILM ABOUT?		
2. WHAT ARE THE MAIN QUESTIONS IT RAISES?		
3. WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?		
4. ANY OTHER COMMENTS?		