



# NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

March 2017 Volume 49 No. 3, ¥400

**THE  
NEW WORLD:  
Bruce Osborn's photos  
of Fukushima families  
Plus: Gender issues,  
architecture  
and rebuilding  
Kitakami**

# 3/11 THEN

# ...AND NOW



Press freedom in Japan:  
excerpts from a new book

A life on the ocean waves:  
photographer Yoichi Yabe

Kim Jong-nam: and the  
journalist who knew him



> THEME.10

> WIND TURBINE

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The rebuilders of Ishinomaki's Kitakami community: Architect Hiroyuki Teshima, consensus builder Naomi Sato and municipal official Teruo Konno.

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Cover photo: Bruce Osborn



From the President

THE FCCJ IS FACING an extraordinary dilemma regarding the proposed move to new premises.

A report from the Club Treasurer says that this move involves significantly increased rent charges and moving costs which cannot be safely met without raising monthly

dues significantly. Yet the Club could be exposed to a huge contract penalty if we opt not to move without obtaining our landlord Mitsubishi Estate's understanding.

This is most frustrating and arises out of past Boards' overemphasis on "confidentiality" instead of upholding our most basic mandatory rules. Now, the current Board has returned us to compliance and in light of this, you, the Regular voting members, must decide the FCCJ's future at the March 8 GMM.

That's why your full attendance and involvement is crucial.

To evaluate the problem, the Board empaneled an Audit Task Force chaired by former President Andrew Horvat and including financial expert and veteran banker Willem Kortekaas with decades of experience in such matters in Japan.

The crisis and our options are explained in detail in reports from the Treasurer and the Audit Task Force which have been sent to all regular members and at the GMM you will have the opportunity to question the Board and Audit Task Force directly.

According to the Audit Task Force report, the FCCJ must raise monthly dues by a maximum of ¥2,000 per member effective April 2017 to accomplish the move in October 2018 and remain solvent.

This will meet an already contracted 20 percent rent increase (¥17.4 million annually) plus moving costs including purchase and installation of furniture and IT equipment and paying a project manager – in all up to ¥100,000,000, and there is a pressing need to increase FCCJ's cash balances and replenish the seriously underfunded employees' retirement fund, according to the report.

I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to Treasurer Bob Whiting and his team and to the Audit Task Force for their dedication in preparing these reports.

The motion approving this ¥2000 raise has been made. Failure to approve it means that the FCCJ must reconsider the plan and seek to renegotiate a more favorable agreement with Mitsubishi. However, that agreement, signed on March 19, 2015 by the Birmingham Board (again without informing the membership of the details) commits the FCCJ to hundreds of millions of yen contract cancellation penalty. There is no Board consensus as to whether Mitsubishi would actually litigate or negotiate, but the penalty clause is valid should they choose to pursue it. And there are no quick fixes.

Some current Board members are more optimistic and feel that we could sustain the move financially with the proper policies. They will be able to share their perspectives and insights with you at the GMM as well.

I won't mince words: Previous BODs and some BOD officers have, whatever their intentions, put the Club at risk of either becoming insolvent or putting it into litigation, according to warnings from the most of the Finance Committee members. They committed us to enormous increases in expenditures without informing us or obtaining required authorization, in contravention of Club By-Law 9-3 [any revenue disbursements exceeding ¥5 million must be approved by the GMM].

I also observe with concern that our kanjis throughout this period have failed to uphold their most basic obligations and prevent this from happening.

I appeal to the members to read the motion and documents carefully, come to the March 8 meeting, ask questions, and vote for the best course for FCCJ. Now we are out of time so let's get this done at the GMM.

– Khaldon Azhari

COLLECTIONS

BEHIND BARS: The global war against journalists

81

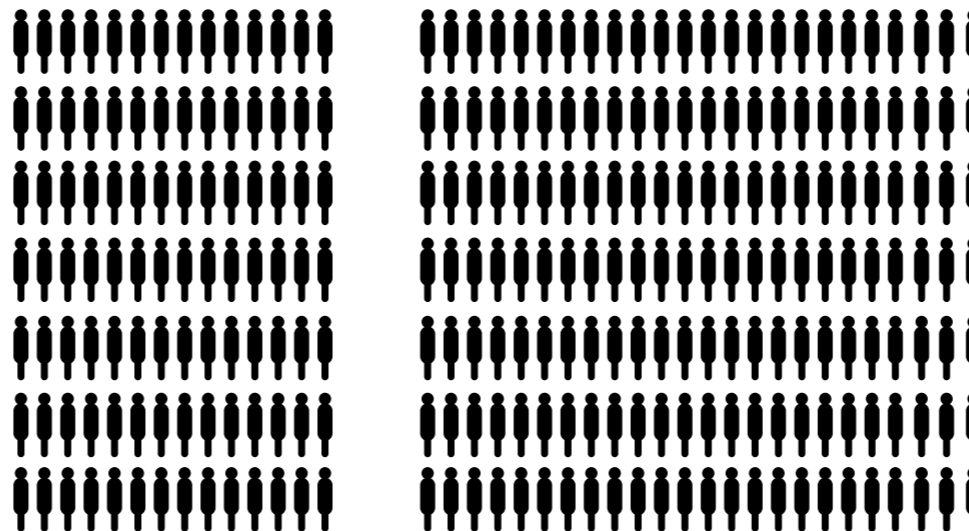
Journalists in jail in 2000

145

Journalists in jail in 2010

259

Journalists in jail in 2016

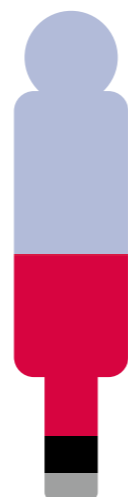


144 Internet

114 Print

19 Television

17 Radio



239 Male

20 Female



53 Freelance

206 Staff



182 Charged with anti-state activities

40 No charges announced



81 Journalists in jail in Turkey in 2016 (highest)

38 Journalists in jail in China in 2016 (2nd highest)

25 Journalists in jail in Egypt in 2016 (3rd highest)

Source: Committee to Protect Journalists

FROM THE ARCHIVES

CATALYST FOR CHANGE



Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone spoke at the FCCJ on Oct. 7, 1985, with Club President Jurek Martin (Financial Times) seated to his left. Nakasone read a prepared statement, including comments regarding his and his Cabinet's taboo-breaking official visit to Yasukuni Shrine to pay tribute to Japan's war dead on Aug. 15, the 40th anniversary of the country's surrender. Until then, postwar visits by political leaders to Yasukuni, where 14 Class A war criminals were enshrined in 1978, had been private. Nakasone later told journalists that he had avoided engaging in religious rites to avoid a potential constitutional issue. Still, his official visit sparked domestic and international criticism.

Prime Minister Nakasone was no stranger to our Club, having expressed his opinions to journalists here in various ministerial capacities in previous years. On Dec. 1, 1970, he visited as director-general of the Defense Agency, and commented on the suicide of Yukio Mishima less than a week earlier. "The literary genius always had in his left hand the spirit of Zen and in his right hand the pen that produced so many masterpieces," he said. "He had to kill himself when he replaced the pen with the ken, a sword."

Born in Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture, on May 27, 1918, Nakasone attended Tokyo Imperial University and served during World War II as an officer and paymaster in the Imperial Japanese Navy. He became a Diet member in 1946 as a proponent of Japan's traditional values, making his first big splash in 1951 by sending a letter to General MacArthur criticizing Occupation policies – and again attracting attention in 1952 by criticizing Emperor Hirohito for losing the war. He became even more controversial with his support for a stronger national defense, including the acquisition of nuclear weapons and nuclear power research. After rising through the LDP's ranks and heading five ministries, he became prime minister in 1982.

Nakasone also served as a catalyst in bringing about major changes in postwar Japan. Internationally, he improved relations with the USSR, China and other Asian nations while solidifying an even closer relationship with the U.S. through his "Ron-Yasu" friendship with President Ronald Reagan. Domestically, he made waves by pushing privatization of state-owned companies, including the breakup of Japan National Railways, reducing the power of bureaucrats and calling for more patriotism in schools and textbook revisions.

Nakasone sparked another international uproar in 1986 with a comment that Americans were less intelligent than Japanese because of its many immigrants and blacks, then compounded that by saying the U.S. had succeeded despite these drawbacks. In 1987 he was forced to resign after a failed attempt to introduce a value-added tax. Though he was one of the many politicians implicated in the next year's Recruit scandal, he remained in the Diet until 2003.

Nakasone, who will celebrate his 99th birthday in May, is Japan's oldest living statesman.

– Charles Pomeroy



**My goal in editing this project was to assess the implications of Abe's reactionary agenda, partly to counter the hype about Abenomics and his transformational leadership, but also to draw attention to his goal of overturning the postwar order, rewriting the constitution and revising history. It was easy to find contributors who also believe that grasping how the media is being muzzled is crucial to understanding contemporary politics in Japan, and they have provided in-depth analysis of the media landscape, how it has been changing in 21st-century Japan and the implications for the Fourth Estate and its vital role in a democratic society. Controlling the media is about controlling the narrative about these controversial issues and thus merits the scrutiny that is offered.**

Jeff Kingston, editor

Director of Asian Studies, Temple University Japan

from *Press Freedom in Contemporary Japan*, Routledge (2017)

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## Growing pains: how Japan's media got here and why

*This excerpt from Press Freedom in Contemporary Japan describes how the political development of Japan's newspapers has seen both struggles for power and collaboration between government and media*

by KOICHI NAKANO

To make sense of the rise of illiberal politics with a particular focus on the role played by the media, it is of utmost importance to look at the historical roots of the most striking features of press-state relations in modern Japan. One of them is the extraordinarily close tie between the press and the state, in terms of both personnel and money. As Sasaki Takashi, a professor of contemporary Japanese history, argues in his 1999 book, *Media to Kenryoku* ("Media and Power"), "Ever since their inception, Japanese newspapers have had the character as devices for the dissemination of information for the government or power, and while there have been some changes in the appearance, that character remains essentially unchanged."

### LATE DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRESS

According to Sasaki, there are three ways in which the Meiji state can be said to have "sponsored" the press in its early years. First the state practically subsidized the press by purchasing a large number of copies. Both *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun* (today's *Mainichi Shimbun*) as well as *Yubin Hochi Shimbun* (later absorbed by *Yomiuri Shimbun*) benefitted from such arrangements from the time of their founding in the first decade of the Meiji era. Amounting to as much as 25 to 30 percent of their revenue, this was no negligible amount of de facto subsidy for the fledgling papers.

Second, the government appointed some papers, *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun*, for instance, as the semi-official conveyors of its news releases – a practice that boosted their sales. This continued on until 1883, when *Kanpo* was launched as the official news medium of laws, ordinances and personnel appointments, which led to a nearly 40-percent drop in the circulation figures of *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun*.

Third, secret government funds were also provided as subsidies to such newspapers as the *Nichinichi*, the *Yubin Hochi Shimbun*, *Jiji Shimpō* (founded by Yukichi Fukusawa) and even *Asahi Shimbun* for several years.

It is well known that, as a late developing country, the Japanese state often played a leading role in founding and nurturing such various key industries as banking and steel, but it is of great interest that similar patterns of state-led modernization were to be found in the news industry as well. In early modern Japan, most of the newspapers fell into either of the two categories – "big papers" (*o shimbun*) that engaged in political debates from strong partisan standpoints, or tabloid-like "small papers" (*ko shimbun*) that traded in gossip and entertainment.

In that context, the Meiji state sought to nurture newspapers that would disseminate information and lead public opinion from a pro-government standpoint, but the overtly pro-government newspapers were not very popular and, consequently, were limited in their influence. As a result, the government attempted to assist the establishment of a new genre, the "medium paper" (*chu shimbun*) that would report seemingly "neutral" news. The eventual success of the *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* placed these "neutral" medium papers in the mainstream of the newspaper industry in Japan.

The intricate ties between the state and the press were not limited to often covert financial support from the former to the latter. The personnel connections were as extensive, and far more overt. The pro-government *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun*, for example, was particularly close to the Choshu clique struggling to control the government, and by 1891 it was under the direct control of Hirobumi Ito and Kaoru

Inoue, both Choshu natives. The paper was headed by Miyoji Ito, chief secretary of the Privy Council and trusted aid to Hirobumi Ito – in secret, because it was against the law for an official to hold another office in the private sector.

Masayoshi Matsukata of the Satsuma clique countered this move by founding *Keisei Shimpō* in 1891, in spite of the fact that he was then prime minister. Over the years, *Mainichi Shimbun* (including its predecessors) invited bigwig politicians to serve as its president – both Takashi Hara and Takaaki Kato, for example, went on to serve as the nation's prime minister during the Taisho period – while *Asahi Shimbun* (and its predecessors) developed extensive relationships with former bureaucrats of the Ministry of the Interior in particular. And the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, an old "small paper" that was acquired in 1924 by Matsutaro Shoriki, an ex-elite police bureaucrat, of course, has eventually grown to become the newspaper with the largest circulation in the world.

### CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES IN THE POSTWAR ERA

Once *Asahi Shimbun*, the last national paper to remain critical of militarism, shifted its position and began contributing to the war effort after the 1930 Manchurian Incident, press freedom and truthful reporting of news disappeared from Japan. In fact, the papers who actively collaborated with the wartime regime received secret funds and preferred paper rationing as well as being supplied with top management personnel.

What is striking, however, is the fact that all of the major national dailies referred to here survived the postwar reforms and disruptions intact. None were disbanded by the U.S. Occupation forces – and none saw fit to close themselves as an act of contrition. In fact, Taketora Ogata, the public "face" of *Asahi Shimbun* in the prewar period, not only served as a state minister and president of the intelligence bureau in the final years of the war, but once he was de-purged following the end of the Occupation in 1952 and the resumption of Japan's independence, continued to rise up the political ladder as chief cabinet secretary and deputy prime minister, as well as ascending to the presidency of the Liberal Party.

The *Yomiuri's* Shoriki, in a similar fashion, swiftly regained control of the newspaper and the Nippon TV empire after his de-purging and went on to become a member of the Diet, an active promoter of nuclear power, probable CIA asset, and a minister of the Science and Technology Agency.

The newspapers themselves, in general, became more liberal and more critical of state power in the newly democratized Japan, but some of the old habits that developed during wartime persisted in the postwar era. The much-criticized press club (*kisha kurabu*) system is an obvious case in point. The wartime government tried to control the media by organizing them into press clubs, and as one of many institutional continuities in postwar Japan, they survived the spate of U.S. Occupation democratization initiatives as they proved to be a handy way to manage the news. It was a cozy arrangement for the journalists as well, serving as an insiders' information cartel.

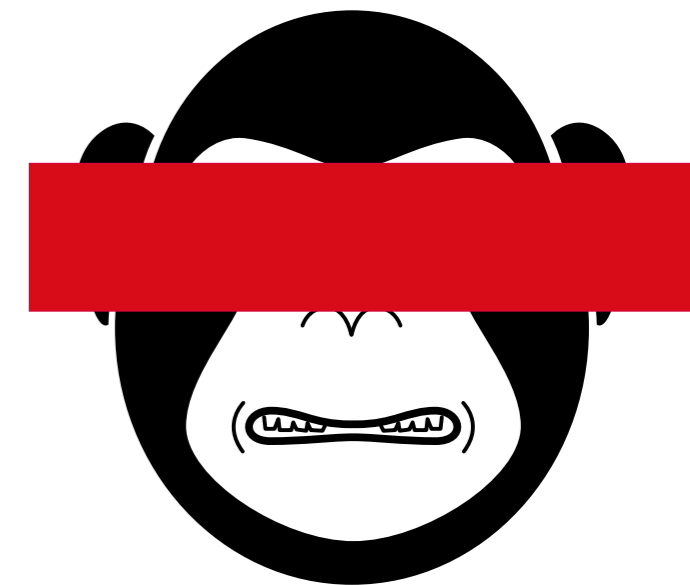
Through the club system, some of the most powerful men in the Japanese media rose and prospered. The now elderly emperor of the *Yomiuri* media empire, Tsuneo Watanabe, saw his career blossom in conjunction with the success of Yasuhiro Nakasone's political career in the 1970s and 1980s. And while most mainstream news organizations in Japan have not adopted a sweeping ban on journalists' participation in government councils, it boggles the mind to think how the journalists can critically examine the government policies they actively take part in formulating in the first place.

Toshio Hara, formerly of *Kyodo Press*, wrote in his 2009 book, *Janarizumu no Kanosei* ("Potential of Journalism"),

*The biggest sin of the press club system is not only that it is a closed information cartel, but also that the agenda-setting initiative of public debate in Japan is thus held by government ministries, parties, and big businesses. News sources thus control the news, and while the media is mobilized to lead public opinion in a certain direction, the journalists are hardly aware that that is a problem.*

This may indeed be among the most lasting and pervasive wartime legacies, the *happyo* (announcement) style journalism that makes a mockery of the Fourth Estate's presumed role of holding the government accountable. Even though news organizations today are not as dependent on the state for money or personnel as in the wartime period, the prevailing mindset is still very much one of dependency and subordination to the state. So much of what passes as "news" in Japanese newspapers and television programs amount to mindless, uncritical announcements of government initiatives and policies.

The press was generally repentant about the wartime collaboration with militarist leaders in the early postwar period and adopted a critical attitude towards the conservative government agenda. Change began in the 1970s when the *Sankei Shimbun* shifted to the right, adopted an overtly pro-government, pro-LDP stance, and started to criticize the other newspapers as "biased" and left-leaning. Further change occurred as *Yomiuri Shimbun*, too, began to shift to the right in the 1980s as Watanabe, a close associate of Prime Minister Nakasone, rose to take increasing control of the paper's media empire.



The fact that the press was now divided between pro-government, right-leaning papers and critical liberal papers is not necessarily a matter of concern. After all, it is both normal and desirable in a liberal society to have a diversity of views represented by the media. What is both interesting and worrisome at the same time, however, is that a less unified media environment did not lead to a freer, more open and more pluralistic and vibrant press culture in the subsequent years, but instead resulted in the considerable decline in press freedom that we witness today. ❶

Koichi Nakano is Professor of Political Science at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Sophia University.

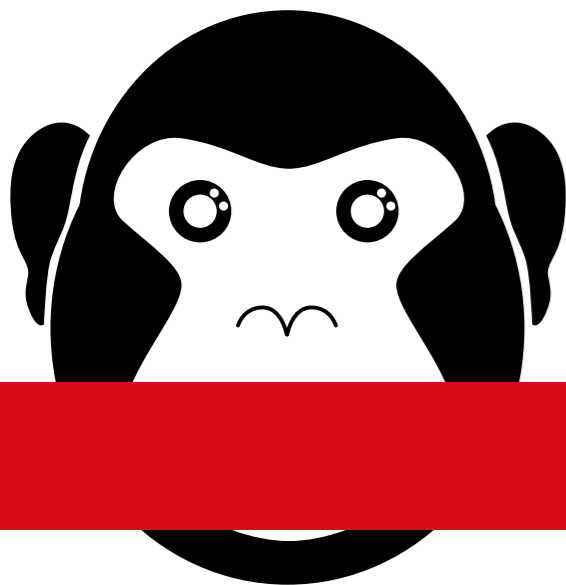
# Trials in the shadows

*This excerpt from Press Freedom in Contemporary Japan describes how reporters for the news media face some formidable barriers in trying to cover criminal court cases in Japan, even after the fact.*

by LAWRENCE REPETA AND YASUOMI SAWA

There are few news categories that attract more attention than criminal prosecutions. Everyone has a strong interest in maintaining a high standard of public safety and in confirming that police power is exercised in a responsible manner. And everyone involved in the news business is well aware that tales of crimes – especially sensational crimes or those involving celebrities – sell the news. So reporting crime and criminal prosecutions is high on the agenda of all news media.

Article 82 of Japan's Constitution recognizes the immense public interest in criminal prosecutions and other trials,



declaring that “Trials be conducted and judgement declared openly.” Despite this unambiguous statement, Japan's legal community has conspired to spin a web of secrecy around criminal trials. Journalists face countless obstacles in reporting criminal prosecutions.

The veil of secrecy descends at the time of arrest. In general, suspects can be detained up to 23 days before an indictment is filed. During this period, police and prosecutors interrogate suspects at will, while the suspects themselves are often prohibited from seeing anyone other than attorneys and immediate family members. Suspects have no contact with the news media. When reporters try to build a story at this stage, their primary sources are often leaks from police interrogators.

Defense counsel are obvious sources of information, but they are barred from interrogation sessions so they may learn of confessions and other client statements only after the fact. And they may hesitate to speak to the press to protect client confidences. Even after an indictment is filed and trial commenced, reporters face other obstacles. In particular, defense counsel and their clients are subject to a relatively new restraint on talking to the press, created by laws passed in 2004.

## “UNINTENDED USE” OF TRIAL EVIDENCE

In response to widespread complaints that trials take too long, new rules that went into effect in 2005 created a pre-trial procedure that requires both the defense and prosecution to identify the issues and provide the other side with access to evidence in order to prepare for trial. This new procedure was a boon for defense counsel because there is no general rule requiring the government to disclose all evidence to the defense. Under the new procedure, defense counsel can get a relatively early look at evidence the government plans to present in court.

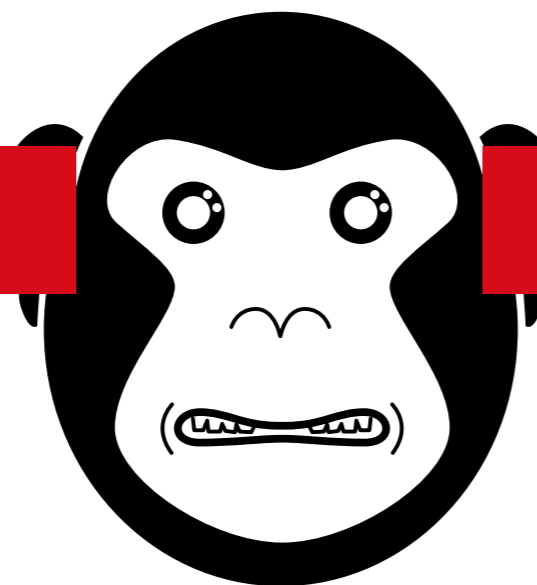
But there is a catch. Another new provision strictly prohibits defendants and their counsel from using disclosed evidence for any “unintended use” other than preparing for trial. Thus, news reporters may request to see this evidence, but defendants and their lawyers are prohibited from showing it to them – and violating this rule is punishable by fines and prison terms of up to one year.

This prohibition came into focus in May 2013 when a prose-

cutor filed a disciplinary procedure with the Osaka Bar Association against attorney Masami Sadamoto for sharing his client's interrogation video with an NHK reporter. The video had played a key role in gaining an acquittal by discrediting the prosecutors' allegation that the defendant confessed to strangling a victim to death, and the reporter later aired the footage on national television in an NHK program focused on the value of video-recording in identifying false confessions.

Prosecutor Yuji Ueno alleged that Sadamoto's disclosure violated the “unintended use” prohibition. Sadamoto argued that his act was legal and justifiable as the video was “important material describing the process of confessions that are contrary to the deposer's intent,” showing that “investigators

ANDREW POTHECARY



sometimes cherry-pick their preferred information and even modify or fabricate it.” He claimed that revealing such injustice serves an important public interest.

After eight months of deliberation, the bar association panel concluded that his act did violate the unintended use prohibition, but “giving weight to . . . his intentions, the propriety of his means, and the lack of actual harm,” that discipline was not appropriate. The “unintended use” rule has quickly become an entrenched feature of Japan's criminal trials. Some bar associations have even adopted ethical rules cautioning members against unauthorized disclosures.

Many reporters complain that it hamstrings their work. The rule was applied in the infamous Ashikaga case, which involved a murder conviction based on a false confession. Audio-tapes of the defendant's 1992 confession were first disclosed to defense counsel in 2009. Although defense attorney Hiroshi Sato spoke regularly with news reporters, he was required to withhold the tapes due to the prosecutors' insistence on the rule. The defendant was ultimately released from prison later that year, following a retrial that resulted in acquittal.

Creative application of the unintended use rule has even affected law schools. In 2006, Tokyo prosecutors blocked a Japanese equivalent of the “Innocence Project,” in which criminal justice experts and law students at Waseda University inspected court records together. The prosecutors said that allowing students to examine the records serves an educational purpose that has nothing to do with trial preparation and therefore violates the rule.

## BARRING ACCESS TO TRIAL RECORDS

The most authoritative source of information on any criminal trial is the trial record itself. However, Japan's courts interpret the Code of Criminal Procedure to require that all records in criminal trials be sealed throughout the duration of the trial and all appeals. Like other members of the public,

**“We'll let you see nothing . . . We will never disclose anything else.”**

news reporters are blocked from access.

In 1987, the Diet passed a law governing the preservation of and access to trial records after appeals are exhausted and court decisions final. Oddly, this statute provides that trial records are not to be maintained by the courts, but by the prosecutors' office in the jurisdiction where the case was initially filed. And while Article 4 of the law declares the general rule that such records must be disclosed to anyone who requests them, this rule is subject to broad and vague exceptions – a perfect example of a case where “the exceptions have swallowed the rule.”

Access under the law was tested in some high-profile cases soon after it took effect. One involved the renowned freelance journalist Shoko Egawa, known for her work investigating police misconduct and wrongful convictions. When Egawa sought access to court records concerning the 1988 conviction of a police officer for rape of a female detainee in a police jail, her request was denied on the ground that disclosure would damage public order and morals, hinder rehabilitation of the offender (a police officer) and injure reputations of related persons. The official who denied the request told her, “The idea that everyone may access records is just what's written in the law. The reality is, we disclose almost nothing.”

After Egawa filed suit, the prosecutor offered to voluntarily disclose the text of the judgment and another 31 documents, which she found to be irrelevant to her area of interest. The reason the officer gave for denying her the bulk of the records was that she was a journalist and was planning to write about the case. In the end, Egawa's suit was fruitless. The court declined to order any access beyond the prosecutor's voluntary offer.

Another case that took place soon afterward concerned one of Japan's most powerful politicians. In 1992, Shin Kanemaru, vice president of the ruling LDP at the time, was prosecuted for failing to report donations of several million dollars. Kanemaru admitted to receiving the money and resigned his position. There was a great uproar after Kanemaru escaped the expected criminal trial when prosecutors applied a special procedure that did not require him to appear in court and agreed to an extraordinarily light punishment with no prison time.

After the court decision was final, a news industry researcher filed a request to examine the trial record. Provided access to only superficial portions of the record, he filed suit, arguing that Article 82 and other provisions of the Constitution guaranteed his access to the files. But the trial court ruled against him, ordering only limited disclosure. He appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, but in 1992, the court upheld the trial court action, ruling that no constitutional rights were involved. Thus, the trial of one of Japan's most powerful politicians for improperly receiving a large sum of money took place essentially in secret.

The 1987 law remains in effect today, and prosecutors continue to enjoy broad discretion in deciding whether and what portions of trial records to disclose. For their part, news reporters continue to make requests. For example, when veteran *Mainichi Shimbun* reporter Hiroshi Dai requested records from a bid-rigging case in 2014 that involved many former high-ranking government officials, he was told, “[W]e'll let you see nothing – if anything, only the text of the judgment. Of course, any private and personal information in it will be blacked out. We will never disclose anything else.”

The official implied that the disclosure policy prioritizes financial interests over journalism by saying, “We won't disclose – especially because you are going to run a story on it. If you intended to use the record for something like an insurance payment, that would be different.” Some reporters have had somewhat greater success, but this seems quite serendipitous – a key feature of the system is its decentralized nature and the nearly unlimited discretion exercised by local prosecutors' offices.

Although the Constitution guarantees freedom of “speech, the press and all other forms of expression,” Japan's National Diet, courts and government agencies have adopted laws, made court decisions and enacted policies that create serious obstacles to the exercise of these rights, especially freedom of the press. Because the public relies heavily on news organizations for information concerning matters of broad public interest, these restrictions significantly limit the people's right to know and their ability to understand and influence public policy. ❶

**Lawrence Repeta** is a professor of law at Meiji University, best-known as the plaintiff in a landmark suit decided by the Supreme Court of Japan in 1989 that opened courts to note-taking by spectators. **Yasuomi Sawa** is an investigative reporter at Kyodo News, who recently worked with the Panama Papers project led by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

# Yoichi Yabe

by TYLER ROTHMAR

Yoichi Yabe is a photographer, chiefly of nautical races and vessels, but his love of sailing and the elements preceded any knowledge of how to shoot them.

Born in 1957 in Mishuku, an area in Tokyo's Setagaya Ward, Yabe nurtured an interest in music and guitars even as he studied law and international politics at Hosei University. He landed a scholarship and spent his third year of study at the University of California San Diego, where he took a course in sailing out of the school's training facility in Mission Bay. "I was fascinated by all the knowledge that is condensed into sailing ships," he says. "All the different riggings, all the details – it's a crystallization of human knowledge and culture."

Yabe returned to Japan, where after graduation he found himself at odds with his parents' wishes: He wanted to make the acoustic guitars he'd loved to play as a student, while they were loath to see him enter a field in which his education would be all but useless.

As a kind of compromise, he joined the Yamaha Corporation in the stereo equipment division, hoping somehow to change tack to guitar production. But he was assigned to sales, eventually working at the firm's headquarters in Hamamatsu. Frustrated with the limitations of company life and longing for autonomy, he bought a small dinghy and sailed Lake Hamanako on the weekends.

One day Yabe noticed an ad in *Kazi*, Japan's preeminent sailing magazine, the publisher of which was seeking a staff photographer. The successful recruit would be 27 or under, have a love of the sea and boats, be able to speak English, and, curiously, have no experience with photography. Being 27 and a perfect fit in all regards, Yabe was taken on and trained in editing text as well as taking pictures. Before long he was sent to Europe for six months to cover yacht races from a base in the UK. The year was 1989.

Covering a race typically involves riding ahead of the competition in a powerboat full of other photographers. There is rivalry and camaraderie in equal measure, Yabe says, and much depends on the skill of the photo-boat captain in bringing them close to the action without interfering with it. Large races attract multiple photo boats, which compete for vantage even as individual photographers negotiate with the captains and their peers for the same. The resulting melee is as thrilling as it is unpredictable.

"The windier the conditions get, the better the photography becomes. Action, the power of the waves and wind, brings the movements and ten-

sion of the crews to a near peak. Everything is heightened, and the windier it gets, the wetter we get," Yabe says, adding that doing the job well is a combination of economy of movement, equipment management, and luck. He refers to his early period of shooting European races such as the Admiral's Cup and the Whitbread Round The World Race as "good training."

FROM THIS Foothold he climbed, eventually covering everything from the America's Cup to the Olympics. The scope of Yabe's work has likewise increased: Assignments from a range of clients have included chronicling the major refit of the storied J-class yacht *Endeavour* in New Zealand, and profiling solo racer Kojiro Shiraishi, 49, a national hero and the youngest person ever to sail around the globe alone when he was 26, whom Yabe counts as a good friend.

In 1999, Yabe founded his own company, Office 11, though he is still a contracted chief photographer for Kazi Co. The arrangement affords him the freedom to cover events of his choice with the equipment of his choosing, something that's extremely valuable to him. He sometimes shoots from hired helicopters, too.

Although he made the switch to digital with everyone else, Yabe says he misses one specific aspect of the film era that affects the photos themselves: optical acuity. "Everything was manual at that time; manual focus, manual everything," he explains. "Because of that, the optical quality of the camera's finder was very high, and it was easy to focus. But nowadays autofocus is the major technology, and camera makers don't invest in the optical system. It's very hard to focus manually – you don't see the peak. In the film days, you could focus on the face of a crew member on a yacht from a distance. That part I really miss, and it makes the photos different. The way you focus is very important."

When he has time, Yabe practices aikido as well as Kashima Shin-ryu kenjutsu, a traditional sword art with centuries of history. He also enigmatically professes a love of mangoes, and hopes one day to grow them: "A warm climate. A small shack in the middle of a mango farm. A small dinghy or sailboat. This is my dream."

Until then, he remains a professional shutterbug, covering events around the world in both photos and text while pursuing a private quest to document the wind, the waves and the light. "These are the elements that I'm chasing," he says.

"Many times I have been at the right place at the right moment to meet good people, good boats. I've been lucky," he adds. ●

**"The successful recruit would be 27, have a love of the sea and boats, be able to speak English, and, curiously, have no experience with photography."**



Tyler Rothmar is a Tokyo-based writer and editor.

# Women power the reconstruction of Kitakami



*The restoring of a tsunami-battered community in Miyagi Prefecture has been enhanced by an approach that values listening to its citizens and involving women in all aspects of planning.*

by JOHN R. HARRIS

Six-and-a-quarter years after the 3/11 tsunami took the lives of 185 residents of Kitakami, six elderly women left widowed and homeless will finally move into a social housing complex specially designed to meet their shared desire to live out the rest of their days together. Although long in coming, this small step will mark an important victory for the citizens of Kitakami, a community of 3,900 inhabitants on the northern fringe of Miyagi Prefecture's Ishinomaki City.

The tsunami that barreled up the mouth of the Kitakami River on the afternoon of March 11, 2011, defied all expectations. Since the city branch office was a designated evacuation site, 37 residents took refuge there along with 20 local officials. But after the full force of the tsunami struck the building only three survived, including Teruo Konno, a municipal official who has since played a key role in reconstruction efforts.

Meanwhile, just across Japan's fourth-largest river, 80 pupils and teachers perished at the Okawa Elementary School after the principal opted to follow the rulebook and keep everyone assembled in the schoolyard instead of climbing a nearby slope.

Few Tohoku communities experienced greater devastation. And with most of Kitakami's administration lost, Konno and the other surviving officials were too overwhelmed with immediate response to even begin thinking about reconstruction. That's partly why Konno made the pivotal decision to delegate planning efforts to Kitakami's economic development committee, a group of citizens and local businesspeople. Repurposed as the Kitakami Town Planning Committee in February 2012, the group's efforts are now being hailed as a model for inclusive community rebuilding.

BY NOW, FEW OBVIOUS traces of devastation remain along Tohoku's coast, save for vast, eerily empty lots. Roads, rails and other infrastructure have been restored by massive gov-

ernment spending. Although 45,000 Tohoku families still live in temporary housing, new multi-story housing blocks are sprouting on the heights behind the coast.

"The best thing about reconstruction in Japan, is that we do it very quickly, which is of course essential," says Akiko Domoto, former Chiba governor and now an activist in the multi-lateral process aimed at improving global Disaster Response and Reconstruction (DRR). "But Japanese officials are slowly coming to realize that the social fabric of local communities is too often sacrificed in the haste to get the job done quickly."

Domoto, who heads the Japan Women's Network for DRR (jwndrr.org), an advocacy group focused on the social aspects of disaster planning and response, believes citizen involvement is the answer, before and after a calamity: "There is no substitute for intensive consultation if reconstruction plans are to meet the needs of everyone - especially women, the elderly, children and the disabled. Ideally, the mechanisms for this should be prepared before disaster strikes. Organizing after the fact takes a lot of time and effort. So governments typically prefer to make one standard plan and, to avoid favoring one area over another, impose the same thing on all communities. This is why Kitakami is such a rare and important model."

At a Tsunami Awareness Day symposium, held in Tokyo last October, government bureaucrats and construction industry people sat down together with DRR social-policy advocates to hear Kitakami's story. "It was a wonderful moment," Domoto says. "You could see the lights go on as they finally got the point."

LIKE MANY TOHOKU COMMUNITIES, Kitakami has always been closely knit, a tight cluster of low-rise houses around the harbor and riverside, steeped in traditional customs and relationships that order the ways of its fishery and local festivals.

After losing so much to the tsunami, however, it was obvious to all that the village could not be rebuilt exactly as it was: the wisdom of moving to higher ground was undeniable. What was not obvious was how the plans for a new community could restore its damaged social fabric.

Most other damaged communities had little chance to even consider such questions. Traumatized, habitually obedient to authority and eager to rebuild quickly, most communities meekly accepted one-size-fits-all government plans to replicate suburban Japan, with serviced lots for those able to rebuild single-family houses and multi-story social housing blocks for others. Typically, units are distributed by drawing

lots, so instead of living next to long-time friends or relatives people end up with randomly assigned neighbors.

Teruo Konno and his surviving colleagues in Kitakami's local administration opted to take a different route in delegating responsibility to what was initially an ad hoc group of local residents - and not only because their ranks were decimated and overwhelmed. Konno says they had also learned vital lessons from other disaster-stricken communities.

"Citizen consultation is clearly important," Konno says, "but we realized that when you put municipal officials in front of a group of people traumatized by the loss of homes, families and livelihoods, too often the result is endless complaints and arguments. Nothing gets done."

## Women with a plan

Left, five of the six women who won the right to live as neighbors. Below, the planned layout of Nikkori's social housing.

"We learned a lot from the experience of Yamakoshi in Niigata" [which had to rebuild after the 2004 Chuetsu quake]. "Their consultation process took three years, but in the first two years only men were involved . . . and all they did was argue. Then they brought local women into the process and everything was resolved quickly."

DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY TO A citizen-led group not only created a buffer between bureaucrats and citizens, it harnessed the strength of Kitakami's tradition of neighborhood consultation - a channel where women have always had a voice. At the Tsunami Awareness symposium, one local man was quoted as saying: "This town has been made by women! We really didn't expect they could do so much."

"Women are just more practical and adaptable," counters Naomi Sato, a mother of three school-aged children, widowed by the tsunami, who stepped up to organize the consultation process. "When men lose everything they often become paralyzed, but we women just think, 'What are we going to make for dinner tonight?'"

Sato also says local women were better able to shoulder the burden: "This is volunteer work that most men didn't have time for because they were off working to pay the bills. I had never been involved in anything like this before, but I thought the best way to honor my husband's memory was to build a better community."

Encouraged by Konno and his colleagues, Kitakami's women began to hold a series of meetings focused on specific issues or neighborhood needs. Starting informally in 2012, the Town Planning Committee later took on official power delegated by Ishinomaki City. But as that change made it less open to ordinary citizens, subcommittees were formed, giving residents of each neighborhood a conduit to provide detailed input.

For critical meetings to decide on relocating residential areas to higher ground, female university students from outside the community were brought in to moderate. "This created a much better atmosphere than if we had tried to do it ourselves," Konno says.

Through these consultations, Kitakami residents achieved a strong consensus on the shape they wanted their new community to take. But in order to focus that into a detailed alternative to the standard government plans, sympathetic professional expertise was required.

Fortunately, Sendai-based architect Hiroyuki Teshima stepped forward soon after the disaster. Having been interested in the community's traditions before 3/11, his local knowledge quickly earned the locals' trust.

TESHIMA WAS PUT IN charge of designing the Nikkori housing complex, now nearing completion, which creates a new upland residential neighborhood and elementary school grouped around an existing junior high school.

Based on local consensus, Nikkori provides 25 serviced lots to those rebuilding single-family dwellings on higher ground, plus a 60-unit social housing complex mainly for seniors. Under standard plans, the houses would have all faced in the same direction and the social units might have been a multi-story concrete block - an alien structural form for small-town seniors. And both types of housing would have been allocated by lottery, randomly scattering people across the area.

Instead, Teshima designed the social housing as barrier-free single-story units grouped around shared gardens and common spaces to replicate the fabric of the old community. The single-family houses were oriented to optimize ocean views. And who gets to live where was decided by consensus - after extensive discussion.

Where contractors initially recommended bulldozing the entire area into a flat plateau, Teshima integrated the new dwellings into the existing topography and preserved the surrounding forest to serve as a natural windbreak. Not only is the result more visually appealing, it slashed the cost of earth-moving.

Public input also determined the compact layout of the neighborhood center, with elementary school, baseball diamond and festival space all grouped together, and surrounded by housing. "The ultimate aim," Teshima says, "is to feel the area's energy wherever you stand."

Still, when the new development is completed in June, nothing will give Konno, Sato and Teshima more satisfaction than watching six elderly widows settle into their new nest. During the consultations, they shyly approached the committee with a photo of themselves holding hands. "Can you please give this to the mayor?" they asked. "Tell him we have come to depend on each other in temporary housing. Now all we want is a place where we can look after each other until the end."

"Kitakami's experience teaches a lesson of global importance," says Domoto, who led successful efforts to have gender issues recognized as fundamental to disaster best practices in the Sendai Framework adopted by the Third UN World Conference on DRR in March 2015. "Beyond being particularly vulnerable in disasters, women have inherent strengths that are a vital source of resilience. Kitakami shows how we can harness women's natural power." ●

John R. Harris is a freelance writer and journalist who lives in Onjuku, Chiba. Yasufumi Horie assisted with this story.



A Tokyo Shimbun journalist recalls his time with the half-brother of the North Korean leader and expresses shock at his recent murder.

## Who was Kim Jong-nam?



by JUSTIN McCURRY

IT IS LITTLE WONDER that Yoji Gomi appeared tired, and at times close to tears, during his recent appearance at the FCCJ. Just three days had passed since his friend, Kim Jong-nam, had apparently been murdered while waiting to check-in for a flight home to Macau from Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

As one of the few journalists to have spent significant amounts of time with Kim, the elder half-brother of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, Gomi has been in huge demand for insights into the possible reasons and people behind Kim's death at the age of 46. Gomi said he did not wish to speculate on who

tell his opinions to Pyongyang through me or other media," Gomi said at a press conference on Feb. 17. "He said that the only way that North Korea could survive would be to go through the series of reforms and liberalization that China had carried out." In his discussions with Gomi, Kim had criticized North Korea's hereditary transfer of power in a socialist society, saying that the leader should be democratically elected.

Kim Jong-nam's death had come as "a great shock" to Gomi and his wife, who accompanied her husband to Macau for his first meeting with the exiled Kim in January 2011. That meeting, plus several

**"I'd heard rumours that he was a playboy and was crazy about gambling, but the man I encountered was polite, and with a keen intellect"**

was behind the killing, or their possible motivations. As the *Number 1 Shimbun* went to press, police in Malaysia had arrested four people, including one North Korean, while another four North Koreans wanted in connection with the attack have reportedly fled to their home country.

Gomi spoke fondly about Kim Jong-nam – calling him a man with "a keen intellect" who, despite his public image as an inveterate gambler and womanizer, had displayed great personal courage in speaking out against the North Korean regime under his younger half-brother. "Even if it put him in danger, he wanted to

hours of follow-up interviews and about 150 emails, formed the basis of Gomi's 2012 book, *Kim Jong Nam: My Father, Kim Jong Il and Me*.

GOMI, A SENIOR STAFF writer at the *Tokyo Shimbun*, cast doubt on widespread speculation on the reason Kim Jong-nam had been overlooked to succeed Kim Jong-il. In May 2001, Kim was reported to have caused his father deep embarrassment after he tried to enter Japan via Narita Airport on a forged Dominican Republic passport. Accompanied by his wife, their nanny and young son, they had said they were planning to visit Tokyo Disneyland.

"He told me that he didn't think the Disneyland incident was the reason Kim Jong-un was chosen over him to become the next leader," said Gomi, adding that the half brothers had never met.

Gomi believes Kim quickly grew disillusioned with the North Korean political system soon after he returned to the country after attending school in Switzerland.

In a possible sign that he was being groomed for leadership, Kim was asked to accompany his father in the early 1990s on a nationwide tour of farms and factories to witness the country's economic development. "He said he saw the reality of the country's situation on that trip, and that was when he started expressing views that contradicted those of his father," said Gomi. "That's what prompted him to start leading a 'wild' life and eventually to leave the country."

Gomi said Kim had made several trips to Tokyo, where he enjoyed singing karaoke and drinking in the bars of Ginza with South Koreans, North Koreans and Japanese.

The reporter's friendship with Kim began after a chance meeting at Beijing airport in 2004. "I'd heard rumors that he was a playboy, had complicated relationships with women and was crazy about gambling, but the man I encountered was polite, and with a keen intellect," Gomi said.

They began exchanging regular emails in 2010. Kim gave Gomi permission to use his comments in the book, but became more cautious after Kim Jong-un became North Korean leader in December 2011. In a message to Gomi soon after the succession, Kim Jong-nam requested that he delay publication of the book, describing the timing as "difficult." Gomi said: "I thought that it was important to tell the world about Kim Jong-nam's philosophy and humanity, and hoped it might bring about a change in North Korea's relationship with Japan and other countries, so I decided to go ahead and publish."

He informed Kim of his decision and, after a gap of several days, received a response in early January 2012. "He emailed me back to say there would be no more contact between us," Gomi said. ●

Justin McCurry is Tokyo correspondent for the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers in London and writes for the *Lancet* medical journal. He also reports on Japan and South Korea for France 24 TV.

### JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...

... at 7:00pm on Monday, March 24 for a special screening of the immersive, award-winning documentary *Don't Blink – Robert Frank*, about the renowned photographer-filmmaker-prickly character whose seminal 1958 *The Americans* completely revolutionized the art of photography and is now considered the most influential photo book of the 20th century. The irascible, reclusive artist, 90 years old when the film was made, appears relaxed and insightful as his long-time collaborator, Laura Israel, captures him at work in a variety of settings, from his New York loft to his isolated cabin in Nova Scotia. Like a visual game of free association that pays tribute to Frank's purposely imperfect, impromptu, personal style, *Don't Blink* is cut together as if it were one of the restless artist's frequent road trips, with rapid-fire montages of his photographic and film work, from his fashion-snapping years with *Harper's Bazaar* and his freelance photojournalism, to his handmade-style films and his friendships with Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and other assorted counterculture artists, as well as with the everyday people who continue to fascinate him. Israel will be on hand for the Q&A session following the screening. (USA, 2015; 82 minutes; English with Japanese subtitles.)

– Karen Severns



### THE MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE'S "HIDDEN GEMS"

IN 2017, THE FCCJ will start a new initiative: "FCCJ in-house Networking," bringing together working journalists and PR officials of associated member companies. It is the brainchild of the Club's Membership Marketing Committee, of which I – PR director at Wacom, Co. Ltd. – am a member.

I became an Associate Member of FCCJ in May 2015 in order to develop and strengthen Wacom's relationships with the foreign media. Club programs, such as "Meet the Press" – the series of speeches by bureau chiefs of the leading foreign media – are useful in that respect as we can get acquainted with the people involved in the program. Building on this momentum, the MMC is planning to begin a new initiative called "FCCJ in-house Networking" between working journalists and PR officials of associated member companies.

Specifically, this program offers a platform for match-making among journalist members, their colleagues and company PR representatives. Company PR officials will speak about their company's business and products/services so that journalists can get in-depth, first-hand information direct from the source. Each session, which will last from one to one-and-a-half hours, will consist of presentations and Q&A sessions with representatives from two or three companies.

There are many opportunities in Japan, "hidden gems" one might call them, waiting for discovery by journalists. Some of them, the MMC believes, might be right under our noses, within the walls of the Club itself.

– Ted Kanno



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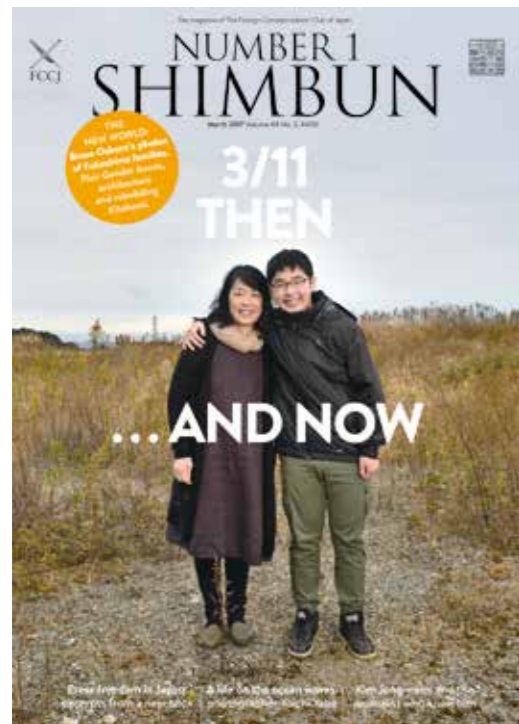
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FCCJ EXHIBITION



**Fukushima  
Photographic Journey**  
Photography: Bruce Osborn  
Chief Organizer: Hitoshi Maruoka

SIX YEARS HAVE PASSED since the tragedy of 3/11 struck Tohoku. I watched the live coverage in disbelief as the tsunami swallowed buildings, cars – anything that was in its way. In Fukushima Prefecture alone, 164,865 people were forced to flee as a result of the nuclear accident and the evacuation order from the government. As of November 2016, there are still 84,289 people who have not been able to return home. Japan has not seen such a large relocation of its population since World War II.

The word *furusato* is roughly translated as “hometown,” but it has a much deeper meaning in Japanese. It is the place where you were born and raised, and the family’s ancestral home. For generations, Fukushima families have lived on this land, cultivating the fields and praying at the local shrines for a good harvest. In an instant, everything changed and whole communities were swept away.

Fukushima is now known throughout the world as a result of the media coverage of the earthquake and meltdown at its Daiichi nuclear plant. The words “tsunami,” “nuclear accident” and “evacuation” evoke images of great loss and communities that have been torn apart. Despite their hardships and uncertainty about the future, people have not forgotten how to smile and even laugh as they rebuild their lives. My motivation for starting this project was to preserve photographic memories of these proud people from Fukushima. And to share the love they have for their *furusato*. I hope that their traditions and culture will not fade away. ❶

*This project was made possible through a grant from the METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry).*



*The Hayashi family on our current cover (photographed in November 2016) and here in 2012*

**Hitoshi Maruoka** began his career as an editorial designer in Tokyo before relocating to Fukushima in 1995. He established “Glamorous Tohoku” in 2016 to help revitalize the community through promoting the beauty and culture of the Fukushima Prefecture.

**Bruce Osborn** has been based in Tokyo for over three decades. His work has appeared in many publications and advertisements. His “Oyako” (parents and children) series started as a personal project, but has grown into something much larger. He went to Tohoku to photograph displaced families and has been back to continue this work and to teach photography workshops to high school students. [www.bruceosborn.com](http://www.bruceosborn.com) [www.oyako.org](http://www.oyako.org)

**SPECIAL CAMPAIGN OFFER FOR NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

The FCCJ is offering a special deal for new Associate Members. Until March 31 this year, those joining are eligible for a **¥100,000 DISCOUNT** off of the regular fee of ¥300,000.

If successfully approved, the applicants will be able to enjoy all the member benefits: attendance at all the major press conferences and professional and social events; dining services at the Main Bar, Pen & Quill Executive Dining area and the Masukomi Sushi Bar; special discounts on sports, arts and cultural events; free wi-fi, half-price parking, the Club's monthly magazine; and access to reciprocal press clubs around the world.

Present members can also benefit. A ¥20,000 restaurant voucher will be given to those who introduce successfully approved new Associates. For more information, or to pick up an application form, go to the front desk.



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Chin Music Press



**REGULAR MEMBERS**

**SARAH BIRKE** is the *Economist's* Tokyo Bureau Chief, covering Japanese politics, society and business. Prior to this she covered the Middle East and North Africa, first as the regional correspondent and then as Bureau Chief, reporting on some 20 countries. A specialist in Syria, she has lived in Damascus, Beirut and Cairo. Prior to joining the *Economist*, she wrote for a range of publications including the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Times* (London). She has also contributed to the *New York Review of Books*, *London Review of Books* and the *New Republic*. Sarah also lived in Italy for two years and spent time wandering Liberia in West Africa. She speaks Arabic, English, French, Italian and Spanish.



**ADRIANA DIAZ** is Asia correspondent for CBS News. Adriana attended Princeton University and received her Master's from Columbia University and France's Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris. Before joining CBS News in 2012, Adriana reported for the in-school news program Channel One News and hosted Yahoo's "Trending Now" web show. For CBS, she's reported from the U.S. Midwest, China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Laos. Adriana has also covered Pope Francis' visits to Brazil in 2013, Israel and Palestine in 2014, Cuba in 2015, and Mexico in 2016, as well as the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. She is from New York City and speaks Mandarin, Spanish, and French.



**PEI-FANG TSAI** is the Tokyo correspondent for Taiwan's United Daily News Group. She graduated with a degree in Journalism from National Chengchi University and a Masters in Political Science from National Taiwan University, before starting as a reporter for GTV News in 2003. She then moved to BCC News from 2005 to 2007 before taking a position as Senior Reporter for United News Daily. She believes strongly in the media's role as a watchdog for the public's interest and has been recognized with several distinguished journalism awards in Taiwan.



**HIROSHI YOSHITSUGU**, TV Tokyo Corporation

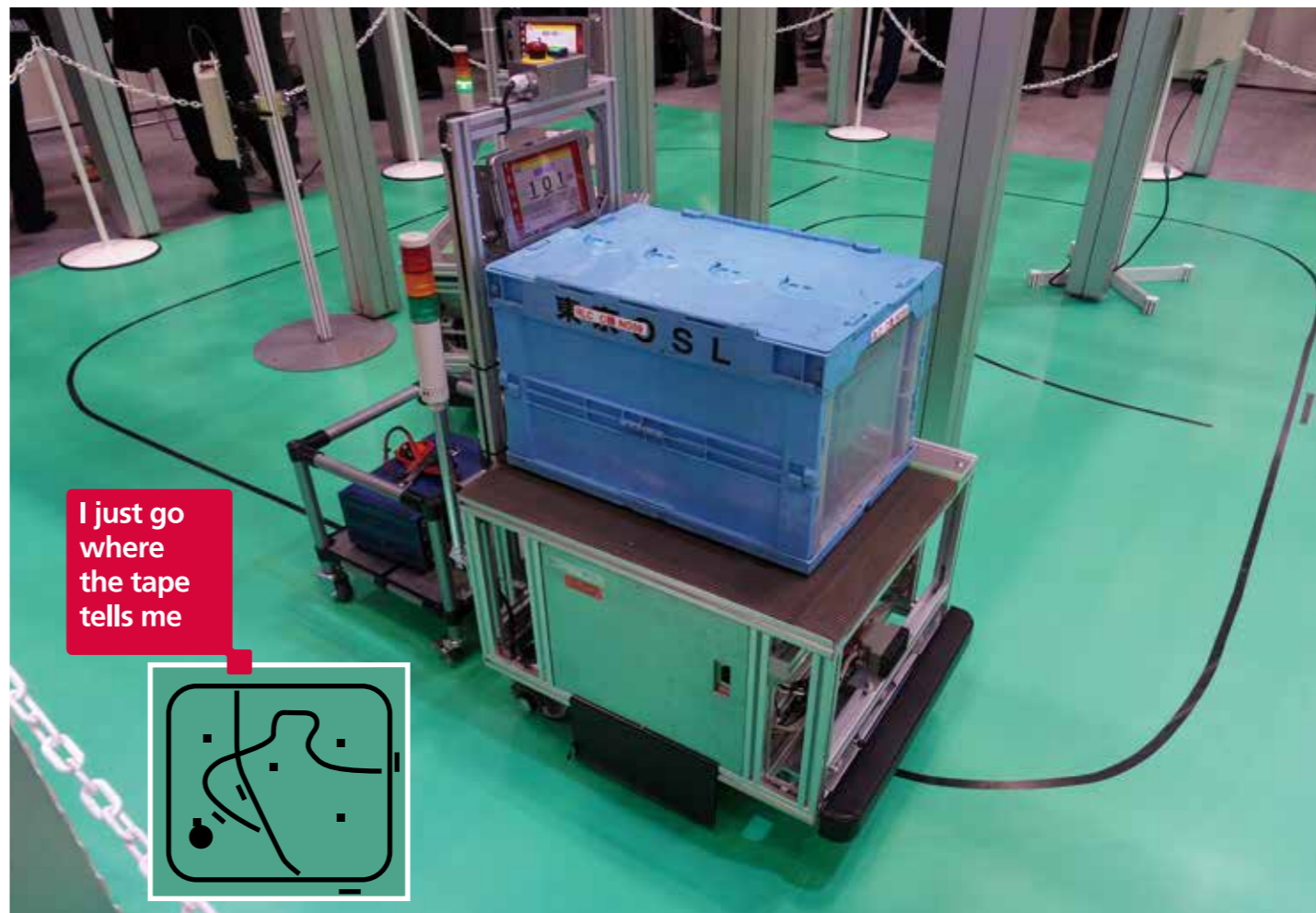
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# Where simplicity equals elegance... a roll of vinyl tape is a thing of beauty



A paradox perhaps, but nothing delights high-tech engineers like an elegantly simple low-tech solution. And for low-tech it's hard to beat a roll of black vinyl tape of the kind likely found in your kitchen drawer. But that humble tape is the guidance system for Ricoh's new Automated Guided Vehicle (AGV) that shuttles goods around warehouses.

Developed by Ricoh Industry, a subsidiary focused on industrial solutions, the compact AGV can carry 60 kg. on its back and tow a 250 kg. trailer, threading its way into spaces, elevators for example, where conventional forklifts can't fit. And AGV has reduced by 70% the labor needed for tasks it now handles in Ricoh warehouses. Even with such dramatic labor savings though, automated systems are hard to justify if they require too much high-tech gear and lack flexibility.

Until now, automated carriers have used magnetic sensors to follow magnetic tape permanently fixed to the floor. But with AGV Ricoh engineers realized, to their delight, they could use less-costly optical sensors to follow ordinary vinyl tape. To change the route, just rip up the tape and replace it. An elegantly simple solution, controlled by an off-the-shelf laptop.

Watch this video of AGV in action:  
[https://youtu.be/\\_HK7stB8EX8](https://youtu.be/_HK7stB8EX8)

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