



NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

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Nostalgic for Showa

Mark Schreiber on the media's sentimental trend

Sontaku: Lost in translation?

Entourage: following the emperor

Bruce Osborn: the photographer in profile

North Korea: Showdown in 1969



> THEME.12
> ZERO

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Stefano Carrer gets on board with the emperor

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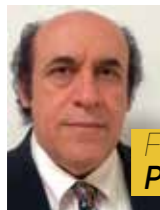
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From the President

SHIMBUN TIMES AHEAD

A group of journalists were invited to an alternative universe and, while having an audience with the king there, were handed a bundle of cash.

The following year, the same group were invited by the same king and, as in the previous year, all were handed more

cash except one journalist who looked puzzled.

The king asked him to come forward and whispered to the ears of the shaken journalist: "After your visit last year and getting my gift, you didn't write anything about me!"

The journalist replied immediately whispering, "Your Majesty, but I thought that I received that cash for NOT writing about you!"

I am reminded of this story every time I must write my president's column for our legendary magazine, *No. 1 Shimbun*, for which I was the editor from June 1999 to June 2000.

As there is no cash involved for me at least (never has been), I feel it is becoming harder to write in light of the new rules of club governance, with so many restrictions about what we can and can't write to the membership. For some articles I wanted to write, I had to consult with the Kanjis, the lawyers and others on some content and decided, in the end, to just quit it and search for new idea, but I can never quit our original mission of the "free exchange of information."

On the other hand, speaking of cash, I and members of the publication committee, as well as contributors, back in 1999, were all volunteers, thus as stipulated in our Bylaws, weren't paid.

Bylaws' Paragraph 12-3 says "Officers and committee members shall serve without personal compensation. However, they may be reimbursed for necessary official expenses, subject to approval by the Board. At official meetings on the Club premises their meals and refreshments, within reason, shall be provided without charge."

The Bylaws haven't changed. The times have. And back then most contributors were FCCJ members who had stable jobs and income and, even though it was difficult, we could always find writers even without paying them.

It has become harder to find writers who will work for free. So against this backdrop, I have decided that we need to draw the lines clearly and empower the publication committee to continue its success story to give it more energy and power at this crucial time,

This is why I have named former FCCJ president Dan Sloan as co-chair of the publications committee to work alongside current publications committee chair Gavin Blair and a new editorial team in charge of the content.

Dan and the team of the Publications Committee will look to realign the business model for the *No.1 Shimbun*, ensuring editorial contribution from Members on issues topical to the Club, expanding the number of authors and viewpoints expressed, but limiting the compensation for content to an infrequent honorarium for Members, and designated external payment to Nonmembers for the services of copy editing and compilation. Ways to improve on-line platforms for the FCCJ and its printed or video content will also be examined, with recommendations on *No.1* and 21st Century media strategies for the membership.

Our current editor, Greg Starr, will, from May 2017, continue as copy/layout manager while Andrew Potheary, our very able art designer, and John Harris, our talented advertisement expert, will also continue their excellent work separate from the editorial team. We are working for the magazine to stay with our basics, and the editorial team will work to set up standard payment guidelines for all contributors, both writers and photographers.

The *No. 1 Shimbun* is coming up on its 49th anniversary this September and as one of the club's icons, AP legend and former FCCJ president John Roderick, reported in then-newspaper's inaugural issue: "Newspapers must not be run behind closed doors..." this should prevail. And be *No. 1 Shimbun's* policy.

– **Khaldon Azhari**

TO THE EDITOR

IT HAS COME TO our attention that Mr. Yasuhiro Nakasone, former Prime Minister of Japan, was discussed in a recent issue of *Number 1 Shimbun* ["Catalyst for Change," March]. We would like to set the record straight.

Mr. Nakasone did not criticize the Emperor with regard either to the war or to Japan's defeat. The Emperor had, in fact, desired to avoid war but Japan's government structure is such that the Emperor's views are not reflected in policy, and the country went on a path to war and to defeat. The Emperor must have suffered deep pain at the course that Japan had taken. In the National Diet, then Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida was asked if the Emperor was considering abdication, and if this would free him from the painful sense of restriction, whether that request should be respected.

As prime minister of Japan, Mr. Nakasone did not instruct educators to teach patriotism nor did he request textbook revisions for that purpose. As prime minister, he established the Ad Hoc Council on Education to address educational reform. In that effort, internationalization and advanced information technology, together with cultural education, were included in the curriculum.

The matter of sales tax [had] nothing to do with his resignation. The Government Tax System Study Council and LDP Tax System Research Council proposed a sales tax which was planned for implementation. However, this proposal was met with strong opposition by the public. The Nakasone administration abandoned the plan and left it for the Takeshita administration to continue the effort. In the July 1986 election, Nakasone was swept to reelection. At that time, the term of office of the LDP president was two consecutive terms for a maximum of five years. In that election, the LDP achieved a remarkable total of 304 seats, so the four years of the LDP administration was extended by another year and Nakasone appointed Noboru Takeshita as his successor.

We trust the above explanations help to clear up any misunderstandings about the Nakasone administration.

Masaki Donji
Yasuhiro Nakasone Office

COLLECTIONS

SHOWA MEMORIES

25 The age Hirohito became Emperor

4.0

Number of children per married woman in agricultural occupations in 1952

2.9

Number of children per married woman in other occupations in 1952

15

The age Kakuei Tanaka left home to help his family working in construction

¥500 million

Amount Tanaka was fined after being found guilty in the Lockheed scandal in 1983

50cc

The engine size of the Honda Super Cub motorcycle launched in 1958, now the most produced motor vehicle in history



1960

The year the hula-hoop was banned in Japan for fear of mass impropriety (Two years after our cover star)



1,641,310

Record number of criminal cases reported – in 1988, not including traffic-related

169.7

Average height in centimeters of Japanese men in 1953

157

Average height in centimeters of Japanese women in 1980

Dollar/Yen exchange rate, Jan. 11, 1971

\$1 = ¥358.40

The age of Emperor Hirohito at the time of his death in 1989, marking the end of the Showa era **87**

Sources: National Tax Agency, UNFAO, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Communications Statistics Bureau

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE MAN WITH THE BATON



Seiji Ozawa, the Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, shared his views with Club members on March 17, 1978. Here, he is about to receive a name card from David Tharp (Freelance), FCCJ Secretary, while President Frederick "Ted" Marks (UPI) looks on. David Tharp, who later transformed from journalist into physician specializing in psychotherapy, participated in efforts to relieve posttraumatic stress disorders following the earthquake and tsunami in March of 2011. David died in October of 2012 at the age of 68 while on a visit to the U.S. Ted Marks also passed away earlier in the same year at age 69.

Seiji Ozawa, however, is still going strong at age 82. Although he had practiced piano at a young age, a hand injury resulted in a switch to conducting. In 1959 he won the top prize at an international competition in France, which brought him under the wing of Charles Munch, Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He later received a scholarship to study under Herbert von Karajan. Then he caught the attention of Leonard Bernstein, who made him assistant-conductor of the New York Philharmonic in the early 1960s, a position that led to his first professional appearance in 1962 with the San Francisco Symphony.

On a trip to Japan in December of 1962, disputes with players of the NHK Symphony Orchestra led to the cancellation of a performance (and a feud that only ended some three decades later when, according to an AP report, he led the famed orchestra in a charity concert for disabled musicians in 1995).

He led the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra as well as conducting the orchestras of Chicago, Toronto, San Francisco, Singapore and various others until his appointment as Musical Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1973. That appointment lasted for 29 years, during which time his achievements included several Emmy Awards. In 1984, together with Kazuyoshi Akiyama, he formed the Saito Kinen Orchestra in honor of an early Japanese musicologist mentor, that brought international Japanese musicians back to their homeland for annual concerts.

Known for his unorthodox conducting wardrobe, consisting of a white turtleneck in place of the traditional white-tie garb and his lion's mane hairstyle, Seiji Ozawa was not averse to controversy. He feuded with NHK, demanded changes at the Tanglewood Music Center and was entangled in battles over the quality of his work in Boston that contributed to his relinquishing a formal role there in 2002. But he has continued to lead major international orchestras in addition to being a modernist in classical music. Health problems, including esophageal cancer in 2010, have mostly brought an end to his active career. His achievements have been recognized by many awards over the years, including Japan's Order of Culture.

– **Charles Pomeroy**,
editor of Foreign Correspondents in Japan,
a history of the Club that is available at the front desk

In the not too distant future, Japan will have a new Emperor and a new *nengo*, or era name. And perhaps the media will eventually start looking back on the Heisei era with some sentimental attachment.

But for now, anyone with an eye on popular media will have noticed a long-running nostalgic romance with the Showa Era that seems to be peaking in recent months. The reasons for this explosion of interest are manifold, but surely among them must be the huge demographic of 94 million potential readers. Roughly three out of every four Japanese alive today were born in Showa – between the last week of 1926 to the first week of 1989. The oldest among them turn 90 this year; the youngest, 29.

The era was, if anything, a study in extremes: Economic depression, militarism, repression and war, followed by military occupation, economic recovery, and then prosperity, driven to a large extent by exports. Trade progressed from handicrafts – silks, carvings and ceramics – to cameras, electronics, motorcycles, automobiles, computers and fiber-optic components for passenger jets.

Such was the power of Showa, that today, three decades after its demise, its styles and influences not only endure, they thrive. Take the weekly magazines: Still printed in B5 size on unbleached newsprint, they are living dinosaurs, surviving with minimal evolution while other formats – such as the glossy photojournalism magazines of the 1980s – folded one after the next.

Shukan Shincho, almost unchanged in appearance from its launching in 1956, observed its 60th birthday last year, celebrating with a solid month of nostalgic stories. Folded inside its Feb. 22 anniversary issue was a facsimile reproduction of the magazine's debut issue, dated Feb. 19, 1956. Priced at around ¥400 now, the magazine retailed then for just ¥30.

The debut issue contained numerous recognizable departments that have changed very little over the past 60 years, such as the half-dozen short weekly news briefs.

Several of the briefs from '56 conveyed an unmistakable sense of *deja-vu*. The lead item, featuring a photo of General Douglas MacArthur, touched on debate over revision of the Japanese Constitution, which in 1956 was less than nine years old.



Trouble, rubble, toil and bubble

As the Heisei era enters its last months and days, the media is wringing out the last drops of Showa nostalgia.

by MARK SCHREIBER

political demise was swift and spectacular.

Last year marked the 40th anniversary of Tanaka's arrest for accepting bribes from Lockheed Aircraft Corp, stimulating a revival of interest in the man, including a slew of books and magazine articles. One publisher, Takarajima, devoted extensive coverage to Tanaka in two magazines and a 223-page book titled *One Hundred Sayings of Kakuei Tanaka*, with sales of over half a million copies. As with U.S. President Trump, there was no love lost between Tanaka and the Fourth Estate: "There are three things you can trust in newspapers," he once grumbled. "The obituaries, the stock quotations and the TV program listings."

If there were a single common factor in the appeal of Showa nostalgia it would be postwar childhood. Eight years ago, what could be called an extreme niche product began appealing to this demographic; a glossy 4-color bi-monthly publication called *Men Born in Showa 40* (1965).

Editor Akira Ogasawara, who was born in 1974, says that the magazine focuses on those born in 1965 because they make up "Japan's first TV generation." His readers, now age 52, enjoy reliving childhood experiences such as collecting sets of premiums sold with candy. They recall faithfully watching

"The sole point of contention," the writer remarked, "seems to be between those with the opinion that since the Constitution was imposed by the military occupation it must be revised in accordance with the will of the Japanese people, and – having been so imposed notwithstanding – those who are in accord as far as its contents pertaining to pacifism and renunciation of war, therefore in their view making revision unnecessary."

If a single individual can be said to dominate recent coverage of the Showa period, it would not be its imperial namesake but a prime minister who served for just two and a half years. Referred to in some quarters as the "computerized bulldozer," Kakuei Tanaka was the *enfant terrible* of Japanese politics in the early 1970s. A self-made man, a farmer's son who left school at age 15 to help his family by working in the construction trade, his smug self confidence was popular with the voters, but not with his political rivals, and his

Showa by numbers Opposite, *Men Born in Showa 40*'s recent cover; right, the recent mook (magazine/book) *99 Mysteries of Showa*, from UFOs to a Yokohama sex worker.

installments of "*Kamen Raida*" (Masked Rider) the superhero TV series created by the late cartoonist Shotaro Ishinomori. And they remember simply adoring virginal vocalist Mari Amachi, whose singing career eventually crashed and burned. A recent "where are they now?" feature in the magazine tracked down Amachi, now age 66. The accompanying photo did a remarkable job of concealing the ravages of age.

The crimes of Showa times are also recalled as part of the good old days. In mid-February, *Shukan Jitsuwa*'s publisher came out with a special edition titled "*Hanko seimei*" (letter admitting responsibility for a crime), which cataloged the previous era's most infamous crimes and criminals.

Leading the rogues' gallery was the audacious crook who in December 1968 impersonated a motorcycle policeman. He stopped a bank car by tricking the occupants into thinking it was carrying a bomb, and drove off with the Toshiba Fuchu factory's ¥300 million year-end cash bonus. The shipment was insured so losses were minimal, and despite a massive long-running manhunt, the robber was never apprehended.

Two serial murderers and rapists, Yoshio Kodaira and Kiyoshi Okubo, and the bloodthirsty radicals of Japan's United Red Army, are also recalled, the latter for their fanaticism and sheer persistence (some are still at large). And finally there's the late Kazuyoshi Miura, the businessman who managed to evade a murder rap over the suspicious shooting of his wife in 1981, while on a visit to Los Angeles. (He was the prime suspect in the death of a girlfriend, also in California.) Described by *Newsweek* as "The Man They Love to Hate," Miura spent over a decade in prison on other charges, but the prosecutor never was able to convict him for arranging the murder of his wife. He committed suicide in a Los Angeles jail cell in 2008.

Another recent publication is the mook *99 Mysteries of Showa*, from Million Shuppan. Among its contents are photos from an abandoned village in the creepy Aokigahara "Sea of Trees" – one of Japan's most notorious suicide spots – near Mt. Fuji; the account of a JAL pilot who swears he encountered a UFO over Alaska; and the tale of "White Mary," who if not Yokohama's most famous whore certainly plied her trade the longest. In business since the Occupation years, she died at age 84 in 2005.

The national tabloid *Yukan Fuji* has also been giving Showa lots of heavy coverage of late. Its April 6 issue toured the north side of JR Nakano station, which it described as "a mecca with the fragrance of retro Showa." The same page carried an installment of Shinobu Machida's regular weekly



Three decades after its demise, Showa's styles and influences not only endure, they thrive

Enfant terrible Below, the book cover of *100 sayings of Kakuei Tanaka*: "There are three things you can trust in newspapers. The obituaries, the stock quotations and the TV program listings."

column, "Showa Heritage," looking back at the old three-wheeled mini-trucks steered by motorcycle handlebars which plied city streets until the 1960s. Machida described those days as the "eve before Japan's modernization."

Overleaf in the same Wednesday *Yukan Fuji*, Kenichiro Nakamaru ran a weekly lesson in "Showa Lingo," introducing words and phrases that typified the era, like *abekku* (from the French *avec*, meaning a couple), *kurukuru-paa* (crazy), *gariben* (a grind at studies), *zukku* (exercise shoes), *suicchi on* (switch on, the first time to use a new electric appliance), *shakai no mado* (one's "social window," i.e., the front zipper on trousers) and "Washington Club" (a toilet, from the initials W.C.).

One recent entry was a popular buzzword from 1972: *Asshi ni wa kakawari no nee koto de gozanzu* – "It's got nothing to do with me" – spoken just before the climax of each episode of the TV period drama Kogarashi Monjiro. Played by actor, and later Diet member, Atsuo Nakamura, Monjiro was a nihilistic *ronin* who chewed on foot-long toothpicks while he roamed about the countryside. The standard tale would find people in distress pleading for his assistance, at which point he used this phrase to express his unwillingness to get involved. Invariably, though, he did the right thing, and intervened with a display of deadly swordsmanship. Monjiro's resemblance to the characters in Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns was typical of the widescale artistic borrowings that were common during these years.

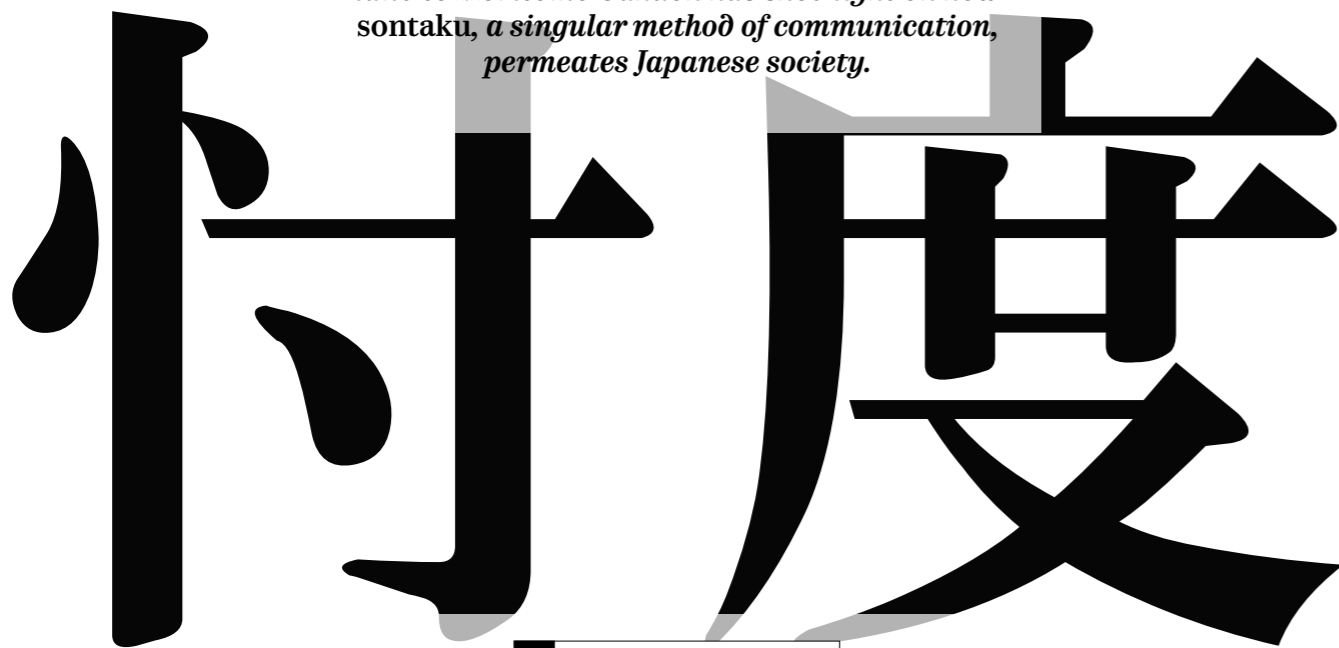
Economically speaking, the Showa era went out with a bang – the short-lived economic boom referred to as the *baburu keizai*. For some reason, the recent media attention has, for the large part, ignored the extravagance and excesses of that age, though the 2007 film, *Baburu e Go!* (*Bubble Fiction: Boom or Bust*), in which a time machine is used to return to the age when salarymen waved ¥10,000 bills to get the attention of spoiled taxi drivers, remains a popular staple on television. But it may be hard to get nostalgic about a time when ¥4,800 loaves of sourdough bread airfreighted from France attracted long lines of shoppers.

Indeed, Showa's cultural and emotional winds gusted so powerfully that in a sense, the first decade of Heisei could be said to have been dragged along in its slipstream. It took the western calendar – the arrival of the new millennium – to stamp out the blaze. But at least during the current media revival, the embers of Showa are still glowing brightly. ●

Mark Schreiber was born in Showa 22 and first arrived in Japan in Showa 40.

What's in a word

*The recent incident concerning the sale of national land to Moritomo Gakuen has shed light on how **sontaku**, a singular method of communication, permeates Japanese society.*



by EIICHIRO TOKUMOTO

At 6:00 p.m. on March 23, just as night began to fall, a full house of more than 220 people were jammed into the FCCJ dining room to await the arrival of the guest speaker. A phalanx of 26 TV cameras lined the back wall; some were there to broadcast the event live. At last, Yasunori Kagoike, controversial head of Osaka's Moritomo Gakuen, made his appearance before the foreign press, his first media event following his sworn testimony in the Diet that morning. Smiling, he was bathed in camera flashes as he took his seat at the head table.

The Moritomo Gakuen scandal is being called the greatest crisis for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe since the forming of his second cabinet in 2012. The school is under fire on a number of fronts. Pupils at its kindergarten undergo revisionist "patriotic education," including the recitation of the now-defunct Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890. And it was about to open a new elementary school with PM Abe's wife Akie as the honorary principal, to be built on national land that was sold to the school at a suspiciously low price. It was the latter issue – their purchase of the plot of land at a drastic discount far below the assessed value of the property – that directed suspicion towards Abe and his wife. It led Abe to vow in the Diet that he would resign and give up his seat if either he or his wife were found to have been involved in any wrongdoing related to the school.

One of the more conspicuous points that came out during the 100-minute-long press conference concerned a fax from Mrs. Abe's female aide to Kagoike in November 2015, noting that an inquiry had been made to the relevant section in the Ministry of Finance concerning Moritomo Gakuen's request for the land deal. The ministry had responded that they could

not grant the request. Yet not much later, the school was able to acquire the land at the highly favorable price – almost as if a gust of "divine wind" had passed over the institute.

Naturally reporters' questions at the press conference focused on the involvement of the Abes in the land deal, but when queried as to whether PM Abe gave the school favorable treatment, Kagoike made an interesting reply. While stating that he didn't think there was any direct influence by PM Abe, Kagoike remarked "*Sontaku wo shita*" (There was *sontaku*).

THIS TERM POSED NUMEROUS difficulties for the interpreter handling the event, who translated it as "reading between the lines." That wasn't enough for Kagoike's attorney and another interpreter, who added that in English the term can be interpreted to mean "conjecture," "surmise" or numerous other words. The foreign media added their own interpretations: Tokyo Bureau Chief Motoko Rich defined it as "powers at work behind the scenes" in the *New York Times*, while Leo Lewis of the *Financial Times* devoted a whole column to it, describing it as a "pre-emptive, placatory following of an order that has not been given," and pointing to it as a cop out used to avoid responsibility even in the corporate world, most recently in the Toshiba crisis.

But there's nothing new about *sontaku* in the political arena, and we can find a useful case study on the suspect term in events from over 40 years ago.

In October, 1974, the monthly magazine *Bungei Shunju* ran an investigative report by freelance journalist Takashi Tachibana about the then-Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's questionable political fundraising activities. Also appearing in the issue was an article by freelance journalist Taka-

ya Kodama titled "*Sabishiki Etsuzan-kai no Jo'o*" (The lonely queen of the Etsuzan-kai).

The Etsuzan-kai was the organization that managed Tanaka's huge political fund; its controller was Aki Sato, Tanaka's female secretary. The article reported on Sato's upbringing and her personal relationship with Tanaka, as well as her tremendous influence on Japanese politics.

Before the magazine went on sale, LDP Diet member Tokusaburo Kosaka, who held the position of Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, paid a visit to the publisher's head office. After meeting with the president, Kosaka departed through the magazine's editorial office, leaving his business card on the desk of the editor-in-chief, Kengo Tanaka, who happened to be absent. On the card, he had written the following message: "Please treat Ms. S. favorably" – "Ms. S," of course, being the PM's right-hand woman, Aki Sato.

Shukan Shincho, a weekly magazine published by a competitor, later ran an article about the politician's visit and the business card, resulting in an opposition party member questioning Kosaka at the Diet about whether the move was an attempt to discourage *Bungei Shunju* from publishing the article. Kosaka replied, "[with the president of *Bungei Shunju*] I discussed social trends, the problem of mistrust in politics and various other matters . . . but there is no truth whatsoever that I implied anything threatening." In other words, Kosaka had demanded *sontaku*.

IN THIS CASE, THE *sontaku* was ineffective. The magazine came out, and the articles by Tachibana and Kodama were important factors in PM Tanaka's resignation two months later, meaning that *Bungei Shunju* refused to accept the LDP's attempt at pressure.

A year later, a more successful example took place between the LDP and the Toho film studio. After Takaya Kodama, author of the *Bungei Shunju* article about Aki Sato, passed away at the age of 38 from lung cancer in May, 1975, the film company planned to produce a film about the reporter, presumably focusing on his investigative activities about Tanaka. The director and script writer for the film had already been named when the president of Toho halted the shooting, stating that "This kind of project is not appropriate when former PM Tanaka is down on his luck."

Toho Studio Vice President San- ezumi Fujimoto submitted his resignation in protest at the aborting of the project, and pressure from the LDP was seen as an extenuating factor. Just prior to the aborting of the film, Fujimoto said that an influential member of the LDP had telephoned him, saying, "I'd like to ask about the situation" [regarding the film], in what could be seen as a clear attempt to use *sontaku*. Toho studios denied that the cancellation had anything to do with political pressure, but following Tanaka's resignation, there were rumors that the former PM, leader of the LDP's largest faction, would harness his immense political influence and attempt to make a comeback. Drawing attention to his troubles, even in a film, would not be seen as helping his campaign.

Immediately after this, in the weekly magazine *Asahi Journal*, freelancer Takashi Tachibana looked into the Toho incident in an article titled "A perfect crime named political pressure." In it, he explained just how *sontaku* works. "Political

pressure from the LDP," he wrote, "after having undergone trial and error for many years, is exercised through exquisite and subtle techniques. Only on rare occasions are plain truths allowed to come to the surface. Political pressure is not applied in a blunt manner but through inquiries phrased using such euphemistic expressions as 'What is going on with regard to this?' or 'What is your intention?'"

He explained how *sontaku* is an attempt to avoid any evidence of the "crime." He wrote: "Even if the matter is exposed to the public, the side that did the coercing can stick to the story by saying that 'We absolutely deny having exerted any form of pressure,' and the side which was the target of the pressure can stick to saying, 'We absolutely deny having been pressured. Our company's action was just based on an internal decision.'" Since nothing has been spelled out in detail, this is, in a sense, true. Wrote Tachibana: "This is what makes it a type of perfect crime."

OF COURSE, THE USE of *sontaku* is by no means limited to Japanese politicians in the LDP. In the records of Diet proceedings since 1890, the word "*sontaku*" comes up nearly 290 times, of which about 65 percent occurred during the post WWII Occupation between 1945 and the early 1950s. In fact, a major source of the *sontaku* intentions that were most feared by politicians and bureaucrats at this time was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers General Douglas MacArthur, who made excellent use of it.

Occupation-era Japan was under the absolute control of the general, who was involved in major reforms of the political, economic and educational systems. But for face-saving purposes (*tatemae*) he tended to operate Japan's ostensibly independent government through remote control. Actually, in the records of the Diet proceedings of those times, one can find plenty of evidence of politicians' *sontaku* conjectures on how they should read MacArthur's intent on such matters ranging

from the right of public servants to take part in political activities to reorganization of the electric utility industry. It's not wrong to say that MacArthur clearly was an expert at the use of *sontaku*.

But Japan's politicians were clearly eager to get back in the driver's seat. In July 1953, after the San Francisco peace treaty came into effect, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida gave the following reply during a Diet session in response to a question on diplomatic guidelines: "Since Japan has become independent, its diplomacy will no

longer be swayed according to conjectures over America's intentions." Readers can decide for themselves if this was actually true.

There is no doubt, however, that *sontaku* was back in the hands of domestic politicians. Though the backgrounds and conditions of political trust during the eras of MacArthur, Tanaka and Abe are completely different, there was one factor they share in common: despite the differences in degree, all three men exerted forceful leadership. When their power was wielded forcefully, politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen felt the hot breath on their necks, read their intentions, and proceeded with taking action before having to be ordered to do so. ●

Eiichiro Tokumoto, a former Reuters correspondent, is an author and investigative journalist.



Bruce Osborn

by ABIGAIL LEONARD

Shortly before Bruce Osborn left for his first trip to Japan, he photographed Rolling Stones guitarist Ron Wood. It was 1976 and Wood, already one of the world's most famous rock stars, drank cheap beer and acted no differently from the struggling Los Angeles musicians Osborn frequently met as a photographer for a local music magazine. "It's always nice to see such highbrow people who know how to lowbrow it," Osborn says with a laugh.

Photography, he says, gave him access to intriguing people and helped satisfy his curiosity about the world. "As opposed to painting or other art forms, with photography, if I wanted to meet somebody or go someplace, I could do that."

And he didn't miss an opportunity. A couple of weeks after photographing Wood, he packed his camera for a round-the-world trip from California to Japan to meet his future wife's family. He started in Europe then went overland to India, traveling for a stretch on a "hippie bus," a 1940s British vehicle that was on its last legs but still managed to ferry Osborn and his fellow travelers through much of Central Asia.

Osborn eventually made it to Tokyo and was struck by the city's bold colors and design. "The whole visual aspect just knocked me over; the advertising was just really strong, bright and entertaining."

Still, he wasn't confident he could make a life for himself here, so he and his wife, Yoshiko, returned to Los Angeles where he continued a successful career in music photography until 1980, when a Japanese contact arranged a show for him in Tokyo. Afterward, several Japanese companies asked to book him and the couple decided it was finally time to give Japan a try.

HE FOUND A WIDER variety of work in Tokyo than L.A. and was soon shooting not only for music magazines but also advertisements, magazine editorials and fashion spreads.

A few years later, when he was expecting his first daughter, he had an idea that changed the course of his career. He was photographing a particularly tough-looking punk rocker with a towering Mohican hairstyle and suddenly thought, "I'd like to see what that guy's parents look like."

He convinced the musician to pose for a series of photos with his mother, who, Osborn found, had a dynamic personality of her own and loved watching her son's performances and hanging out backstage. "Seeing

him with her expanded my whole understanding of what he was beyond that stage persona," Osborn says.

He started taking photos of all types of people with their parents – tattoo artists, carpenters, even beauty queens. The series grew into a decades-long project called "Oyako," a convenient Japanese word that encompasses parents and children. That eventually led to dozens of gallery shows, five books, several commercials and, for the last 15 years, a major annual event Osborn organizes with his wife, in which he photographs a hundred families in a one-day shoot.

"Next, I'd like to go to Papua New Guinea or someplace wild, set up a studio in the jungle or something"

THEY HOLD THE MARATHON session on the fourth Sunday in July to follow Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May and Father's Day on the third Sunday in June; they hope to turn Oyako into a similar national celebration of family. The event has grown steadily and last year a hundred portrait photographers across Japan held Oyako festivals of their own.

He recently expanded overseas, with his first international Oyako show in Singapore. The Japanese series is in black and white, but in Singapore, where his subjects dressed in bright, bold fabrics, he couldn't resist shooting in color. "Next, I'd like to go to Papua New Guinea or someplace wild and woolly, set up a studio in the jungle or something," he laughs.

Osborn has organized more somber Oyako shoots as well. After the Tohoku Earthquake, he photographed survivors who had lost all their family photos and some who had even lost close relatives. "One of the most moving things was when one fisherman said, 'this is the first time I've laughed in three months,'" he says.

He's now working on a series of photographs of found beach objects for an art festival in Hayama, near his home on the coast southwest of Tokyo. He combs the shoreline for things like old sandals, lighters and other forgotten refuse, then creates beautiful, wall-sized images of them.

He also chairs the FCCJ's Exhibition Committee, curating the monthly exhibitions that are shown in the Main Bar. It's his seventh year as chair and this month is his eightieth show.

He says that he's still inspired by the things that first drew him to photography. "If I want to meet this person or see that place, I just get my camera and that's my passport-Through media, you can reach a lot of people, so I try to be a good influence, that's the bottom line." ●

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Abigail Leonard is a Tokyo-based freelance reporter and producer whose work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *NYTimes.com*, NPR, BBC and Vox.

ANDREW POTHECARY

The emperor's *buon viaggio*

As the only foreign correspondent on Emperor Akihito's recent trip to Vietnam, this Italian journalist had much to think about.



by STEFANO CARRER

“On the day before departure, please come at 11 a.m. sharp to the Sakashita-mon entrance of the Imperial Palace.” With that surprise message from the Kunaicho, the Imperial Household Agency, I found out that I would be the only Western journalist, along with 126 colleagues from Japanese news organizations, to cover the historic first visit by a Japanese monarch to Vietnam.

That also meant being included in the restricted group that would receive the imperial couple's pre-voyage greetings. But any gratification was dampened by the necessity of attending two excruciatingly long briefings and the reception of over 200 pages of detailed written instructions. I cannot imagine 127 Italian journalists attending a three-hour briefing of the sort – after 10 minutes, I believe, the scene would have looked like herders desperately trying to corral 127 cats.

I expected the meeting at the Imperial Palace to be very formal. So when Akihito and his consort entered the Shakkyo room – surrounded by wood, shoji and a large painted lion related to the Noh theater but with no furniture at all – I dutifully joined the collective deep and long bows.

Moving in gracious slow motion or as still as a statue,

Empress Michiko appeared as timeless a figure as a noblewoman from the Heian epoch. On the contrary, the emperor's facial features betrayed a hint of irony that made him seem very modern. After the official greetings and short reciprocal speeches, we all “broke ranks” as attendants brought coffee, tea and biscuits on trays. Akihito sipped a coffee while standing and talking informally with those who approached him.

When introducing myself, I recalled the visit by Giorgio Napolitano in 2009, when the Italian president, who had already met Akihito, greeted him with a vivid “*Buongiorno Imperatore, come sta?*” Later that day, Akihito went with him to see an Italian opera for the first time, arriving at the start of the third act of Verdi's *Don Carlos*. It was precisely the moment beginning with the famous aria “*Ella giammai m'amo*,” or “She never loved me,” showing the monarch of Spain in a moment of regret, bitterly complaining about how burdensome it is to be a sovereign. The irony, I'm sure, was not intentional.

I LEFT THE ROOM with a small confirmation of Akihito as the “emperor of the people.” After all, this is a son of a god who became a human being, since his father Hirohito was considered divine before the Americans induced him to renounce the highest holiness and to state his human nature. The present emperor has a number of firsts under his belt: first to marry a commoner, to speak on TV following the devastating tsunami in order to encourage the suffering ordinary people, to suggest the taboo of an affinity with the imperial line in Korea, and to pray for the souls of fallen American soldiers in Saipan. Even

in full compliance with the constitutional limitations, he has acquired a rather “liberal” aura.

The trip to Vietnam was the emperor's 28th overseas voyage, and it could well be the last, so I was lucky to be able to report on how serious a matter his departure from Haneda Airport was. When the imperial couple walked down the red carpet toward the State Boeing 747, past a lineup of the prime minister and his wife, as well as imperial family members not making the trip, my foreign eye was impressed by how deeply Princess Masako bowed to her father-in-law. Even more impressive was watching the double bow of mother Michiko to her first son, Crown Prince Naruhito.

According to some rumors, one of the reasons for Akihito's desire to abdicate is his wish to facilitate the transition to the throne for his son. Naruhito is necessarily less charismatic a figure, said to be somewhat affected by the psychological problems of his wife. Conservatives have grounds to fear that Naruhito too carries “liberal” sentiments.

Such were my thoughts while boarding the State Boeing. It was the first time I've boarded before paying the fare, but I guess I was trusted (the bill came a month later). Inside, even

the seats for journalists were clearly business class. During the journey, every journalist was supposed to read the latest package of documents that were handed out at the airport. Included were maps of each floor of the hotels where we were to stay, with clear indications of the emergency exits (for each floor). An entire sheet of paper was dedicated to the time zone difference, and it was not enough to point out that Vietnam is two hours before Tokyo time. Instead, we got a complete table advising us that when it is 11 o'clock in Japan it is 9 o'clock in Vietnam, 12 corresponds to 10, and on and on and on.

AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE in Hanoi, looking at the imperial face filtered by the shadows of the bayonets of the Vietnamese soldiers parading with goose-steps, I could not help but notice a respect that never turned into enthusiasm. (This seems contrary to the present prime minister, who seems to enjoy the pomp of military parades.)

Burdens and ironies from a painful history were likely affecting the first Japanese emperor traveling to this country. Akihito laid a wreath at the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, who won the war with the U.S. during which the Americans used the Japanese archipelago as their main logistics base territory.

A most moving moment was the meeting with the 93-year-old widow Nguyen Thi Xuan, who had married one of several hundred Japanese soldiers who remained in Vietnam and joined the fight for independence. After the French were defeated in 1954, they were sent back to Japan with no thanks, without their wives and children. (Many of the children suffered from discrimination, and called sons of “the fascists”).

“You have had a very difficult life,” the emperor told the widow. “I deeply sense your pain.” Empress Michiko bowed almost to the ground, taking her hands and consoling her, cheek-to-cheek.

That led me to think about the Japanese rule which forbids any physical contact with the imperial couple. The former Italian president Sandro Pertini, during his official visit to Tokyo in 1982, was the only one who dared to give a strong pat on the back of Hirohito. But Pertini – the most beloved of the Italian chiefs of state – was a unique character, absolutely allergic to strict protocols. Instead of being horrified, the Kunaicho staff should have welcomed that friendly pat. It represented a forgiveness of sorts. Pertini had been languishing in jail for several years for anti-fascist activities when the dictator Benito Mussolini signed the Tripartite Pact with Hitler's Germany and Hirohito's Japan.

Another quite interesting encounter was Akihito's meeting, after more than 40 years, with an old acquaintance at the Biology Museum in Hanoi. It was a white goby, a species that the emperor had discovered as a young scholar on a tributary of the Can Tho River and donated to the museum in 1976.

There were other events scheduled, including one inside the imperial citadel of Hue, where the imperial couple witnessed a performance of Nha Nhac music and traditional Vietnamese dances. A monk of the Champa region, Phat Triet, introduced the style to Nara, and it was later incor-

porated into Japan's *gagaku*, proving that even a quintessential Japanese artistic expression like court music has some foreign roots!

MANY COMMENTATORS DRAW PARALLELS between the first Japanese emperor in 200 years who is going to abdicate and Benedictus XVI, who in 2013 became the first pope to relinquish his duties in some 500 years. But there are substantial differences. The pope in Rome enjoys absolute powers: he has no need to ask permission. (And, by the way, if he did, traditionalist Catholics would have never allowed him to resign.) He can also make impromptu statements or answer questions from journalists on the Alitalia plane which takes him to foreign countries, though the Vatican press office must sometimes do some “damage control” management.

The Japanese emperor, I discovered, is not supposed to talk freely with the press: it would be too risky according to the Kunaicho standards. Though we had one or two briefings a day by the Kunaicho or Gaimusho officers (respectively, in Japanese and in English for the Vietnamese press), there was no chance to ask questions directly to the emperor.

On several occasions I found myself very close to the emperor. Nobody actually told me not to talk to him: it was so taken for granted that there was no need to highlight the point to a correspondent based in Tokyo that I grudgingly agreed not to be found guilty of *lèse majesté* – which got me wonder-

ing if I have gone too far in absorbing the Japanese mindset. I settled my internal turmoil by recalling the first lessons of criminal law at Milan University: despite my professional urges, pretending ignorance would never constitute an excuse for a crime.

I was an object of curiosity among the Japanese colleagues: they wanted to know why I was with them, what I thought about the

emperor and what I would report on. Not being a member of the Kunaicho kisha club, of course, I sometimes tried to circumvent the rules. Accredited as a pen journalist, I was not entitled to take pictures or moving images. So on a number of occasions I slipped out of the group to shoot from public places: after all, only the Vietnamese police could have stopped me there.

Some friends in Italy begged me to take a selfie with the emperor. But while I was momentarily tempted by this suggestion, I ended up deciding not to contribute to a further lowering of gaijin reputations.

But it was in front of the crowds of hundreds of flag-carrying Vietnamese that it suddenly dawned on me how important Vietnam was to the world. It was this country after all that indirectly decided the outcome of World War II. In that fateful summer of 1941, the Japanese decided not to attack Russia, as the Nazis had asked them to do, and instead to invade South Indochina. It was a decision that prompted the American embargo and the later attack on Pearl Harbor. Moscow was saved and the U.S. entered the war. It was the turning point of the conflict, the beginning of a new era. For me, in the end, covering the emperor's trip was not only an interesting experience, but a great lesson in world history. ●

Stefano Carrer is the Tokyo correspondent of *Il Sole-24 Ore*, the Italian economic daily.



Aircraft Carrer

Opposite, the author descending the steps of the State Boeing 747; left, at the presidential Palace in Hanoi

If recent events have given you a feeling of *deja vu*, perhaps there's a good reason for it.

When we targeted North Korea



A piece of the wreckage of the downed U.S. Navy EC121 reconnaissance plane is carried off the USS destroyer Tucker in 1969.

by TODD CROWELL

RECENT HEADLINES SUGGEST THAT the United States is considering a range of “options” to curb North Korea’s nuclear weapons/missiles ambitions, up to and including air strikes. What everyone seems to have forgotten is that there was a moment between the two countries in the past that also involved the planning of an air attack by the U.S. Though it eventually never took place, it’s not as easy for me to forget, as I was personally involved.

There was nothing to indicate that the day April 15, 1969, would be any different from any other day as winter gave way to cherry blossom season in Japan. I was a young air force lieutenant stationed with the 347th Fighter Wing at Yokota air base as an intelligence officer for a squadron of F-4 Phantoms.

I began my daily routine by stopping by the communications shop to pick up the morning “flemsies,” a military version of teletype print outs. From them I would construct a short briefing for the benefit of what was grandly called the “battle staff.”

On that particular morning there was no indication that anything out of the ordinary was taking place. There was the usual complement of war news from “down south,” meaning Vietnam and Cambodia, where the war was still going strong, and some information on deployment of Russian fighters in the Far East.

As I entered the War Room to give the 7 a.m. briefing, I could see immediately that something was different. The room consisted of a bank of seats culminating at the top

dais where the wing commander and his deputy sat, and people usually slowly drifted in. But this day every seat was occupied and, it seemed, every eye was on me. I went over to a major sitting in the corner, and bent down to ask him what was going on.

“North Korean jets shot down one of our planes,” he said.

“Oh,” I said. I stood up and turned to face the briefing audience, fully aware that as I repeated what he had just told me, I was probably the last in the room to know. So I added, optimistically, “We’ll provide more information when we get it.”

That is how I learned about what could have become a seminal event of the Cold War in Asia. Two North Korean MiG-21s ambushed and shot down a U.S. Navy EC-121 electronic surveillance aircraft with the loss of all her crew of 31 sailors and marines over the Sea of Japan.

Within in an hour I was ordered to grab my kit and we were hustled aboard a C-130 transport plane and flown from Yokota to Osan Air Force Base in South Korea, the advance base for our wing of jet fighters. For the next week we were on a war footing, fully expecting to launch air strikes on North Korea. I still remember our target: Pukchang-ni air base north of the capital, Pyongyang. It is still an important North Korean Air Force base, home for MiG-23 and MiG-29 fighters.

Everyone was on edge. Pilots, who usually could barely conceal their boredom on our briefings, suddenly became very attentive to what we

had to say about defenses they might encounter on bombing runs. We pulled together maps and photos and anything else we could find out about Pukchang-ni in order to make target folders. There wasn’t much we could do, considering how skillfully the North concealed its assets, including placing many aircraft safely in underground bunkers.

But after a week of fevered activity we were ordered to stand down. No airstrikes were ordered, and I returned to the comforts of Japan – able to enjoy the cherry blossoms instead of enduring the tag end of a cold Korean winter.

This was former President Richard Nixon’s first real crisis, coming about three months after he was sworn in, or roughly the same time frame President Donald Trump sits in today. Nixon and his advisors considered several responses, including air strikes on North Korean military facilities. After debating various options, he decided against retaliatory air strikes. Presumably, he believed that one war at a time was enough.

Instead, he dispatched a small armada of war ships, built around several aircraft carriers, into the Sea of Japan as a show of force – very much like the flotilla sent into the region by Trump. But after a time, they departed and Nixon simply ordered the reconnaissance flights to resume, albeit escorted by fighters.

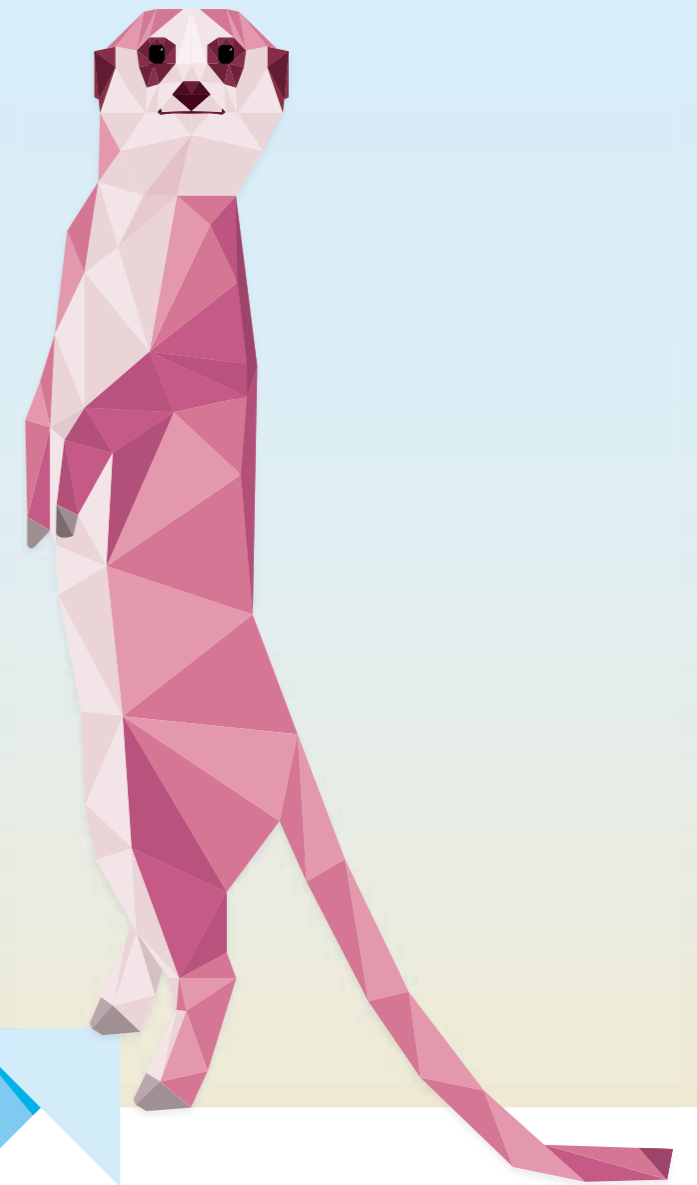
He faced the same conundrum that bedevils policy makers to this day: namely, what kind of force could the U.S. use that would be tough enough to punish North Korea but not so tough that Pyongyang would think it was prelude to a general invasion, requiring a massive retaliation? Remember, this was a time when nuclear weapons were only a gleam in the eye of supreme leader Kim Il-sung.

The EC-121 shoot down was the single largest loss of U.S. aircrew during the Cold War. There is no memorial to the crew, but the U.S. Navy detachment at Misawa Air Force Base places a floral wreath on the edge of the Sea of Japan and watches it drift out to sea. They have been doing this every April 15 for 47 years. ●

Todd Crowell is the author of *The Coming War Between China and Japan* published as an Amazon Single Kindle.

AP PHOTO: JACKSON SHIZAKI

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FCCJ EXHIBITION



Made in Tokyo
Photographs by
Carla Hernandez

THE PHOTOS IN THE exhibition were taken in 2015 and mostly shot on a mobile phone. As the title says, they were all “Made in Tokyo”. I want to show the variety, colors and composition of this big city called Tokyo. ●

Carla Hernandez is a photographer with over 20 years of working experience. Her images can be found in a number of overseas publications, along with *Asayan*, *Zipper* and *Tokyo Classified* in Japan. In addition, Carla is co-founder of Mejual group, which presents photo/music fusion events in Tokyo’s clubs and event spaces.

PRESS TOURS ORGANIZED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The Special Projects Committee has been busy as usual this early spring, organizing two recent press tours.

On March 23, 20 members participated in a visit to the Tokyo Komatsu “IoT” (Internet of Things) Center in the Chiba port area. Members were briefed on the construction machine company’s concept of “Smart Construction,” which includes improving ease of maintenance, helping find lost or stolen machines and making operation of the big machines easier, minimizing the amount of time needed to teach new operators.

Participants of the tour tried their hand at operating Komatsu machines.

On April 17, 14 journalists visited a Special Exhibit of Chanoyu, the tea ceremony, at the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno Park. Special exhibits included national treasure tea bowls, utensils for the ceremony and cultural heritage scrolls from the Muromachi era (1336-1573) to today.

With the cooperation of nine major schools, tea ceremonies were performed by kimono-clad tea masters in the lobby of the museum. Tour participants partook of fresh powdered green tea and exquisite wagashi sweets reflecting seasonal changes.



FCCJ Member
Richard Weisburd
watches the tea
preparation.

– Kenji Obayashi and Haruko Watanabe

JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...



...at 7:00 on Wednesday, May 31 for a sneak preview of Masahiro Kobayashi’s *Lear on the Shore*, starring screen legend Tatsuya Nakadai as Lear – or rather, as a faded star who is desperately holding onto memories of his glory days. In this lean, elegiac tragicomedy, Chokichi Kuwahata (Nakadai) is trying to escape from the luxury nursing home where his daughter Yukiko (Mieko Harada) and son-in-law Yukio (Hiroshi Abe) have stashed him after forcing him to write a will leaving them everything. Chokichi has dementia and only fleetingly recalls their betrayal. But he is a thespian to the core, and can still recite great chunks of dialog from heralded performances. He is determined to find his adoring audience, wherever they are. When he comes across Nobuko (Haru Kuroki), on the beach, he isn’t sure if she is an assistant, a fellow actor or, as she claims, his estranged younger daughter. Does it matter? He’s free to discourse at will, and that he does, delivering what may be his penultimate performance. Nakadai and Kobayashi will be on hand for a Q&A session following the screening. (Japan, 2016; 105 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.)

– Karen Severns

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REGULAR MEMBERS

DANIEL HURST is a freelance journalist working in Tokyo. Hurst started his journalism career in his home state of Queensland, writing for community newspapers. He previously covered Australian politics from Parliament House in Canberra, including as the political correspondent for the *Guardian*. Before that he worked as a national reporter for Fairfax Media mastheads including the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Melbourne Age*. Daniel's three years in Canberra spanned four prime ministers; apart from the tumultuous politics of the time he focused on education policy issues. He has worked in Tokyo since January, 2017, and has been published by the *Guardian*, the *Times of London*, *Asia Times* and Australian Associated Press.

NOBUYOSHI SAKAJIRI is the foreign news editor at the *Asahi Shimbun*. Sakajiri joined the *Asahi Shimbun* in 1989. He covered Hong Kong as a correspondent from 1996 to 1998. From 2002, Sakajiri was diplomatic correspondent in Washington D.C. From 2005 he was based in Beijing to cover China including the Beijing Olympic Games. He later spent a year in Washington D.C. as Asia Society Bernard Schwartz Fellow and three years and half as Beijing bureau chief before taking his present position in 2016. In 2007 he received the Vaughn Ueda Prize for his reporting from Washington D.C. and Beijing.

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Japandemonium Illustrated: The Yokai Encyclopedias of Toriyama Sekien
Toriyama Sekien; Hiroko Yoda (trans. and annot.); Matt Alt (trans. and annot.)
Dover Publications, Inc.

Drones can now see in 3D



Birds' uncanny ability to navigate pole-to-pole migration routes with pinpoint accuracy is a mystery science is only beginning to unravel. With a recent Ricoh innovation though, 'mechanical birds' are making an important step forward in emulating avian navigational prowess.

Drone technology has soared far beyond what anyone even imagined 20 years ago. But until now pilotless vehicles have had one key limitation: dependence on GPS. If the satellite link is lost or becomes unstable – say, flying through a tunnel – drone navigation is seriously impaired.

Ricoh engineers, working with specialists from the University of Tokyo and Blue Innovation, have overcome this obstacle by developing an automated flight-control system featuring 3D vision capability provided by a super-wide stereo camera.

The super-wide stereo camera delivers a 3D data stream that enables real-time depth measurement and self-localization. In other words, the ability to recognize its surroundings in three dimensions allows the drone to automatically and accurately thread its way through complex environments.

This Ricoh innovation opens the way for drones to operate safely and usefully in hazardous enclosed areas where humans dare not tread.

To learn more, visit:

www.ricoh.com/technology/institute/research/tech_flight_by_3d_vision.html

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"I JUST FLOAT ALONG."

Pat M, USA, LEAF Owner



**100% ELECTRIC NISSAN LEAF.
ELECTRIFY THE WORLD.**

Model may vary by country.

#NISSAN