

6

NEWSPAPERS AS AN ADVERTISING MEDIUM IN CHINA

By Hollington K. Tong

Hierarchy

The press in China undoubtedly serves as the most effective advertising medium. No substitute has been found to replace it as a channel through which commodities can be quickly carried to the purchasing public. Handbills and posters, to which the Chinese used formerly to resort, are limited in their scope, and at their best, are old-fashioned and out-moded vehicles of publicity. Newer forms of publicity, including billboards, placards, sandwich-men, sky-writing, motion pictures, the stage and even the radio, have their handicaps, their limitation and their shortcomings. The daily newspaper still holds the key to the advertising situation by its ability to carry the advertiser's message to the greatest number of people in the shortest time in the most convincing manner.

*the
from
made*

Habit dies hard. The majority of the people who constitute the buying public in China are accustomed to rely on the press for information about various commodities, about sales, notices of new publications, school announcements, automobiles, home necessities, and amusement places. They do not want other mediums to convey such information to them. The large amount of space devoted to advertising in proportion to reading matter is an outstanding feature of the Chinese newspapers, and this is done purely in response to the demand. The most successful daily in Shanghai gives fully two-thirds of its space to advertisements, while its less successful contemporary allots even one-fourth of its space to paid publicity. Confronted with this growing popularity of the newspapers as an advertising medium, newer forms of publicity make little appeal to the masses.

1/3

The commodity of newspapers—that of publicity—has been characterized as the most valuable in the world. It raises generals, statesmen, artists and actors to the pinnacle of success and it pulls them down. This aspect of the power of the press has long held the attention of Chinese newspaper publishers. During the last decade

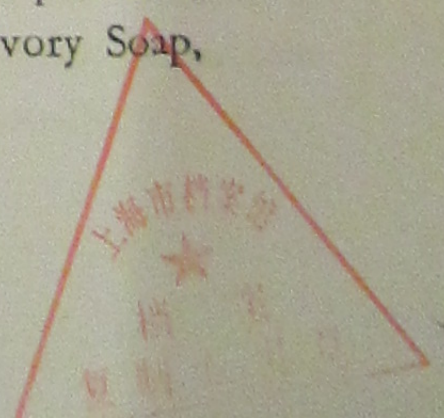
a more modern concept of the utility value of the publicity afforded by newspapers has been accepted by the thinking classes of China. It has now been fully realized that advertising, that is, publicity for business enterprises, is the backbone of the really successful newspaper. Although an important start has been made in the direction of acquiring this essential backbone as the basis of successful journalism, it may as well be frankly confessed that few newspapers in China have yet passed beyond the patent-medicine stage of development concerning their advertising. In this respect, the advertising in Chinese newspapers parallels the development of advertising in the United States of America, which in a peculiar sense may be regarded as the home of modern high-powered publicity for business undertakings. The patent-medicine men in America were the first to appreciate the possibilities of advertising in newspapers as a means of attracting favourable attention to their products by the public. In China, patent medicine dealers during the past three years have been the largest patrons of the press. Cigarette manufacturers used to take second place as buyers of space, but they are now yielding this position to the publishers of books. Automobile companies will eventually be one of the important stand-bys of the daily newspaper in Shanghai. With the growing network of good roads in China, it is to be expected that there will be a considerably greater volume of profitable advertising from this source than there has been in the past.

What is called national advertising, that is, the publicizing of certain industrial products on a national scale, however, is still in its infancy. The national advertising done in China is mainly by the tobacco companies. There is nothing to compare with the efforts made along this line in America by scores of other great industrial houses. As long as 25 years ago, there were at least ten concerns each spending \$750,000 (U. S. currency) a year in order to sell their products. These concerns included Armour's Extract of Beef, Force, Grape Nuts, Gold Dust and Fairy Soap, Ralston Mills food-products, Royal Baking Powder, Sapolio, Swift's Hams and Bacon, Ivory Soap, and Uneda Biscuits.

P₁ - P₂
of medicine
2.15.20 of 1536
Pommes
Heracleie prod
(1) medicine
(2) cigarette
= a coffee
(3) books
1930
(4) out p
P₁
P₂

PS
Good
6661
USA

ca
w
che
19.21
1930
USA



27 A

There is a serious failure to appreciate the value of newspapers in China as a medium of advertising by yet another class of business, that of mercantile establishments. It is true that the department stores of Shanghai, for instance, do advertise in the daily press, but it is more or less spasmodic. Moreover, it is done on a decidedly small scale when compared with what has been accomplished along that line in American cities. As early as 1909, Hamilton Holt in his book on Commercialism and Journalism stated that \$4,000,000 (U.S.) was spent annually by twenty large department stores in New York City. In Chicago, he related, one large department store appropriated \$500,000 (U. S.) a year for publicity in order to sell \$15,000,000 worth of merchandise. But today these figures have been trebled or even quadrupled. Looking at the question from the standpoint of the material interests of the daily newspapers of Shanghai, it would, indeed, be a great blessing if an up-to-date American department store were to be established in Shanghai. The monetary benefits to local journalism should be, it is thought, comparable to those of the London dailies after the invasion of the British metropolis by the famous American department store of Selfridge years ago.

Very few human endeavors in China during the last half century have attained in a commercial sense such rapid success as the Chinese press. Fifty years ago, the newspapers in Shanghai were read by a few hundred persons. But today, at least two of them each enjoy a daily circulation of more than 150,000 copies. Their annual advertising receipts have grown in the same proportion. Some of the Chinese newspapers take in more than \$1,500,000 a year in advertising. It is conservatively estimated that more than \$10,000,000 annually are being spent by various firms on newspaper advertising in this city alone. But this is a small figure when it is compared with what is expended on advertising with the dailies, weeklies and monthlies in America and Europe. Great Britain and Ireland lay out £50,000,000 a year in advertising, while an equal amount is expended by the countries of western and central Europe. Coming to the colossus in advertising in North America, the United States and Canada at present spend no less than one billion dollars (U.S.) annually.

(X10)

1909
1910
1911
1912
1913
1914
1915
1916
1917
1918
1919
1920
1921
1922
1923
1924
1925
1926
1927
1928
1929
1930
1931
1932
1933
1934
1935
1936
1937
1938
1939
1940
1941
1942
1943
1944
1945
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956
1957
1958
1959
1960
1961
1962
1963
1964
1965
1966
1967
1968
1969
1970
1971
1972
1973
1974
1975
1976
1977
1978
1979
1980
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025

PS

Reader
Club

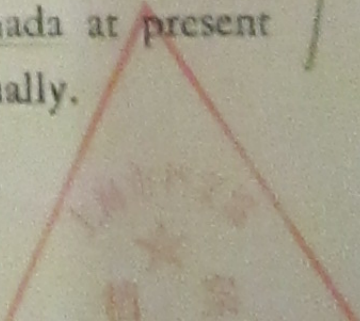
10000
1350

1
to 1,50,000
(1920)

SHANGHAI

P5

Wet



There are three factors which will make the newspapers in China a more effective medium for advertising in the near future. First and foremost, is that of literacy. An increase in the number of persons who can read will result in a larger newspaper reading public, thereby automatically enhancing the publicity value of the press. A second important factor is the development of native industry. Since China has attained her tariff autonomy, there has already been considerable growth in this direction and the future may confidently be expected to yield even greater results. The third factor, and the one from which the greatest immediate results can be expected, is that of the advertising agents and agencies. Through their skill and mastery of the technique of advertising they can make advertising "pay," and that is one argument which is as well understood in China as in America or any other country. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the service rendered by the modern advertising agency as a means not only of contributing to the development of domestic industry, but also of promoting the newspaper publishing business.

ta de b
 ules indus
 merce
 pour le
 pers

Shopping News

*Read and Believed in
 By Women in China.*

Because it's the only publication in China whose advertising policy is based upon that of Good Housekeeping Magazine.

Because it's the only publication in China which keeps abreast of Fashions, Food and Feminine News and offers its readers personal service in solving their individual problems.

Because it's the only publication in China providing its advertisers with effective distribution facilities for samples or literature, free of charge.

Audited average circulation
 over 6200 copies weekly.
 60% Foreign 40% Chinese

PUBLISHERS
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES INC.
 Shanghai - China

Readers of **The China Weekly Review** are to be found in every province of China.

The reason for this is that **The Review** publishes every week a complete summary of news developments together with editorial comment and articles by leading Chinese and foreign writers.

For nineteen years the number of readers of **The Review** has steadily increased. If you are not familiar with **The Review** send for a sample copy. Subscription rates: \$12 a year within China or U.S. \$8 if mailed to addresses outside of China.

It's the most widely quoted Journal in the Far East!

CHINA WEEKLY REVIEW
 160 Ave. Edward VII
 Shanghai

Enclosed please find \$12.00 or U.S. \$8.00 for which please send me a full year's subscription to **The China Weekly Review**.

Name

Address

THE CHINA WEEKLY REVIEW
 J. B. Powell—Editor and Publisher
 160 Avenue Edward VII
 Shanghai

