

Frederick Ringer (1838–1907)

Born the son of a grocer in Norwich, England, Frederick Ringer followed his elder brother to China to seek his fortune. In 1865, while working as a tea inspector in Kiukiang (now Jiujiang), Ringer was invited to Nagasaki by Thomas B. Glover (1838–1911) to manage his company's tea trade. Three years later, Ringer and Englishman Edward Z. Holme (1836–1909) started their own company, Holme, Ringer & Co. to take over Glover's export of tea and other products. The business grew quickly, expanding into banking, insurance, shipping, and various commodities including coal, tobacco, and marine products. Holme, Ringer, & Co. also opened branch offices in China and Korea and conducted extensive trade with Russia.

Ringer helped introduce several Western technologies to Japan, including telephones, waterworks, a mechanized flour mill, trawl fishing, and Norwegian-style whaling. In 1897, he launched the *Nagasaki Press*, an English-language newspaper, and the following year he established the Nagasaki Hotel, a lavish three-story building with electricity, private telephones, and cuisine prepared under the supervision of a French chef.

His health declining, Ringer left Nagasaki in 1907 and traveled with his wife to England to visit his hometown. He died in Norwich on September 29, 1907.