The Heart of San Francisco’s Nihonmachi (Japantown)
Japanese American Businesses at Post & Buchanan Streets
Maps by Ben Pease

These maps are part of a set of maps I have drawn of Japanese American businesses districts in San Francisco and other cities showing how they have changed over time.

Buildings are based on Sanborn Insurance Map Co. maps of 1910, 1929, 1951, and 1987, from microfilm at the San Francisco Public Library History Room. I redrew the maps and copied buildings forward and backward to match what existed at the featured dates, based on directory and historic photo evidence. Buildings may or may not be accurate for the dates shown.

Japanese American business and institution names are from old directories published by newspapers such as the Hokkubei Mainichi, Nichibei Times, Japanese American News, and others. They are provided courtesy of Mr. Seizo Oka, curator of the Japanese American History Archives (JAHA) in San Francisco. Maps also build on a set of maps at JAHA created in 1990 by the Japantown Arts & Media Workshop (JAM).

Map ©1998-2018 by Ben Pease.

I have created similar maps for 24 historic Japantowns in California, including the wider San Francisco Japantown area, San Jose, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Marysville, and more. thanks in part to a 2006 California Civil Liberties Public Education Project, at www.japantownatlas.com

– Ben Pease

PEASE PRESS CARTOGRAPHY
1717 Cabrillo Street, San Francisco, CA 94121 • (415) 387-1437
Website: www.peasepress.com • Japantownatlas.com
Email: benpease@peasepress.com
The Heart of San Francisco’s Nihonmachi in 1940

East edge of Webster Street today

North edge of Geary Expressway today

Peace Plaza today

Peace Pagoda today

Japanese Corp of Salvation Army, built in 1930s at SE corner of Geary & Laguna
The Heart of San Francisco’s Nihonmachi in 1950

SUTTER

WEBSTER

POST

BUCHANAN

HEMLOCK

LAGUNA

The map shows the layout of San Francisco's Nihonmachi in 1950. It highlights various businesses and residences, including restaurants, hotels, and stores. The map also indicates the location of the North Japanese American Hotel (NJAH) and Peace Plaza, which were significant landmarks in the community. The map provides a historical snapshot of the area, emphasizing the cultural and economic activities that took place there.

Returning Nisei businesses were scattered as far south as Fulton St after WWII but gradually condensed back to Post and Buchanan, by the late '50s.
The Heart of San Francisco’s Nihonmachi in 2000

SUTTER Bridge to Webster

WEBSTER Bridge & Street Entry

GEARY EXPRESSWAY

The Heart of San Francisco’s Nihonmachi in 2000

Japan Center–Miyako Mall

Japan Center–Kintetsu Mall

Peace Plaza

Japan Center–Kintetsu Mall

Peace Plaza

Japan Center–Miyako Mall

Historic north edge of Geary Street

Historic north edge of Geary Street

Historic north edge of Geary Street

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