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The Early East Asian Press in the Eyes of the West
Some bibliographical notes

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Berlin

Meeting:	79 Newspapers
Simultaneous Interpretation:	No
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Abstract

The East Asian press was studied relatively late in the West. One of the reasons is that newspapers did not exist in China, Japan, and Korea until these countries opened to Western influences. There were certainly forerunners of newsprint also in the indigenous tradition, like the famous Peking Gazette (Jingpao) which is often claimed to be oldest newspaper of the world. We find numerous little articles in Western papers on the *Jingbao*, usually from secondary or tertiary sources; they do not take into account that this gazette had limited circulation and that it just contained edicts and decrees – thus it does not fit the modern definition of newspaper. But it definitely was a forerunner of newsprint.

In China a number of missionary periodicals are counted among the forerunners of newspapers but even such non-religious items like Karl Friedrich Gützlaff's *Dongxiyangkao meiyuetongjizhuan* - they were usually monthlies, or irregularly published serials. Some Western language items do qualify as newspapers, like *A Abelha da China* (1822-1824), Macao's first (Portuguese language) newspaper, but Chinese press history really starts only with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Chinese papers.

Shenbao, founded by the British businessman Frederick Major in 1872, became very successful and was probably the best known paper before 1949.

The history of Chinese newspapers and their forerunners is sketched very well by Roswell S. Britton in his pioneer work: *The Chinese periodical press 1800-1912*.

In a number of chapters: Indigenous newspapers and gazettes, Introduction of Western journalism, Chinese reactions to the alien press, Wang T'ao and the Hongkong newspapers, Alien periodicals in the treaty ports, The Shun Pao •”≥ and other Shanghai papers, General newspaper developments, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao ±Á±“∂W and the reform press, Authority and the new press, the revolutionary press, The new and the old, especially the prehistory of Chinese newspapers is well shown. Also the rapid and successful launching of Chinese language papers is thoroughly documented. A bibliography of no less than 140 titles, 24 illustrations as well as the use of Chinese characters throughout the book make it attractive. Britton lists an earlier, careful study by A. S. Polevoj¹, but apparently did not use it to its full potential: *Periodic[eskaja pec]at' v Kitae* was the first full length book on the Chinese press, giving a sketch of its historical development and focusing on a characteristic of the major Chinese papers, giving ample examples from their contents. In an appendix the author provides a listing of 476 papers (with Chinese characters) by place of publication. He also adds an facsimiles of caricatures from Chinese papers - this seems the first attempt to make such drawings available to the Western reader. A later treatment of the subject is by E. Krebs: *Die politische Karikatur in China*, where 18 samples, with explanations, are given from Peking dailies.

A short introduction to the Chinese press, with listing of titles, was provided by Carl Fink², formerly editor of *Der Ostasiatische Lloyd* in Shanghai, in a booklet *Die Presse des Fernen Ostens* (1926).

Particularly valuable is the Ph.D. dissertation by Kim Heun-Chun: *Die Aufmachung der modernen Zeitung in Ostasien* [The get-up of the modern newspaper in East Asia]. Leipzig 1928. He analyses the distribution and presentation of contents within the papers. While he finds that the foreign forms of mass communication were

¹ 1886-1971; Polevoj studied at the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok and then lived in China from 1917 to 1939 when he emigrated into the United States.

² 1861-1943. See P. W.: Carl Fink† *Ostasiatische Rundschau* 1943, 108; *Ibid.*, 18.1937,331-332

quickly and easily adapted by Japanese journalists, owing to their aesthetic sense, he considers the Koreans fact oriented and mainly interested in the political lead articles which certainly influenced the form of presentation. In China at that time he noticed to many divergents developments and considered the Chinese press still in a process of formation.

Thomas Ming-heng Chao analyzed *The foreign press in China* in a preliminary paper for a conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1931. He presents many details on the editorial policy, contents, and staff from the point of view of a contemporary. A nice feature is the addition of caricatures of some of the elading journalists.

Rudolf Löwenthal³, 1909-1996, studied *Zeitungswissenschaft* («newspaper science») in Berlin before he went to China as an emigré. In a series of articles and one book he studied especially the newspapers in languages other than Chinese, like the Russian and German as well as the religious press in China. He also dealt with the paper supply for Chinese newspaper publishing,⁴ and with the bibliography of Chinese press history. The religious press comprises mainly periodicals as the author also indicates in the title of his book, a pioneering work that for the first time assembled a wealth of information on the Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, Islamic, Jewish and Russian Orthodox periodical publications in China. Löwenthal extended his studies even to other countries, e.g. the Chinese press in Australia. Löwenthal's methodical approach shows him as a trained newspaper researcher. He is factual, data oriented and refrains from lofty interpretations.

In 1942 a Ph.D. thesis on the paper production and trade in China, Japan and Manchukuo was defended by Ingeborg Rühl.⁵ This is an economic study, taking into account the war situation, but not going into any detail regarding the newspaper industry.

Wolfgang Mohr⁶, 1903-1979, was a real newspaper professional not a journalist but an engineer who specialized in printing technology; he knew Chinese and spent the years 1932-1956 in China. His three volume work on the development of the Chinese press is more of a documentation than a press history. The centre piece of the work is a collection of facsimiles from Chinese papers, arranged in systematic order. It starts with a description of the early press, until 1911, the end of the Chinese empire, and deals with the government and the private press separately. The followingb mains ection deals with the newspapers under the Peking government (1912-1927, and the Nanking government, 1928-1949, with detailed treatement of the press during the war, and the continues to show the development in the People's Republic of China until 1954. Newspapers in Taiwan, the People's Republic and Chinese language papers around the globe are relatively short. The conclusion comprises presentations of special groups of papers, like the party press, and individual papers. All these documents are commented upon in volume 1 which also

³ H. Walravens: Schriftenverzeichnis von Rudolf Löwenthal (Loewenthal). *Monumenta Serica* 45.1997,417-437; Michael Pollak: Rudolf Loewenthal (1909-1996). *Ibid.*,425-417

⁴ Printing paper: its supply and demand in China. *Yenching Journal of Social Studies* 1.1938,108-121.

⁵ Ingeborg Rühl: *Die Papierwirtschaft in China, Japan und Mandschukuo*. Erlangen 1942. VI, 185 p.

⁶ See Herbert Franke: Wolfgang Mohr† 1903-1979. *Oriens extremus* 27.1980,151-154; Wolfgang Bauer: Wolfgang Mohr† *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 127/128.1980,11-13, Portr.

features chronological listings, including Chinese characters, as well as a bibliography. Vol. 2 provides numerous lists, statistics and map illustrating the development of the Chinese press. All in all, this is more of a catalogue than a press history but the careful documentation and its down to earth approach make it an extremely valuable reference tool which may serve as the basis of further analytical research.

The Shanghai Pictorial *Dianshizhai huabao* found special interest in Germany. It was first made known by Max von Brandt who had been the German minister to both Tokyo and Peking until he had retired after 33 years of service and devoted himself to writing. He considered the Pictorial a mirror of Chinese life and published 82 of its illustrations / episodes with commentary while the translations were prepared by Wang Yintai who at that point in time studied in Berlin but was to become a well-known politician in China later on. The author commented: «The last decades have produced already a large, perhaps too large number of books on China and the Chinese, but we always received a picture seen by foreign eyes, described by a foreign pen, lacking the originality which alone would be able to catch the sympathetic interest of the general reader – in spite of the care of the authors to observe this world strange to them and us, and despite the detail in which the described it.» The author divided his selection in ten sections according to subjects like Imperial Court, Family Life, Death and Burial, Pastimes, Law Enforcement, etc. and provided ample commentaries on the respective scenes, drawing heavily on his own experience from his China years.

Bodo Wiethoff focused on the description of Europe and the Europeans in the Shanghai Pictorial, while Fritz van Briessen who stayed as a journalist in China in the early 1940s selected another 52 scenes from the paper on different subjects, like Examinations, The war in Vietnam, the Strange Customs of the Western Barbarians, etc. Again translations and comments accompany the pictures, this time in order to look at the situation in China from a distance and analyse its perception of current events, and foreign impact.

A lot of the material in the Shanghai Pictorial was taken from foreign sources, and this fact was documented in a paper by Julia Henningsmeier. A thorough introduction to the subject for English speakers was only given recently in an Ann Arbor dissertation by Ye Xiaoqing.

The *Dianshizhai huabao* was published from 1884 to 1898 in Shanghai by the well-known daily *Shenbao* which was founded by the British businessman Frederick Major, and became popular. This partly due to the publisher's business acumen but to a large degree by the well executed large illustrations which contain descriptive text in the same way as traditional Chinese paintings. The illustrations were printed lithographically; they were executed by different artists the best known of which is Wu Yuru who also published a pictorial newspaper by himself.

Korea

Korea's press has been little studied as a separate subject. Because of the political development it was sometimes covered by investigations into Japanese newspaper history. We may point out here Altman's study on Korea's first newspaper which was published in Pusan as of Dec. 1881: *The Japanese Chōsen shimpō*.

Japan

Pioneer in the field of Japanese press history was Martin Ramming⁷ who investigated Japanese newspapers during his stay in Japan in 1911 and 1912, following his term of study at St. Petersburg University. He published the results of his trip as *Oč]erk sovremennago polož]enija periodic]eskoj pec]ati v Japonii* in 1913. He gave a the history of the Japanese press, characterized the main papers, described the juridical situation of the press, informed about the news agencies, outlined the contents of the papers and the role of advertisements and dwelled on Japanese journalism.

Ramming returned to the subject in 1934 when he was director of the Japan Institute in Berlin: *Die japanische Zeitung in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*. This in an update of the previous paper, with the added advantage that Kanji (Japanese characters) are given throughout. There is also a listing of the more important Japanese newspapers.

Also Ramming's renowned *Japan-Handbuch*⁸ has an article on the Japanese press (p. 664-666), not, however, from Ramming's pen but by Werner Wosseng. Like the whole *Handbuch*, also this article is completely free from ideology and gives a sober and factual account of the genesis of newspapers in Japan and their situation in 1940. It is hardly surprising that another contribution was published in Germany before the end of WW II, considering the the political connections between Japan and Germany during those years. Hayasaka Jiro's Outline of the Japanese press was offered in German translation as *Das Werden der japanischen Zeitungen*, with notes and additions by the translator. It is only for the latter that this title is mentioned here - as an originally Japanese publication it is out of the focus of the present survey.

Albert A. Altman, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, researched the early history of modern newspapers in Japan in several articles:

In *The press and social cohesion during a period of change: the case of early Meiji Japan* he gave a survey of the development of Japanese papers during the first years of the Meiji reform, while in *Shinbunshi: The early Meiji adaption of the Western-style newspaper* he investigated the adaptation of the Western newspaper by the Japanese in the *historical and political context*. He started with the first (English language) paper *Nagasaki Shipping List and Advertiser* (1861) to the *shinbunshi* («news booklets»), a forerunner of newspapers, and to well-developed dailies as a tool to influence the masses, as for example in 1905 when a protest against negotiations with Russia was organised. Fukuzawa Yukichi had described the role of European newspapers in his *Seiyō jijō* (The situation in the West, 1866); in 1868 no less than 17 *shinbunshi* were published. The government was quick in recognizing the potential of the new media and using it for its own goals as described with regard to the *Shinbun zasshi* (1871). The crisis of 1873 and the citizen rights movement (*jiyū minken*), however, supported a critical and polemical press, unhampered by government influence.

In a further paper, *Proprietor versus editor: The case of the Osaka Asahi shimbun in the late nineteenth century* Altman focused on the early history of the Asahi shinbun which was founded in 1879. He described the tendency of the proprietors of newspapers to exert a major influence on the papers' lines.

⁷ H. Walravens: Ramming, Martin. *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 21.2003,133.

⁸ Berlin. Steiniger 1941. 740 p.

Western literature on the East Asian press has been numerous but most contributions if we compare e.g. the listing of the German Language material by Gert Hagelweide⁹, consists of journalistic treatment of the subject on two or three pages but lacks depth. Only very recently there has been a revived interest in press history in Europe as documented by Rudolf Wagner's essay on early Chinese newspapers and the public sphere, Natascha Vittinghoff's thesis on Chinese journalism¹⁰, and Barbara Mittler's book on the *Shen-pao*.

The selected references surveyed here show a high level of expertise and gave readers a reliable picture of the newspapers in the respective countries.

⁹ Hagelweide: *Literatur zur deutschsprachigen Presse*. Eine Bibliographie. Band 9: Länder außerhalb des deutschen Sprachraums. München: Saur 1998. (Dortmunder Beiträge zur Zeitungsforschung.35)

¹⁰ Vittinghoff: *Die Anfänge des Journalismus in China (1860-1911)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2002. XI,507 p. (Opera sinologica.9)

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Hartmut Walravens

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Illustrations



1. Jingbao, covers of editions by two different publishers

申報

壬申三月二十三日

英四月十三日

第

號

本館告白

今天下可傳之事甚多矣而泯沒不彰者比比皆是其故何歟蓋無好事者爲之記載
 便奇聞逸事固然無稱焉可嘆惜也溯自古今以來史記百家載輿地志記
 纂計然所載皆前代之遺聞已往之故事且其體裁繁文辭古非輿論先生不能有也
 非文人學士不能觀也至於稍官小說代有傳者蓋其志博物十寶記搜神齊諸志
 怪之書或爲文章之體凡茲諸類均可流觀雖其事或荒誕無稽其文皆典範有則足
 借而助儒者之清談未必爲雅俗所共賞求其紀述至今時事文則實而不俚事則簡而
 能計一而學士大夫下及農工商賈皆能通曉者則莫如新聞紙之善矣新聞紙之創
 自西人傳於中土而見香港唐字新聞創始於今仍其意殷申報於上洋凡 國家之
 政治軍民之變遷中外交涉之要務商賈貿易之繁興與夫一切可驚可喜之事足
 以爲人觀聽者莫不屏息以求其真實無妄使觀者明白不爲浮誇之辭不迷荒唐
 之說而能知心中時務者於此可以得其概而出以爲生理事者於此亦不至受其欺此新聞之
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 之賢者才者才不出戶庭而知天下矣豈不善哉惟是事雖盛興與初創或恐困於方隅
 限於知識遙隔多尚希 四方君子進而觀之巨其不速實有厚望焉申報主人謹白

本館條例

啟者新聞紙之設原欲以開新智開閱報與流佈四方者也便不事聖博博探以撰我見
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 于左如 貴客賜顧或蒙惠顧者祈惠顧一切爲幸
 一 本報報費于上海各店零售每張取銀八文各遠處發賣每張取銀十文本館最貴
 每張取銀六文
 一 如有識人願以短什長篇應教者如天下各名區竹枝詞及長歌紀事之類
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 小民保祐之苦附登斯報概不取酬

行情新聞日派
星房虛昴停印

西曆一千八百八十年十一月八號

香港目下棉花紗

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13

道光癸巳年六月

東西洋考每月統記傳

人無遠慮必有近憂

愛漢者纂



4. Dongxiyangkao meiyuetongjizhuan, by Karl Gützlaff, Pomeranian missionary. 1833.



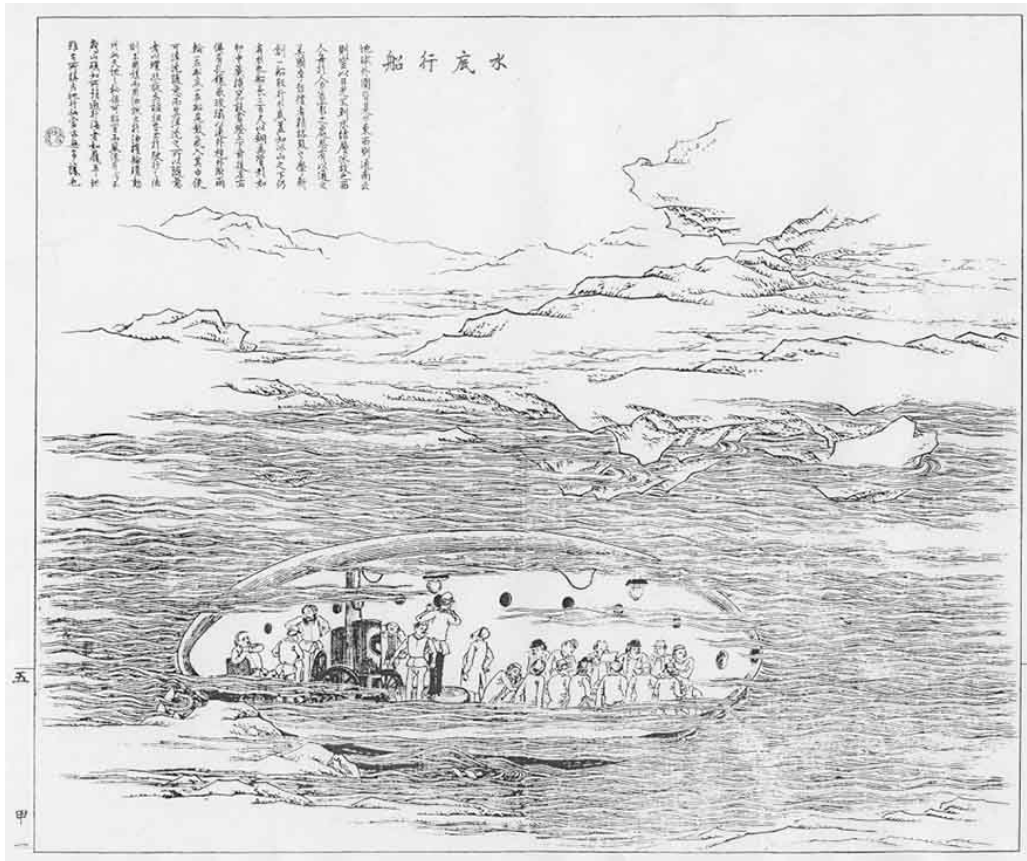
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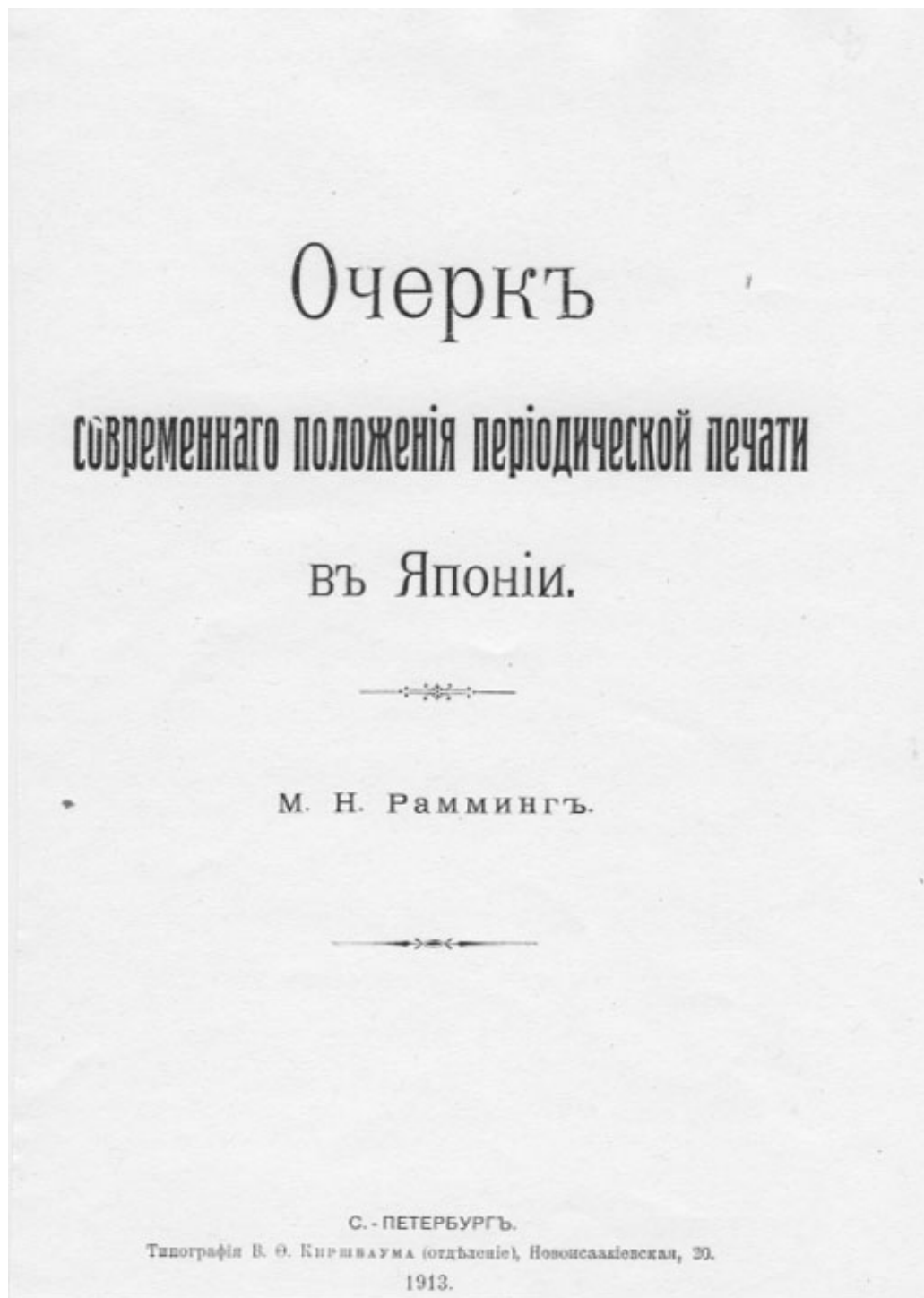
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Das Werden der Japanischen Zeitungen

Vom Flugblatt zur Weltpresse

Von Jiro Hayasaka

übersetzt und ergänzt von
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1943

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