

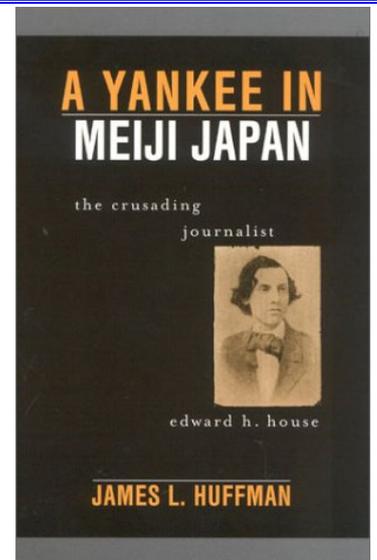
TWO PROPAGANDISTS? MILES VAUGHN AND E.H. HOUSE

INTRODUCTION

This week, we will be discussing Miles Vaughn and Edward H. House. We'll begin with a brief discussion of the career of the journalist and media entrepreneur Miles "Peg" Vaughn. Then our Guest Speaker Professor James Huffman will give an account of the work and life of Edward H. House and address the question of House's work/identity as a propagandist.

Professor Huffman is the H. Orth Worth Professor of History at Wittenberg University, Ohio, USA. and a world authority on the Meiji press. His research on the related history of the English-language press of Japan led to the publication in 2003 of "A Yankee in Meiji Japan: the crusading journalist, Edward H. House" (Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield).

Alongside his pioneering study of House and his work, Professor Huffman wrote a useful Introduction to a collection of House's writings. As there is only one copy of the relevant Volume in Waseda library, I have reproduced an edited form of the Introduction below (Readings 6-12).



1. MILES 'PEG' VAUGHN: REPORTING EAST ASIA, 1924-48

AND SEE [HERE](#)



1. In the 1920s and 1930s, many Western journalists in East Asia occupied an ambiguous position in relation to the Japanese authorities. The American Miles Vaughn (1891-1949), who was based in Tokyo as the Manager for the Far East for United Press from 1924-33 and 1945-49, came to Japan following a career that began on newspapers in Kansas, in his native Missouri and with UP in South America. In 1933, Vaughn returned to UP New York as a manager with special responsibility for East Asian News, then came back in 1946 as a Vice-President of UP and Far East Manager, staying until his death by drowning in 1949.

Vaughn first set up the UP bureau in a building shared with Mitsunaga Hoshio's Dentsū news agency (*Nippon Dempō Tsūshinsha*). Vaughn got on close terms with Mitsunaga and eventually helped organise a news sharing arrangement with Dentsū in Japan in exchange for a similar arrangement in the US. Vaughn also moved among a carefree crowd of young Western journalists associated with the *Japan Advertiser*, initially sharing a house with one of the *Advertiser's* editors, Frank Hedges.

At the time, Dentsū's less well-known advertising division was close to some official bodies in Japan but, compared with Kokusai, the semi-official news agency subsidised by the Foreign Ministry, Dentsū was a relatively independent entity, often locked in head-to-head competition with Kokusai and its successor, Rengō, (*Nihon Shinbun Rengōsha*) until 1936 when its news agency was amalgamated with Rengō to create Japan's most effective pre-war news agency, Dōmei, in 1936.

Like Dentsū, the *Japan Advertiser's* American owner-editors B.W. and Wilfrid Fleisher and

their longest serving editor, Hugh Byas, did their best to maintain their editorial integrity and at the same time avoid directly contradicting the official version of events carried, for example, in the *Japan Times*. While it walked this narrow tightrope in Japan, the *Advertiser* stood at the centre of a network of newspapers and agencies in China that increasingly challenged Japanese influence and media power there.

Among the agencies moving in the *Advertiser* network's China orbit were Dentsū and Vaughn's new UP set-up. Thus, socially and professionally, Miles Vaughn was associated with some independent voices in East Asia at a time of sharpening polarities in the public sphere between pro-Chinese (but also pro-American) and pro-Japanese media. These polarities were fought between three networks: two forming around the foreign-owned *Advertiser* and the *Japan Chronicle*, based in Kōbe; a third centred on Japan's Foreign Ministry.

2. MILES VAUGHN AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NETWORK



2. Vaughn and UP's cordial relations with Dentsū and young staffers at the *Advertiser* would appear to place his sympathies with the *Advertiser* network, but Vaughn also enjoyed what might be called a special relationship with the Foreign Ministry Information Bureau (*Gaimushō Jōhōbu*), as did his housemate Frank Hedges and another close associate, Roderick Matheson, both of whom would become influential writers at the Foreign Ministry network's English-language flagship, the *Japan Times*.

The contrast between Vaughn's social life in outspoken, 'liberal', independent journalistic circles and his discreet professional closeness to authorities at the Foreign Ministry and Army Ministry was not uncommon at a time when Japan's plans for East Asia were more opaque and less obviously threatening than they have become in retrospect. Anglophone journalists in East Asia were busy people and semi-official journalism was a well-paid, fast-track career option chosen by many young newcomers. Journalists such as Henry Kinney and George Gorman of the South Manchuria Railway and the *Manchuria Daily News*, H.G.W. Woodhead of the *Peking & Tientsin Times* and the *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury*, George Bronson Rea, W.H. Donald and Patrick Gallagher of Shanghai's *Far Eastern Review*, Malcolm Kennedy of Reuters and Rengō, John Russell Kennedy of the *Japan Times* and Kokusai, and Vere Redman of *Contemporary Japan*, the *Japan Times* and, eventually, the British embassy propaganda bureau, and many others found plenty of work as official storytellers for Japan and were not treated as social pariahs by their more principled colleagues.

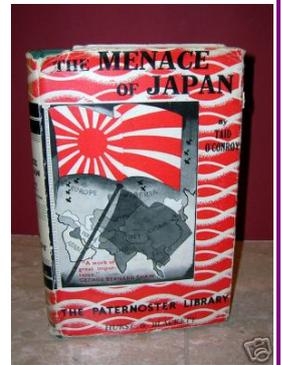
Certainly, the features pages of local English-language newspapers such as the *Japan Chronicle* and semi-official organs like the *Far Eastern Review* and the *Japan Times* indulged long-standing vendettas between individual journalists, but the position of some journalists opposed to Japanese incursions in China did not always guarantee them a place on the moral high ground. Some, like G.E. Morrison and Thomas Millard, had left conventional journalism to become highly paid consultants to, respectively, the post-1911 Chinese Republic and its Guomindang successors in Nanking (Nanjing). Other pro-Chinese journalists such as J.B. Powell of the *China Weekly Review* lost American converts to the Chinese cause by their readiness to look the other way during the Guomindang round-ups and public decapitations of Communists in 1927-28.

At the same time, a significant pro-Japanese consensus had developed among Western settlers in China and Japan who shared Miles Vaughn's 'realistic' view of China as a failed state and

a morass of venality where Chinese solutions could never solve Chinese problems, and where the most urgent need was uncompromising intervention by the one nation best qualified and most willing to bang heads together and sort out the Chinese chaos: Japan.

Vaughn addressed the pro-Japanese consensus among his fellow Westerners, but he did not stop at voicing such opinions in an individual capacity. Vaughn's influential position at UP was not lost on the Foreign Ministry network and he soon got into the business of propagating his ideas on Japan's behalf. In return, Vaughn and other Western journalists enjoyed easy access to senior Japanese sources, military and civilian. This meant advance briefings, leaks, 'world beats' or scoops that other journalists never came close to, impeccably authorized field passes in militarized areas and invitations to social gatherings where they could hear the Japanese point of view unfiltered by official briefings.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, restricted cable and telephone channels and intense censorship meant that Western journalists in Japan were effectively working under a news blackout, especially as far as events in China were concerned. Tokyo journalists had to rely on Foreign Ministry statements and hearsay. People like Hugh Byas and Wilfrid Fleisher, writing, respectively, for *The Times* and *New York Times*, and the *New York Tribune* had cultivated embassy sources who kept them in touch to the degree that diplomatic staff themselves were in the know, (and not all were), but the *Manchester Guardian's* Japan correspondent, Morgan Young, was kept at bay by the Tokyo Embassy, mainly because as editor of the *Japan Chronicle*, his critical line on events in China was seen as an impediment to accommodations Britain sought to reach with Japan at a time when Whitehall saw the 'Bolshevik Menace' as a greater threat to British interests in East Asia than the 'Menace of Japan', to cite one of the most popular titles of the day ▶



3. THE MANCHURIAN INCIDENT AND THE TOKYO NEWS BLACK-OUT



On the evening of September 18 1931, events in Manchuria shifted the world's attention to East Asia. But for the news blackout in Tokyo, Miles Vaughn's pro-Japanese cards might well have stood out on the table, but because most other Tokyo journalists were in the dark, their reports also relied on official briefings, highlighting the difference between despatches from correspondents on the ground in China, and those based in Tokyo. Hugh Byas's *New York Times* reports from Tokyo were completely at odds with Hallett Abend's *New York Times* despatches from China: eventually their common editor threw up his hands and ran their despatches in parallel columns. In common with Byas, like the *Tribune's* Wilfrid Fleisher and James Young of the Hearst chain's International News Service, Vaughn's Tokyo reports contradicted the news as reported by his colleagues on the ground in Manchuria, and early the following year in Shanghai.

In the weeks following 18 September 1931, despite consistent disclaimers by Japanese officials quoted in the *Japan Times* and trusted international media like the *New York Times*, a consensus developed among English-language journalists in China that the Incident and the succeeding occupation were contrived by Japan. This skeptical view spread to most foreign correspondents in East Asia and, by 1932, to their colleagues in the US and Britain. However, in 1937, following the outbreak of full-scale Sino-Japanese hostilities after the Marco Polo Bridge

Incident (*Rokōkyō jiken*), Vaughn broke with this consensus in a memoir:

The Japanese version of the affair – and it generally agreed with that of our correspondents in Mukden – was that, on the night of the 18th, at about 10.30 o'clock, two or three companies of Chang Hsueh-liang's [Zhang Xueliang's] troops...deliberately destroyed a section of the South Manchurian Railway...(Vaughn 1937: 247).

- but this was disingenuous. In the autumn of 1931, the Japanese version of events was far from being anything like 'generally agreed' among United Press correspondents. Either Vaughn was, like most of the Tokyo international press corps, simply out of touch with events on the ground or he was willing to rewrite versions of events that even his own colleagues had reported.

In mid-December 1931, when Vaughn was sending UP despatches from Tokyo stating Japan's new Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi's resolute opposition to any annexation of territory, Frederick Kuh was filing UP reports from Mukden, labeled 'uncensored', which described Japan's systematic seizure of all political, financial and commercial organizations in Manchuria (May 1973: 517). In their reports and in later memoirs, none of the UP correspondents who went to Mukden or who were based there – neither Kuh, nor Demaree C. Bess in Peking, nor H.R. Ekins in Shanghai – gave credence to the Japanese version of the events of 18 September and succeeding weeks in which Japan took control of Manchuria and surrounding territories.

In December 1931, Vaughn made a broadcast to the US for NBC. Before going on the air, Vaughn asked Shidehara Kijūrō, then Foreign Minister, for a statement of Japanese policy. At the time, the 'Shidehara diplomacy' that had prevailed over hardline Japanese thinking at the London Naval Conference was one factor encouraging Western expectations that the Minseito cabinet had the Manchurian situation in hand and would be able to rein in the army. During his broadcast, Vaughn read out Shidehara's statement, which sounded a pacific note without making overt concessions to those who felt Japan had no business in China (Vaughn 1937: 294). This broadcast may have helped buy time for Japan at this stage in the Manchurian campaign.

4. KEEPING THE GATE IN TOKYO AND NEW YORK

Between 1924-33, as UP's Far East manager, partly for sound journalistic reasons (sticking to the facts; not reporting rumours), partly for want of other information in a closely controlled information environment, but also as a result of his closeness to Japan's Foreign Ministry, Vaughn's UP reports and those he approved for dispatch from China to UP New York echoed the Foreign Ministry version of events. From 1933-46, back in the US in a management role at UP headquarters, Vaughn held a key gatekeeper position with the final say on the content of despatches from East Asia. During these years, he gained a reputation among UP correspondents in China for toning down UP reports of Japanese incursions in China, and for inserting the spirit and sometimes entire passages from the despatches of Japan's national news agency from 1936-1945, Dōmei, into UP reports before sending them on to UP member newspapers across the United States (Mackinnon and Friesen 1987: 137).

In 1946, Vaughn returned to Tokyo to revive the UP operation in East Asia. In 1948 he published a book intended to highlight the 'ordinariness' of the emperor, in the spirit of the new constitution. On January 30 1949, his death in a duck-hunting accident in Tokyo bay alongside Ueda Teizo, President of Dentsū, led to the establishment of the Vaughn-Ueda Prize for International Reporting the following year, honouring the memory of both men. The prize, which has been described as 'Japan's Pulitzer', expressly recognizes and rewards excellence in international

correspondence and journalistic contributions to international understanding. It has since been awarded to some of the best and brightest of Japanese foreign correspondents.

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5. THE 2005 VAUGHN-UEDA PRIZE FOR INTERNATIONAL REPORTING

ボーン上田賞：毎日新聞の國枝記者ら 2 人に

「ボーン・上田記念国際記者賞」選考委員会は 22 日、05 年度の受賞者に、毎日新聞ロサンゼルス支局の國枝すみれ記者（38）と共同通信外信部の砂田浩孝記者（32）の 2 人を決定した。

國枝記者は、45 年 8 月 9 日の長崎市への原爆投下の翌月に外国人記者として初めて現地入りした米紙記者の未公表原稿を 60 年ぶりに発見したスクープ報道が認められた。一方、砂田記者は、核拡散問題に関するムシャラフ・パキスタン大統領への単独インタビューが評価された。授賞式は 4 月 3 日、東京都千代田区の日本記者クラブで開かれる。

同賞は 50 年に設けられ、毎年、優れた報道活動で国際理解に貢献したジャーナリスト個人に贈られる。毎日新聞記者の受賞は 9 人目。

國枝記者は 05 年 6 月 17 日の毎日新聞朝刊で「幻の長崎原爆ルポ 60 年ぶり発見」との記事を掲載した。米国民の核兵器に対する意識の低さに衝撃を受けたことをきっかけに取材を始め、さまざまな文献や資料を調べる過程で未公表ルポの存在を知った。選考委は「日本はもとより海外でも原爆の悲惨さを再認識させ、核の問題を問い直す契機となった」と評価した。

國枝記者は 91 年に毎日新聞入社。英文毎日編集部、外信部、福岡総局（現福岡本部）勤務などを経て、03 年から現職。

（毎日新聞 2006 年 2 月 22 日）



Mainichi correspondent wins major Japan-U.S. journalism prize

Sumire Kunieda, the Mainichi's Los Angeles correspondent, has won the prestigious Vaughn-Ueda International Journalist Prize [*sic*] for 2005, organizers said Wednesday.

Kunieda receives the prize in recognition of her 2005 coverage of unpublished reports by American reporter George Weller on the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in 1945. Her story on the reports was carried in the June 17, 2005, morning edition of the Mainichi Shimbun. The unpublished reports were the first reports from a Western journalist following the U.S. nuclear attack, but Allied censorship prevented them from being published. They remained unpublished until Kunieda unearthed them. "Her reports helped people both in Japan and abroad to recognize once again the misery of atomic bombs," the prize's selection commission said.

After joining the *Mainichi Shimbun* in 1991, Kunieda worked for the *Mainichi Daily News* and *Mainichi Weekly*, the Foreign News Department and the Mainichi's Fukuoka Head Office.

The Vaughn-Ueda International Journalist Prize [*sic*] is presented to individual journalists who contribute to international understanding through outstanding reporting. It has been won by Mainichi reporters nine times. Kunieda shared the 2005 prize with Hirotaka Sunada, a foreign news department reporter for Kyodo News. Sunada won the prize for his exclusive interview with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf over nuclear issues. The award ceremony will be held at the Japan Press Club in Tokyo's Chiyoda-ku on April 3. [*Mainichi*]

6. JAMES HUFFMAN ON EDWARD H. HOUSE (1836-1901) AND JAPAN

Writings on Japan referred to in Professor Huffman's Introduction: from O'Connor (2005) (ed.) *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings. Series 1: Books, 1872-1943*, (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental).

- "Japanese Statesman at Home" *Harper's* (March 1872)
- "The Coolie Trade" *New York Tribune* (28 November 1872)
- *The Japanese Expedition to Formosa*, Tokyo (1875)
- *The Simonoseki Affair: A Chapter of Japanese History* (1875)
- *The Kagosima Affair: A Chapter of Japanese History* (1875)
- "Martyrdom of an Empire" *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1881)
- "Thralldom of Japan" *Atlantic Monthly* (December 1887)
- "Hesperia Outrage" *The Tokio Times* (9 August 1879)
- *The Tokio Times*, established and edited by E.H. House, 1877-1880

7. THE WRITINGS OF E.H. HOUSE: EARLY DAYS

Charles LeGendre, a crusty American advisor to Japan's foreign ministry, told the ministry's leading light, Ōkuma Shigenobu, in 1874 that Japan should create a news organ to amplify its voice abroad, a government-subsidized paper that "shall, by sufficient distribution in the capitals of Europe and the various political and intellectual centres, tend to create a new interest in, and a more complete comprehension of, the Japanese situation" [[To sample a September 1880 letter from House to Ōkuma Shigenobu go to cork.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/AE/AE_3871_44/](http://www.cork.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/AE/AE_3871_44/)] The need for such a publication, LeGendre said, sprang from the damage done by "the malicious efforts of the foreign newspapers of Yokohama," which had poisoned international images of Japan in order to promote British commercial interests.¹ He made it clear that he had a specific man in mind to edit the paper: Edward H. House, a Bostonian who had come to Japan in 1870 as a reporter for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. House was a respected journalist; he had influential friends in Japan, Europe, and the United States; and he was a known crusader for idealistic causes.

Indeed, House, who had been a celebrity in American reporting, had made his name as an advocate: publicizing John Brown's abolitionism at the end of the 1850s and pushing the New York press to give a sympathetic ear to the little known Mark Twain at the beginning of the 1860s. After coming to Japan as one of America's first regular Tokyo correspondents, he had defended Japan vigorously in 1872 when it freed 130 Chinese workers from the Peruvian barque *Maria Luz*; he had excoriated British journalists in Yokohama for their condescending reports on Japanese affairs; and he had written an influential book praising Japan's handling of a military expedition to Taiwan in the spring and summer of 1874.²

When House accepted an offer from the government in 1876 to establish the *Tokio Times* as the country's first pro-government, English-language newspaper, his life pattern was set. Until his

death in 1901, he would agitate endlessly for his adopted land: as a paid journalist at the *Times* in the late 1870s, as a sympathetic lobbyist in Paris, London, and Washington in 1881, as the recipient of an annual “pension” from the Japanese government after 1884, as a novelist who depicted Western missionaries as hypocrites and Japanese women as noble, and as a defender of Japan’s aggressive war against China during the middle 1890s. One of his greatest triumphs was helping to persuade his own U.S. government to return the \$750,000 indemnity that it had received after military conflict in Shimonoseki, the western tip of Japan’s main island, in 1864. And he reveled in Japanese officials who credited him as “the one who laid the groundwork” for Japan’s final success, in the 1890s, in revising its unequal treaties with the Western powers.³ The British journalist Frank Brinkley would call him “Japan’s pioneer friend,”⁴ while later scholars would recognize him as one of the country’s earliest, and most effective, foreign propagandists.

8. HOUSE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR JAPAN

House would not have liked the latter designation, however. While he proclaimed his sympathy for Japanese causes openly and constantly, he never regarded himself as a lobbyist, or paid agent. In part, this was because of his view of journalism. From the first, even as a teenage arts reporter in Boston, he had seen journalism as a platform, a forum in which writers used facts and “truth” to shape people’s opinions. Reader confidence was won not through some pretended neutrality but through the journalist’s ability to use facts and rhetoric honestly and skillfully. When Fukuchi Gen’ichirō, the father of Japan’s modern press, called journalism a medium through which “I might eventually see my ideals realized in society,” he was expressing the very sentiment that motivated House from his teenage years until his death.⁵ One of House’s early assignments at the *Tribune*, a series of stories on the 1860 visit of England’s Crown Prince Albert to the United States, brimmed with partiality toward democracy. He called the price an “intense democratic presence” and said the unruly crowds that clamored after him illustrated “the capacities of the people for a self-government founded on the immutable laws of human sympathy.”⁶ Similarly, when he reported on a famous London boxing match between John Heenan and Tom King in 1863, he informed readers that boxing fans showed “no mercy for the defeated. Fair or foul, there is yet only one morality with them – success.”⁷ Dry objectivity was not House’s goal. Like most of his nineteenth century peers, he found in journalism a medium for saying what he *thought*, as well as what he observed. Brinkley said he was imbued with “a fervour of controversial zeal,” a zeal that caused him, for an entire lifetime, to give “his ability and his energy to combatting the racial prejudices which are the disgrace of this twentieth century.”⁸

For that reason, House was an advocate from the first, a spokesperson for Japanese causes long before anyone would have thought of calling him a propagandist. His coverage of the first Japanese mission to the United States, in 1860, brimmed with favorable evaluations: their “courtly and gentle manners,” their “gorgeous . . . robes of blue and purple crape,” their boundless intellectual curiosity, the rationality of their thought, their “dignity serener than the calm of your own Pacific!”⁹ His *Atlantic Monthly* article that same year, entitled simply “Japan,” summarized Japan’s history with similar approval, referring to the “present moment,” when “all seems favorable for the development of the long hidden resources of the Empire.”¹⁰ And as soon as he arrived in Tokyo in August 1870, his *Tribune* articles exuded a respectful, positive tone that contrasted markedly with the condescension and criticism of other Western journalists. He praised the Meiji government’s efforts to bring modernity to the country, described the country’s most beautiful spots, and declared in a letter: “Existence here is a perpetual delight.”¹¹ Japan was a place that House found congenial from the start, long before he had any formal connections with the government, and he told his

readers that often. Defending himself against charges in the mid-1870s that his views had been bought, he argued that “an unchanging front through half a dozen years of tolerably active controversy counts for something.”¹² It was a telling point. His support for Japan had been fulsome from the day he met that country’s first ambassadors at the Washington naval yards – because he admired the Japanese, not because he was paid by them.

The other reason House would have objected to being called a propagandist lay in the free way he criticized Japan and its officials, even when he was on the government’s payroll. The respectfulness of his general tone never prevented him from taking on policies or programs that he disliked. During his early years in Japan, he wrote often about the shaky position of the Meiji government and criticized it for taking on too many projects too quickly. During his years at the *Tokio Times* he attacked official extravagance, the *ricksha* system, Tokyo’s erratic fire fighting organization (which resulted in the destruction of his own house and a school he had started for poor girls). No issue drew his ire more fiercely than the unequal treatment of Japanese women. Drawing on the experiences of Aoki Koto, a brilliant student whom the unmarried House had adopted in the mid-1870s, he wrote numerous editorials on the “long disease” of Japanese marriage and the way in which the elite confined daughters and wives to lives as “assistants in their husbands’ households.” “To our mind,” he wrote in one *Times* editorial about leading officials, “the profoundest lesson of foreign culture remains untaught until the sentiment of cold and selfish disregard for the rights” of women “has been burnt out of their souls.”¹³ If being a propagandist meant hewing the party line, House would have protested quite rightly that he merited no such label. To life’s end, he was an independent spirit, praising Japan much of the time but criticizing it freely when he disagreed with official policies.

9. HOUSE AS A PROPAGANDIST

The truth is, however, that House’s protests would not have been wholly supportable. While the evidence argues strongly that he remained true to himself, that he never stopped writing from conviction, he nonetheless served the Japanese government aggressively for a quarter of a century. By today’s standards, he must be called a propagandist. The first reason for this already has been addressed: House spent much of his life *persuading*, devising arguments to convince Americans and Europeans that Japan should be treated as a modern, sovereign state. His campaign to get the U.S. Congress to return the Shimonoseki indemnity was indefatigable, carried out in the columns of the *Tokio Times* and *Japan Weekly Mail*, in interviews with New York papers, in *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harpers* essays, at smoke-filled dinners with congressmen. When the clergyman-educator William Elliot Griffis used the columns of the *New York Evening Post* to accuse Japanese officials in 1887 of quieting enemies through assassination and despotism, an apopleptic House wrote a series of stinging rebukes, calling Griffis’s charges “the wildest rhapsodies of a distorted imagination.”¹⁴ No abuse of Japan was slight enough to be ignored by Japan’s public friend.

Nor was House above putting a pro-Japanese spin on the news. While I have found no evidence of House reporting a falsehood, he often focused on facts that put the Japanese establishment in the best light. In his exchange with Griffis, for example, he labeled the Meiji government’s efforts to stifle dissent as necessary “for the preservation of social order” but ignored several draconian features of the measures.¹⁵ His attempts in the late 1870s to get Harry Parkes removed as Great Britain’s minister to Japan made much of the diplomat’s volatile personality and single-minded pursuit of British commercial interests but said nothing about the high respect in which most Western officials held him. Most striking of all, perhaps, were his articles for the *New York World* during the Sino-Japanese War late in 1894, during his final stint as a journalist. When

reports about a Japanese massacre of civilians in Port Arthur in Manchuria began to appear, House countered with reports from the Japanese Foreign Ministry, downplaying the extent of the outrages and relaying the government's statement that the incident "shocks and grieves both the civil and military authorities." The *World* editors expressed pleasure with House's reports. But his emphasis on the official line, whether out of ignorance (he was reporting from Tokyo, not Manchuria) or by intent, downplayed the darker side of the story. While tailoring of this sort was typical of most reporters, then even as now, it leaves House subject to the label 'propagandist'.

Even more telling was House's non-journalistic work on Japan's behalf. Wherever he went, he lobbied people to buy Japanese goods, to respect Japan as a modern country, to support equal treaties for the Japanese. The most dramatic work of this sort came in 1881, when he traveled to England and France on a quiet diplomatic mission, at the behest of Ōkuma, to talk with opinion leaders and officials about Western treatment of Japan. He also tried, in Great Britain, "to weaken or destroy the influence of Sir H. Parkes."¹⁶ Although he returned saddened by how hard it was "to get the Europeans and Americans to take Japan seriously," he told Ōkuma in a series of letters that he was pleased by American responses to his call for return of the Shimonoseki indemnity.

House also wrote endless letters across the years, urging influential men to support Japan's causes. Among the most impressive was a set of lengthy epistles in 1897 to his old friend, the U.S. diplomat John Hay, insisting that better American diplomats be sent to Asia, particularly to Japan, which he called the "brains" of Asia, "the lever by which Asia is to be lifted out of stagnation." He said Japan's own statesmen were "so adroit, so tactful, so resolute and courageous that they could beat most of their European adversaries at any game of wits"; if America did not send better representatives, it might find itself, at length, on the victim's end of conflict with Japan.¹⁷ The letters showed that House's interests were not limited to Japan; they also included his native land. They also demonstrated how central advocacy was in his life.

10. "FOLLOW THE MONEY!"

The most direct evidence that House was a propagandist lay in his financial relationship with the land whose causes he advocated. While the records do not tell us whether he was compensated for several pro-Japanese booklets, such as *The Simonoseki Affair*, which he wrote in the early part of the 1870s, they do describe how much he was paid, and what he was expected to do, from 1877 to 1880 as the editor of the *Tokio Times*. The government provided him with ¥6,500 a year and gave him relative freedom, with the stipulation that he print anything demanded by Ōkuma or the powerful Ōkubo Toshimichi and that "editorials on Japan be written truthfully and impartially, with the well being of the government in mind."¹⁸

When House returned from the European diplomatic trip in 1882, he was prevented by domestic politics from reviving the *Times*. Not coincidentally, however, he was granted an annual pension of ¥2,500 eighteen years later – a pension that continued, with occasional modifications in amount, for the rest of his life – with a requirement that he "promote the interests of Japan whenever a suitable opportunity presents itself, in the same satisfactory manner as you have done hitherto."¹⁹ Though nothing in these documents required that House tailor his writings, the *quid pro quo* – financial support in exchange for advocacy – is obvious.

11. HOUSE'S MAIN CAMPAIGNS

The writings selected for this volume also make clear just how consistently House played the propagandist's role. The *New York Tribune* article dealing with the *Maria Luz* "coolie trade," for example, goes to great lengths to illustrate not just that the dispute over the confinement of the

Chinese “coolies” has been settled to the workers’ advantage, but that Japan has acted more nobly than have diplomats from House’s own native America, while the article on the Japanese statesman, Hirosawa Saneomi, shows a man at once intelligent, high minded, and sophisticated. One of the most influential – and certainly the longest – of House’s works, *The Japanese Expedition to Formosa*, argues that Japanese troops were both courageous and skillful during their brief 1874 sojourn in Taiwan. It sees their effort to punish the aborigines of Taiwan for killing fifty-four Okinawans three years earlier as wholly justified, both morally and diplomatically; it refutes the widespread view that Japan wanted to colonize southern Taiwan; and it praises Japan for making the sea routes around Taiwan safe for international ships. Like any good publicist, House tells a riveting story in this work – and while some of his analyses and emphases have been questioned by later historians, his facts are solid and the account has set the parameters of most narratives of the event, right down to the present.

The Simonoseki Affair and *The Kagosima Affair*, most likely commissioned by the Japanese government,²⁰ are highly polemical documents. In both, the Bostonian uses rich source materials to correct what he sees as a mistaken narrative. In the former, he argues that Western nations were not justified in bombarding the western port of Japan’s main island in 1864 and that the real reason for the attack was the British-inspired desire to force Japan to open more treaties for trade. In the latter, he contends that the 1862 murder of Charles Richardson by Satsuma troops, which precipitated the later bombardment of Kagoshima (Satsuma’s capital), was a more complex affair than traditional accounts had suggested. At the core of the entire episode, he argued, was the “perpetual cry” of the British for “money, more money, forever money.”²¹ In both booklets, House writes as a man on a mission. His prose in the Kagoshima analysis is turgid and legal, while the essay on Shimonoseki is livelier, but in both he piles fact on fact, drawing heavily on diplomatic documents, to convince readers that Japan was wronged by avaricious foreigners. The depth of his conviction was shown by the way he continued to reiterate the booklets’ themes across the succeeding decades—to the point of writing a letter to the *Japan Weekly Mail* editor in the spring of his final year, urging Japanese to teach their children how principled their leaders had been during the Shimonoseki episode. “The foreign world . . . has yet a good many revolutions to make, before it reaches the point of fair equilibrium,” he wrote.²²

The issue for which House fought most consistently across the years was treaty revision. Angry that the early treaties had robbed Japan of the right to set its own tariffs and to try foreigners in its own courts, he wrote endless articles at the *Tokio Times* and in American journals calling for change. “The Hesperia Outrage” described for *Tokio Times* readers a cholera-infested German ship that ignored a Japanese quarantine and allowed crew members to disembark at Yokohama, thereby causing an epidemic. The Japanese courts, deprived of jurisdiction, helpless to do anything. In “Martyrdom of an Empire,” House told *Atlantic Monthly* readers that tariff restrictions had placed Japan in “desperate” financial straits because it could not collect the same duties that Americans and Europeans did; he then showed how Parkes’s harsh tactics had kept Japan from getting a fair international hearing in recent years. The treaty court, or extraterritoriality, system was a focus of “Thralldom of Japan,” as was a list of the many ways in which Japan had achieved excellence since the Meiji Restoration: everything from military skills to railway safety, from postal efficiency to legal integrity. The refusal to grant Japan treaty equality, he argued, was a refusal to act fairly.



CONCLUSIONS

12. SOME CONCLUSIONS: HOUSE AS JAPAN'S JOURNALIST-ADVOCATE

In each of these works, and scores more, House played the role of journalist-advocate. He was a bona fide journalist: he wrote for newspaper and magazines; he rooted his arguments in factual description; he wrote about contemporary events, with the general public as his audience. But he also was an advocate, because his chief goal was to *influence* the public on behalf of an agenda, to secure “justice” for Japan in the world of international politics. That payments from the Japanese government were a prerequisite to this goal was, to House, a simple matter of necessity. He was not a rich man; he could not have fought without financial support. The question of whether money affected his influence was moot. For us, however, the question of money may not be so easily dismissed. Did it undermine his impact? Corrupt him? Affect his role as a journalist? It is such questions—to the broader issues raised by House’s balancing of journalistic and propaganda roles — that we must finally turn.

It seems clear, in the first place, that House’s effectiveness was indeed influenced by his receipt of financial support from the Japanese government and his open adoption of the advocate’s role. He was attacked constantly by most of the other foreigners in Japan, particularly the Yokohama papers, whose writers labeled him a toady, “pharisaical”, and a “naughty American boy.”²³ They would have opposed him anyway, given his views. Indeed, when his name was raised as a possible American consul general in Yokohama in 1881, those papers’ editors responded with invective that approached apoplexy. But their attacks were rendered more effective by the fact that he received government monies. The *Japan Gazette* called him an “unconscientious writer who prostituted his intellect”, in a reference to the financial arrangements of the *Times*. The financial support that underwrote his efforts made it easy for opponents to dismiss a viewpoint that needed to be articulated — and considered seriously.

At the same time, House’s experience also calls attention to two aspects of early-Meiji propaganda that are less negative, and arguably more interesting. It shows, first, the government’s astuteness about public relations. Japan’s rulers had long been sensitive to the crucial role of public information in governing; indeed, Tokugawa officials had worked hard to control the kinds of information that reached their people. The quickness with which men such as Ōkuma and Ōkubo grasped the need to publicize Japan’s cause at home and abroad was, nonetheless, impressive. They did not need LeGendre to tell them that perceptions were as important as policies in getting people at home to follow them and foreigners to respect them—that the “malicious” reports of the Yokohama papers (as “the only channels through which intelligence concerning Japan has reached Europe for many years”²⁴) were undermining Japan’s ability to secure fair treatment. That was the reason House’s contracts included clauses requiring him to present Japan in a favorable light. They knew that they would not get him to change his own views; that was the kind of man he was. But they also knew that without assistance his Japanophile views never would gain a hearing abroad, and Japan’s cause would suffer. Much has been written about the skills of the early Meiji leaders in creating educational, military, and economic institutions. More thought needs to be given to their understanding of how important it was to create popular support, at home and abroad, for those policies.

A point needs to be made too about the complicated connection between journalism and propaganda, today even as in House’s time. We already have noted that all journalists are, at some level, advocates. They construct narratives designed to persuade, to convince readers, at the least, that their stories are authentic. Certainly, the Yokohama journalists who daily decried Japan as backward and House as a sycophant were themselves advocates of the unadorned variety, crusaders for a “free trade” system designed to increase imperial profits. And even they had no particular

trouble with House when he was advocating his earlier ideals: Americanism, fair play, Republicanism.

So the question raised by House's role as a propagandist is not whether good journalists may be advocates. Of course they may. The question, rather, is what impact advocacy will have on the writer's integrity and influence as a journalist. And here, once again, the issues of money and partisanship are crucial. House's life makes it clear that it is possible to be an advocate, even a *paid* advocate, without giving up a commitment to the fair handling of facts. His attention to research, his careful marshaling of data, his efforts to "set the record straight," all bespoke a determination to write accurately. So did his willingness to advocate unpopular views. Ulysses Grant's secretary (and later minister to Beijing) John Russell Young said, after visiting House at *Tokio Times*, "If you take sides with the eastern nations, in this far east, you bring upon you the rancor of the foreigners. . . . You are possessed of the devil."²⁵ That House kept advocating Japan's cause in the face of crushing opposition says something powerful not only about his personality but about the journalist's ability to maintain integrity even as a paid advocate.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that partisanship and financial support undermined House's impact on several levels. The former made his writings predictable and thus less effective over time, while the latter made him vulnerable to the attacks on integrity noted above. One may contend, of course, that without the monetary support or the partisan conviction, he would have had less influence, because he would not have had the financial or spiritual resources to write about Japan at all. But the truth is that the government's largesse robbed him of the moral high ground, making his enemies' attacks more effective than they otherwise might have been. The results was that, while House won more victories than most – the return of the Shimonoseki indemnity, success in the treaty revision struggle, the shaping of the Taiwan expedition narrative – he came to the end of life plagued by the ambiguities that necessarily mark the careers of most propagandists. He was passionate and courageous in the telling of his friends, purchased and compromised in the accounts of detractors. At best, the propagandist's ambiguities made him an interesting man. At worst, they rendered him a disappointment, a man with a cause whose compromises too often undermined both the cause and his influence.

¹ Charles LeGendre memo to Ōkuma Shigenobu, December 23, 1874, in Ōkuma monjo, C479, Waseda University Library, Tokyo, 81 ("malicious") and 82-83 ("distribution").

² Edward H. House, *The Japanese Expedition to Formosa*. Tokyo: n.p. 1875.

³ Ebihara Hachirō, *Nihon Ōji shimbun zasshi shi* (Tokyo: Taiseidō, 1936), 128.

⁴ *Japan Weekly Mail*, December 28, 1901.

⁵ Fukuchi Gen'ichirō, *Shimbunshi jitsureki*, in Yanagida Izumi, ed., *Fukuchi ōchi shū*, vol. 11 of *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1966), 328.

⁶ *New York Tribune*, October 12, 1860.

⁷ "The Great Prize Fight," *The Times*, December 11, 1863.

⁸ *Japan Weekly Mail*: "Mr. E. H. House," December 21, 1901; "Funeral of Mr. E. H. House," December 28, 1901.

⁹ From House's reports in the *New York Tribune*, May 22, June 30, 1860.

¹⁰ E. H. House, "Japan," *Atlantic Monthly* V (June 1860), 733.

¹¹ House letter to Whitelaw Reid, September 21, 1870, Whitelaw Reid Papers, Library of Congress.

¹² *Tokio Times*, July 6, 1878.

¹³ *Tokio Times*, March 2, 1878, November 22, 1879.

¹⁴ *New York Evening Post*, February 21, 1888. The exchanged was precipitated by the 1887 peace preservation law, which removed hundreds of government enemies from the Tokyo region, among other things. Griffis's identity as writer of the charges was not publicly known until after the controversy had ended;

it is clear, however, that House was quite sure from the first that Griffis, one of his former friends, was the author.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Letter: House to Ōkuma Shigenobu, October 7, 1887; Ōkuma monjo (C-336), Waseda University.

¹⁷ House to John Hay, February 6, 1897, Samuel Langhorne Clemens (The Edward House Collection), University of Virginia Library.

¹⁸ The contract, dated October 1, 1876, is in Ōkuma monjo (A1115), Waseda University. House's payment was increased by ¥1,000 a year in 1878.

¹⁹ For the pensions, see letter from Inoue Kaoru to House, December 1883, and letter, January 24, 1889, in "Beikoku 'Hausu' e nenkin oyobi teate kane kyōyo ikken", Foreign Ministry Gaikō Shiryōkan, Tokyo.

²⁰ I have not found documents stating that they were commissioned by the government. Their tone, the lack of a stated publisher and the typography all suggest that they were produced by government printers.

²¹ For a fuller analysis of the Shimonoseki article, see my "Edward H. House: questions of meaning and influence." *Japan Forum* 13, no. 2 (2001): 15-25; I discuss the Kagoshima booklet in *A Yankee in Meiji Japan: The Crusading Journalist Edward H. House* (Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 99-100.

²² *Japan Weekly Mail*, March 23, 1901.

²³ *Japan Punch*, February 1878.

□ Memo: Charles LeGendre to Ōkuma, December 23, 1874; Ōkuma monjo (C479), Waseda University Library.

²⁵ *Tokio Times*: December 27, 1879.