

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

May 2018 · Volume 50 · No. 5



Beyond Words:

Photos of the Month

Memoirs:
Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo
(Part 2)

A Deeper Look:
America Last: Asia-Pacific Trade
Negotiations Under Trump

A Little-Known Story:
Tapestries for the
Empress



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Yurakucho Denki Building North 20F, 1-7-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0006, Japan
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The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan
Yurakucho Denki Building, North Tower 20F,
1-7-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0006.
Tel: (03) 3211-3161 · Fax: (03) 3211-3168 · fccj.or.jp

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FCCJ

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From the President

The establishment in 1998 of the Keizo Obuchi government was a major positive turning point for foreign correspondents in Japan. That's because the late Prime Minister Obuchi was eager for his voice and the policies of his cabinet to reach foreign countries, directly from the mouths of Japanese officials.

To achieve that, Obuchi selected as his spokesman to the foreign press one of the finest Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, Akitaka Saiki. Weekly sessions ensued at the Sori Kantei - the prime minister's official residence - for MOFA-accredited correspondents. I was one of them, and I knew if I missed a session I'd miss getting valuable first-hand accounts of - and quotes on - Japanese domestic and diplomatic policies. Saiki-san was one of the most eloquent spokesmen I have met in Japan. He always gave hungry correspondents something to report on, with very informative great and spicy quotes, calculated to grab foreign readers' attention.

With the passing away of Obuchi two years later, the Kantei and the Foreign Ministry maintained those briefings. A series of very capable and good speakers continued to accommodate the foreign press and its questions. I remember Yoshikawa-san, who is now a high ranking official of Japan International Cooperation Agency,

who used to sometimes call us to provide updated information on a developing story.

Such briefings are a matter of course in most advanced countries. Foreign correspondents get the chance to meet heads of states or prime ministers of the countries they serve in regular sessions.

Neither I nor any of my colleagues thought the day would come when such normal practices would become history here in Japan. But as LDP power weakened a decade or so ago, such briefings were gradually disappearing. When the LDP lost power and the Japan Democratic Party took over the Kantei in 2009, the Kantei briefings stopped up to my knowledge.

Meanwhile, prime ministers had long since stopped appearing at FCCJ professional functions. Junichiro Koizumi was the last to come, before the Iraq War.

When Shinzo Abe led his party's return to power at the end of 2012, we prepared to return to the Kantei for the resumption of the briefings there, but this was not to be. Unlike Obuchi, who treated all the foreign media on an equal basis, Abe seems to favor certain media - whose correspondents in Japan are cherry picked to go to the Kantei to be given briefings.

As an insider in the Kantei acknowledged to me recently, the rest of the media have been left out. He told me that Prime Minister Abe, with the support of some of his advisors, has been cultivating selected senior foreign journalists in Tokyo, such as bureau chiefs of certain media organizations, offering them individual briefings as a way to "get his message across" to the outside world - and as an alternative to having other cabinet members and senior officials come to the Club to speak. This approach also avoids the logistical issues that would be involved if they dealt with all foreign media on an equal basis.

The Kantei official referred to the fact that attendance by foreign correspondents at FCCJ professional events has decreased, saying this has not gone unnoticed by government people. Thus high officials have less incentive to speak at the Club nowadays.

For foreign media left out of the handpicked few who are invited for Kantei briefings, depriving us of officials' presence at the Club is a double whammy.

One related point I also heard from the official in this regard refers to the fact that our FCCJ news events are conducted in English when possible. This makes the FCCJ less attractive to non-Japanese Asian correspondents operating in Tokyo nowadays who are more comfortable with Japanese than with English, he pointed out.

The unwillingness of the Kantei to invite all foreign correspondents on equal basis, and the boycotting of the FCCJ for a prime ministerial visit are major issues I have been giving attention to.

The American Embassy in Japan admits journalists who hold FCCJ membership cards to its news events, one very positive indicator regarding the importance of the Club. Our mission is to expand the acceptance of Club cardholders for other news events in Japan.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics is around the corner and the Japanese organizing committee has shown a great deal of respect and attention to the FCCJ by giving the Club's committee membership. I spoke at a plenary session and confirmed we at the FCCJ are more than ready to be a dynamic force in supporting media coverage of the Olympics.

At the same time, we must call upon the Kantei to reconsider its policies and strive, once again, to get its message out to all foreign media "without fear or favor."

● **Khalid Azhari**

Letter to the Editor

April 28, 2018

Roger Screffler's letter to the editor last month referred to a new by-law "prohibiting associate members serving on the board from voting on press-related issues including who qualifies for regular membership." If the proposed by-law change was passed by the general membership meeting, it certainly has not been communicated to the associate membership. I would expect the associate membership to be unhappy with this

kind of restriction, or with any kind of restriction placed on associate board members.

I do wonder what is so special about "press-related" issues that associate members would not be able to have a valid opinion about them. How is "press-related" defined? In the end, the question is whether a vote is in the interest of the club as a whole. I can well imagine situations in which associates are quite capable of judgement on these matters.

Recent history of the club provides us with enough examples of journalist-dominated boards taking business and personnel decisions which - lacking relevant business experience - they were not qualified for. Outsourcing, and the move to a new building, just

to mention the two most important decisions of recent years, are examples. Would Roger not agree that we should then also consider a similar by-law change to restrict voting by regular members on non-press issues? Issues that specifically relate to business or personnel matters? But this is not the point I want to make.

The main issue is whether it is possible for by-laws to restrict any board members' voting power without restricting their fiduciary responsibility. Every board member has a fiduciary responsibility that cannot be restricted, not even by by-laws. I trust the kanji would agree and that this particular by-law change therefore is invalid.

● **Willem Kortekaas**
Associate Board member

Ellison Onizuka— NASA Astronaut

by CHARLES POMEROY

Displaying a model of NASA's space shuttle is United States Air Force Major Ellison Onizuka at an FCCCJ professional luncheon on June 21, 1983. Naoaki Usui (McGraw-Hill), standing in for FCCJ president Karel van Wolferen (NRC Handelsblad), lends an approving smile to his description of the shuttle.

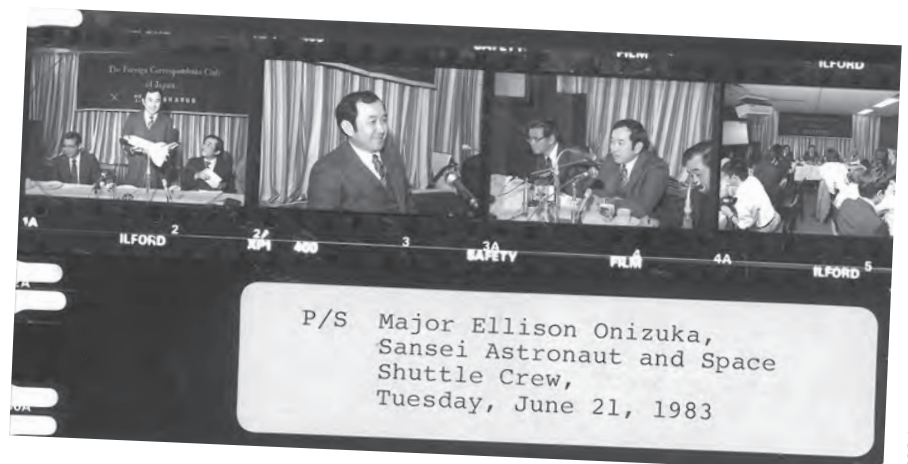
A Japanese-American who had been selected for NASA's shuttle program in 1978, Onizuka was to become in January of 1985 the first person of Asian ancestry flown into space when he crewed as a "mission specialist" on Space Shuttle Discovery. A year later, on January 28, 1986, he was to die along with six other crew members in the shocking explosion of Space Shuttle Challenger.

Although he would die at age 39, Ellison Shoji Onizuka achieved much in his short life. Born on June 24, 1946, in Kona, Hawaii, and raised in a rural setting, he excelled as a youth in scholastics and sports as well as farm-focused 4-H Club activities and the Boy Scouts. He graduated from high school with honors in 1964. He then attended the University of Colorado, where he earned a BS degree in aeronautical engineering in 1968 and an MA in aerospace engineering in 1969. Onizuka became a pilot after joining the Air Force in January of 1970 and within four years had become a test pilot. That, in turn, led to his selection in 1978 as an astronaut candidate for NASA's space shuttle program, one of 35 selected from 8,000 applicants.

Fame, and an upgrade in rank to lieutenant colonel, came to Onizuka following the successful Discovery mission in 1985, a classified military space flight. That, in turn, led to his selection for the more civilian-centered Challenger mission, which included Christa McAuliffe as the first school teacher in space among the six other crew members of varied backgrounds representative of America. Unusual cold weather apparently caused the failure of vulnerable rubber sealants on the rocket boosters, which resulted in the explosion 73 seconds after launch. Challenger was torn



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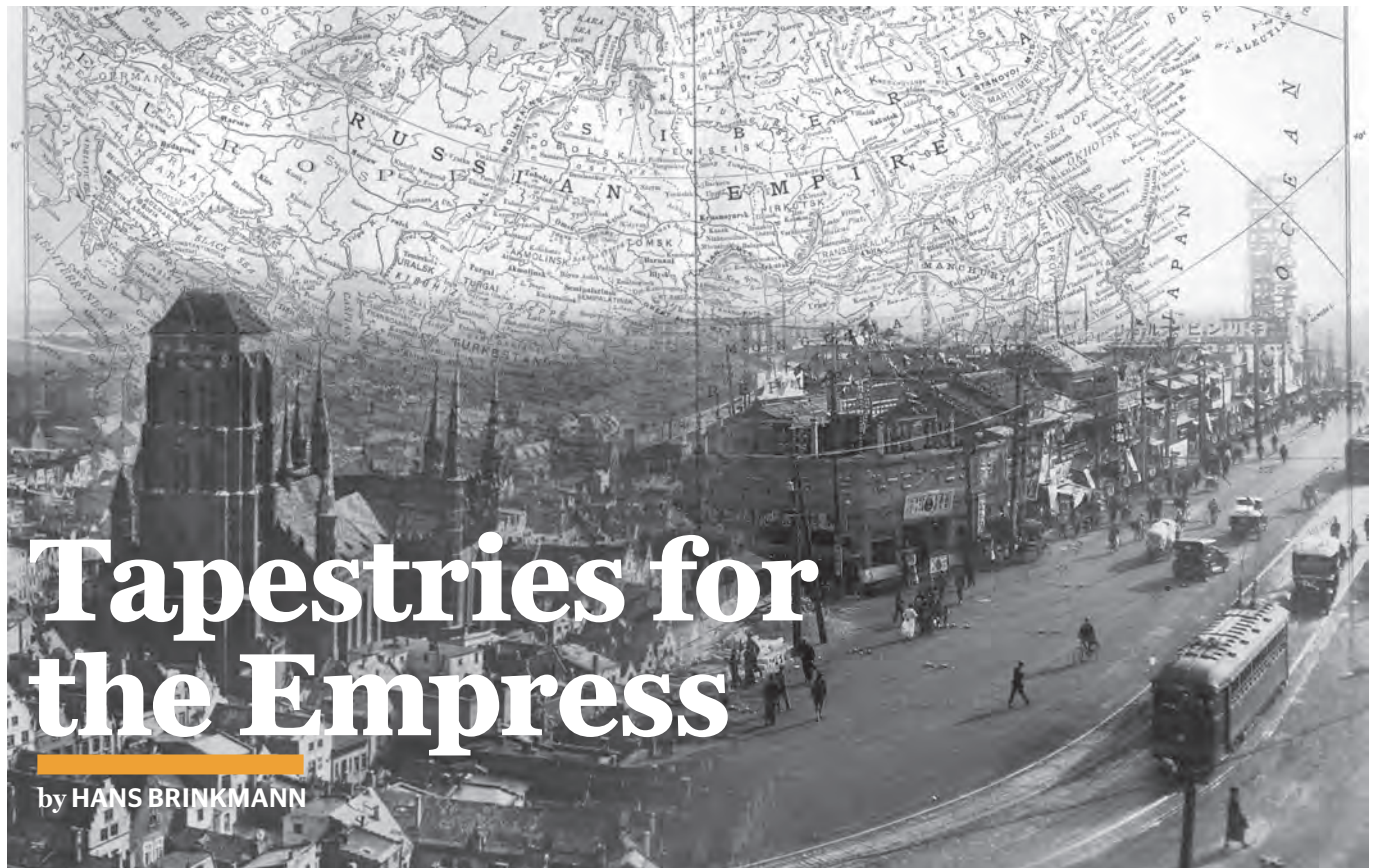
FCCJ

apart and the lives of its seven crew members were lost on that fateful day.

Posthumously, Ellison Onizuka was promoted to colonel and awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor, adding to his long list of awards for earlier achievements. To honor his memory, a U.S. Air Force station, an asteroid and a crater on the moon

as well as a number of educational facilities were named after him. He is buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

● **Charles Pomeroy** is editor of *Foreign Correspondents in Japan*, a history of the club that is available at the front desk.



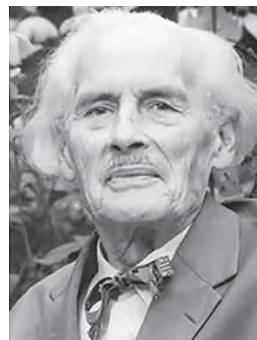
Tapestries for the Empress

by HANS BRINKMANN

In October 1961, during a vacation in the Netherlands from Japan - where I worked as a banker - my wife, Toyoko, and I paid a visit to my parents in the leafy town of Doorn, in the province of Utrecht. During our brief stay at the Koetshuis, a bed & breakfast in the nearby village of Driebergen, we had a most unusual encounter. The Koetshuis - the former coach house of a stately mansion by the name of Kraaybeek - was situated on the mansion's extensive grounds. The mansion itself served as an exclusive retirement home, and the Koetshuis offered accommodation to visitors and outsiders alike.

We registered at the front desk in the mansion, walked over to the Koetshuis and checked into our room. Later that day the front manager called to say that the mansion's director, "Count Lubienski," had noticed our Japanese address and would very much like to meet us, as he too had lived in Japan. We were invited to join him for tea in the mansion's salon.

We were greeted by a tall, courteous gentleman, who introduced himself as "Stefan Lubienski, the host of this retirement home." He explained that the home was operated by the Anthroposophical Society, a spiritual movement based on Rudolf Steiner's philosophy. It counted among its residents a Princess Hohenzollern, a close relative of Germany's last Kaiser, Wilhelm II, who had been forced to abdicate in



Count Stefan Lubienski

1918 as Germany faced its disastrous defeat in the First World War. Wilhelm fled into exile in the neutral Netherlands and purchased the stately Huis Doorn not far from Kraaybeek, where he spent the rest of his life, from 1920 until his death in 1941.

Lubienski went on to say that he had been born in Poland in 1893 and had had many occupations in his life, ranging from painting and teaching to trading and diplomacy, and had worked in many countries, including

Japan. His eyes grew distant as he mentioned Japan. "Ah, Japan. You see, I had studied piano and composition in Vienna, with the idea of launching a musical career. But I was much more interested in philosophy, metaphysics and Eastern religions, and wanted to go and live in Japan."

Since my arrival in Japan in 1950, I too had studied Buddhism and Japanese culture. Noticing my interest, he told us more. He moved to Paris in 1920 and there met Zina, a lady from an aristocratic Polish family, who also had her eyes on Japan and, likewise, had a musical education. They got married and booked their trip, "third class, for we were very poor, you know!" They arrived in Yokohama in March 1921 after a sea voyage of 44 days.

"My memories of Japan are precious and unforgettable," he said. "So much happened in the five years we lived there, studying Buddhism and the

"So much happened in the five years we lived there, studying Buddhism and the Noh theatre and making music."

Noh theatre and making music.” The beginning was a struggle. The couple survived by drawing postcards by hand, which he hawked door to door. Then they turned to weaving tapestries, a skill they had learned in Paris. It took a while, but eventually they managed to find a market. “In the end even the Empress bought them!” he added rather proudly.

Despite their modest means, his family background allowed them to move in the best circles. “Overalls by day, tuxedo by night!” is how the count phrased it. The terrible earthquake of 1923 that devastated Tokyo and Yokohama killed their tapestry business, but they managed to stay on a few more years, to continue their studies. “I wanted to stay forever, among those spiritual people, but I couldn’t. We had to go back to Europe.”

After returning to Poland in 1926 Lubienski joined a firm that traded with Holland, and he was sent to Rotterdam. Apart from the war years, he had lived there ever since.

That, in broad strokes, was the story of his colorful life. I was fascinated, not so much by the wealth of his experience as by his mind. He was elegant and charming, but it was his intellectual and spiritual side that appealed to my probing, searching 29-year old self. Unexpectedly, he asked if I would be willing to give a talk on “Japanese life and culture” for the residents of the house. I readily accepted, and he promptly invited us to join them for dinner at the main house that evening.

My talk took place two weeks later. I don’t recall what I talked about, but it turned out to be a rather lively and pleasant evening. The count came dressed in a faded, formal kimono preserved from his Japanese past. He welcomed us most warmly, and introduced us to his then-wife (who was not Zina; this wife said she had not been to Japan). The residents, mostly well-heeled old ladies, were clearly delighted with this exotic happening.

The count had prepared a little exhibition of his modest collection of Japanese objects, which he had treasured all those years. Teacups, a doll in kimono, lacquered chopsticks. Also old postcards of Mt. Fuji and the Polish countryside, which he said he had hand-painted himself... After my talk, tea and cakes were served, and even a good glass of wine to grace the occasion and loosen the tongues.

Almost six decades have passed since this brief experience, which took firm root in my memory. I wanted to verify some of the more unusual details of his story. My initial enquiries on the internet turned up two references. One was the autobiography of the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. At the time of the Lubienskis’ arrival in Japan, Wright was living in Tokyo to oversee the building of the New Imperial Hotel, designed by him, the construction of which had begun in 1916. Wright writes:

“The management of the Imperial allowed me to build a modest little nook for myself in the new



Picture postcard dated 1 April 1962 from Stefan Lubienski showing Het Koetshuis

temporary annex. ... Into these charming quarters we now went. There was a small grand piano - there were few in Tokio, and our friends were all capable of making good music. ... We knew a good many interesting people and some charming Russians in Tokio[sic], among them the talented Polish Count and Countess Lubienski.”

The hotel was due to open on September 1, 1923, but on that very day the Great Kanto Earthquake struck, destroying most of Tokyo and Yokohama. More than 140,000 people died in the disaster. Wright, who had returned to the States, anxiously awaited news of the hotel’s fate. At last, on September 13, Western Union delivered a telegram with this message:

“Hotel stands undamaged as monument of your genius.”

The Lubienskis were not so lucky. Although they survived the earthquake, their workshop was damaged beyond repair. They had to stop making tapestries, for which in any case the demand had evaporated.

The other reference was on the website of The International Shakuhachi Society where I found the following note to a CD in their catalogue of recorded music for shakuhachi (the Japanese bamboo flute) composed by Seifu Yoshida, a prominent shakuhachi player and composer at the time:

“When the Polish nobleman, Count Lubienski, visited Japan...he commissioned this music for a ballet of his creation, inspired by ancient Greek sculpture, expressing the chaste devotions offered by the Athenian maidens to their gods.” The composition was given the name Inori and is known as Adoration in English. Yoshida, by the way, often performed together with the legendary blind player of the koto (the Japanese horizontal harp) Michiyo Miyagi, whom I came to admire in Japan.

The beginning was a struggle. The couple survived by drawing postcards by hand, which he hawked door to door. Then they turned to weaving tapestries, a skill they had learned in Paris.

I found no other record of Lubienski's time in Japan. Then I had an idea. I wrote for information to the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands. Thanks to the material they kindly and promptly provided, including selections from Lubienski's journal, I was able to fill in some of the blanks in my sketchy recollections. What I learned is that a friend of Lubienski's, a Frenchman he met in Paris who also had his sights set on Japan, suggested they learn how to knot and weave tapestries "as there is nobody in Japan doing that." The friend was convinced that they could make a living that way. Together they spent many nights "in a Parisian basement" teaching themselves the necessary techniques. They were very poor. During their Paris period Lubienski provided for his wife and himself by doing backbreaking work as a laborer in a paper factory. Once they felt sufficiently confident about their acquired skill they booked their third-class passage to Japan.

A generous Japanese nobleman to whom Lubienski had an introduction offered them a small house to live in, free of charge, in the seaside town of Atami. They had to import wool from Australia before they could start on the tapestries. Meanwhile, wrote Lubienski, "I made picture postcards, by hand and, whether I liked that or not, hawked them door to door. Very original, Polish folk art in the Far East! But if you have to draw every one of them yourself you can't produce more than 100 a day - anyway, that was my record. I couldn't charge more than for a printed postcard, and for every one I sold I had to ring dozens of doorbells . . . At last, with the first rolled-up tapestry on my shoulder, I left for a round of visits to art lovers."

He took the night-boat from Atami to Tokyo and called on "Baron Kondo," who introduced him to "the head of a department store, who might allow me to hold an exhibition. And believe it or not, in October Mr. Kurachi can make a large space available for us!"

The exhibition proved his big break. Eventually he formed a partnership with an architect named Horikoshi who had visited the exhibition, and together they opened a "well-equipped workshop with new looms and workers and the security of a regular income. . . . The Horikoshi-Lubienski partnership soon became well-known. I made tapestries for Horikoshi's houses. . . . Newspapers write about us, the empress orders our products."

And then it all came to an abrupt end with the devastating earthquake. "We are on the train to Tokyo," wrote Lubienski in his journal, "returning from a holiday. Suddenly the train shakes and in the distance we see enormous clouds of dust and smoke. . . . The last stretch we have to walk. It's dark when we arrive home. Smoke and ashes everywhere and silent, stunned people. Our house is still there. But what now?"

Without wasting time, Lubienski changed tack. Because he and Zina wanted to stay on to continue studying Japanese culture, he had to find another

source of income quickly. Anticipating the need for stenographers by insurance adjusters arriving from abroad, he took a crash course in shorthand from a self-help book, and was promptly hired. After the insurance people had gone home, he joined an established British import-export firm as department manager. With a secure income ("The highest I've ever received!") the couple could now devote themselves more fully to their private pursuits. Besides the spiritual studies, Lubienski continued composing and writing for the stage. But when in 1926 his employer needed to downsize in the face of increasing competition from Japanese firms, Lubienski decided it was time to leave.

They returned to Poland in September 1926, taking the Trans-Siberian Railway. "While on the train," noted Lubienski in his autobiography, "I wrote my book about the Japanese soul and its future." Soon his work in a Polish trading firm brought him to Holland. The Second World War Lubienski spent in France in various disguises, mostly working for the Maquis resistance. In 1945 he returned to the Netherlands, as Polish consul-general in The Hague. When the Soviet communist domination over Poland became a fact, Lubienski took up lecturing and language teaching in the Netherlands until, in 1959, he was offered his position at Kraaybeek.

A raging fire destroyed the Kraaybeek mansion in 1969, killing seven of its residents. Lubienski survived, but seven years later, when he was 82, death came to this man who

evidently possessed such a thirst for knowledge and experience, both spiritual and broadly cultural, that he had allowed nothing to stand in the way of quenching it. He had not let his aristocratic upbringing keep him from working as a common laborer when poverty required it, and he had embraced the artisan's life in his quest for a reliable source of income. Perhaps he recognized the intrinsic value and dignity of even the humblest kind of work.

"I made picture postcards, by hand and, whether I liked that or not, hawked them door to door. Very original, Polish folk art in the Far East!"

● **Hans Brinkmann** has been living in Japan on and off since 1950. He is the author of several books of fiction, non-fiction, history and poetry as well as many essays. For more information about his work and activities, see his English/Japanese website at www.habri.jp.

Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo

PART
2

by CHARLES SMITH

When Charles Smith arrived in Tokyo in 1973 as *Financial Times* bureau chief, he had no idea he'd end up spending most of the rest of his life here. Now 82 and still an FCCJ Regular member, he's been writing his memoirs and has consented to share with us accounts of some of the most memorable moments in a long and interesting career. Here is the second installment.



Would Japan, to counter the oil shock's damage to its trade balance, return with a vengeance to its widely condemned 1960s template and flood the world with a "heavy rain" of exports?

In the fall of the first year of the reopened *Financial Times* Tokyo Bureau, 1973, this was still a looming issue. Instead of tackling it directly I said, in two lengthy feature articles published in late November and early the following January, that 1974 was shaping up to be "the most difficult year" in the country's economic history since the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.



I argued that Japan would be forced to rethink many of its basic foreign and economic policies, not just in trade but also in diplomacy. Ideas on foreign aid allocation and investment would need to be revised so as to give preference to countries that could sell energy - Indonesia, for example - while curbing ties with resource-poor neighbours such as South Korea. Money would probably have to be poured into huge and risky resource processing schemes in the Middle East that had barely caught Japan's eye before the *shokku*.

Stalled negotiations on investments in resource-rich Russia and China would have to be restarted, I predicted, but would not be limited to raw materials development. To please China - then incorrectly seen as a possibly significant oil supplier - Japan would have to allow Beijing to have its way on the terms of a deadlocked aviation agreement. This would humiliate an older friend by blocking flights to Tokyo by Taiwan's China Airlines, because Chinese Communist and Nationalist airliners couldn't meet on the same tarmac. To influence Russia, Japan would need to help build an oil pipeline from eastern Siberia to Russia's

Pacific coast. That would be in return for 25 million tons of Siberian oil.

In order to bring my analysis to a suitably dramatic close I said that one other thing that might have to go was the "assumption of political stability," at home. This was my own, far out, personal guess, offered without any support from external sources.

I do not think I believed that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, in power for 20 years, risked being unseated by the elite Marxists of the Japan Socialist Party, even in an oil crisis. What did seem to have happened, though, was that a self-confident world had vanished. Was Tokyo faced with more fundamental changes than anyone had dreamed of in the 1960s to early '70s? Was it time for a country that could do anything to learn some new lessons?

So pressing did it seem to get those thoughts in print that I stayed behind in Tokyo on New Year's Day, 1974, typing in a corridor overlooking the tranquil garden of our home, while my family made a trip to the seaside resort of Hayama. It was a case of family harmony versus professional stress, of which there would be many more in the weeks and months that followed.

Japan didn't come apart the way I seemed to be suggesting. But before I plead guilty to reporting a train wreck that didn't happen, I should say that something had gone wrong by the end of 1973. I believe Japan's growth strategy from the early 1960s to the early '70s reflected an unduly casual view of its place in the world.

Because of an almost total lack of natural resources, the economy had been based during that period of "miracle" growth on importing huge amounts of raw materials. Oil and gas, metals and minerals were consumed at home or processed and re-exported as manufactured goods. As part of that scenario Japan had, by 1973, become the world's biggest oil importer - accounting for between eight and nine per cent of world consumption.

DOMINANT SOURCE

Energy use had risen faster than GDP growth throughout the booming 1960s, and oil had taken over as the economy's dominant source of fuel following the closure of an inefficient and low yielding coal industry in the 1950s. By 1971 imported oil's share of Japanese energy sources had passed 70 per cent, with most of that coming from the Middle East. What is barely credible from a distance of decades is that, until the crisis struck, the political implications of this change seemed to be unnoticed.



The reason presumably was that oil seemed to be painlessly obtainable from a network of American and European oil “majors,” which acted as intermediaries between Japan and the producing countries. No one in Tokyo appears to have foreseen during those brilliant decades that the Middle Eastern nations that were the original producers of much of the oil could challenge the majors’ trading oligopoly. If they could do that they could also play off oil against politics.

When neglect of this possibility came in the autumn of 1973 to be seen as an astonishing lapse by Japan’s leaders, a measure of surprise and distress was not to be wondered at. But it still needs to be asked whether the world and the FT should have labelled Japan disabled. Could we be accused of wishful thinking?

It seems to me, looking back on FT editors’ reaction to some of our gloomy stories, that they weren’t exactly discouraging us. In Tokyo, our competitors included other pessimists. Meanwhile, in London and New York, traders in financial markets seemed to have grown used to telling each other that the Japanese miracle was “over.”

In Tokyo what happened was that Prime Minister Kakui Tanaka’s main political rival, Takeo Fukuda, joined the cabinet as director general of the Economic Planning Agency. Fukuda was a former elite Ministry of Finance bureaucrat who had headed two of the Ministry’s main bureaus - banking and budget - before retiring in 1950 to lead what had become one of the Liberal Democratic Party’s biggest conservative factions.

When the FT’s editor Freddie Fischer and I interviewed him in 1976 to ask his views on the (by then) slowly recovering economy, he impressed me as relaxed and gracious. (Perhaps I was charmed at being called Smithson). But in January 1974 what had counted was dynamism. On his first day in office Fukuda used his authority to order the Bank of Japan to withdraw support for the over-valued yen. In the next few days, ever-ready bureaucrats under his direction drafted a range of measures that switched the economy from fairly loose to ultra-tight money.

TRADE POLICY

A crucial area of change was trade policy. Fukuda scrapped the use of interest rate differentials at government banks as a way to discourage exports. Instead the Japan Export-Import Bank began encouraging exports with cheap loans. This was a return to the distant days of the Occupation when

the Americans had urged Japan to use all available means to improve its trade balance.

While that was happening the bureaucrats at MITI were starting to mobilize unused capacity in industry to feed what would become a new export binge. From the media arose a chorus on how to become savvy in the neglected art of conserving energy.

The Foreign Ministry also had something to do. Diplomats were told to pass on the message that - believe it or not - Japan still wanted to increase manufactured goods imports from Europe and was not about to overwhelm the economies of friendly industrial competitors. We heard that improved export finance would be used mainly to increase sales of manufactures to primary producers who were structurally in surplus with Japan. Japan would still be a responsible member of the community of advanced industrial nations - perhaps just a shade less responsible than usual.

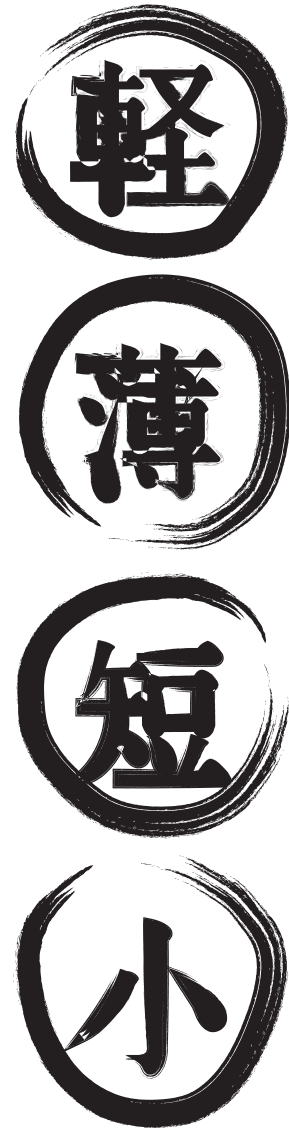
This was the theme of a succession of eloquent weekly briefings from the Gaimusho’s friendly and articulate press spokesman. It was good for our relationship that when we met around this time at an embassy dinner party we didn’t discuss trade. He told me how he admired the two Brahms sonatas for cello and piano and I stretched credibility by saying I could play them.

Over the next two or three years one of my main themes turned out to be the patient but fundamental restructuring of Japanese industry following a slogan which I had picked up somewhere. Perhaps the idea came from one of the bilingual Japan-watchers in American consulting companies who had won their linguistic spurs as interpreters during the Pacific War.

FOUR WORDS

The four-word motto - *kei, haku, tan, sho* (light, thin, short, small) - was a call to redesign and convert the leading edge of Japanese industry from resource-greedy sectors such as shipbuilding and steel to goods which stressed added value and innovative design over raw material content. These could be small tractors, mini cars, hand held calculators, industrial or home-use robots, computer-controlled machine tools and many others.

The aim was to shift the economy into new directions while reducing oil imports and, in the same breath, to steal a march on world markets with a range of products that western countries had not thought of. It worked. Within six months after I had churned out those disaster scenarios in the closing weeks of 1973, I was writing features with titles like “Japan’s



Exports for a Changing World” and warning of a new era of structural Japanese trade surpluses that was soon to come.

That was an understatement. By April 1974 exports were up by 40 per cent over a year earlier and the long term capital deficit had fallen by over \$1 billion in the closing months of 1973 to \$160 million. In July, in a feature tactfully entitled “Pressures May Produce a New Sense of Purpose,” I reported that officials expected a balance of payments deficit of \$5 billion for the fiscal year ending March 1975, only half what had been forecast in December 1973.

As part of the story I tried to explain how Japan, instead of being a conventional capitalist nation featuring private business and independent regulatory authorities, was run by a combined public-private team consisting of graduates from a handful of top universities. These people were making their way along a

single career path starting with membership in an elite bureaucracy and leading to senior posts in a highly competitive, yet carefully coordinated, private sector.

The two sides worked together because elite young bureaucrats hoped to end their careers as company presidents, and those who had already made the shift from public to private were willing to work with *kohai* (former juniors from their own colleges). The procedure that linked the two sides was known by the magic four-Chinese character phrase *gyosei shido* - administrative guidance.

This expression had become popular with former Japanese language interpreters for the US armed forces who were now active interpreters of a changed Japan. But it was older than them. The system of what Chinese might call “lips-and-teeth” collaboration between business leaders and bureaucrats was a hold-over from World War II.

If one needed signs of continuity it wasn't hard to be nostalgic. In my second year in Tokyo I interviewed the head of the aircraft industry division at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries while researching a story on Japan's efforts to re-create its aircraft sector after the old one had been systematically demolished by the Occupation. He was the soft-spoken son of General Hideki Tojo, Japan's longest serving wartime prime minister.

The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the mastermind of innovation in the years after the oil shock, had its own streak of continuity. MITI had been established in 1949 as part of an American-sponsored plan for Japan to revive its economy by boosting exports of manufactured goods. The drab headquarters of the new ministry, in Tokyo's Kasumigaseki district, had housed the Ministry of Munitions up to 1945.

KISHA KURABU

The Team Japan theme provided the basis for many news stories and features on Japan's post-oil shock recovery which I wrote between 1974 and 1978. When the economy was back on track the next job was to describe how the same Japanese bureaucrats were warding off pressures from the United States and Europe to reduce massive trade surpluses.

In both cases my sources were similar. I talked to general trading companies (*sogo shosha*) on the Japanese side and to Western diplomats and envoys who needed to negotiate export restraint agreements with Tokyo without breaking the rules of international trade. The underlying doctrine of a resourceful Japan was fed to me by a handful of bureau-



A wristwatch assembly line in Japan during the early 1970's.

crats at MITI, including a couple of vice ministers for international affairs.

These officials were the most senior people on the international trade side of the Ministry. (There was a separate hierarchy of officials on the industry side who were involved in what seemed to be permanent conflict with the trade wing). They were fluent English speakers in a nation still renowned for its fumbling foreign language ability; and they used their skills to tell a tale of Japan's struggle to survive and rebuild. I was innocent or credulous enough to think that this was close to the real story. But there was one other factor I haven't yet mentioned. This was (and is) the *kisha kurabu* - reporters' clubs - which gave reporters from a few powerful Japanese media exclusive briefings at individual ministries. The arrangement was scandalously biased - all the more so because it was assumed that selected writers would report favorably on everything they were told. When I look back on my early years in Tokyo I can see that something like a *gaijin* - foreigner - *kisha kurabu* existed at MITI, with me as one of its more dedicated members.

As a *kurabu* member you naturally wrote what you were told but, in return, you were on the inside of the story. I remember being fascinated by reports on how a vice-minister had ordered Toyota Motor Corporation and Nissan Motor Company to cut back “voluntarily” on car exports to the United States at a moment when Detroit seemed about to force its government to introduce import quotas. The order provoked fury but was obeyed.

There were plenty of other cases where we thought we could see senior bureaucrats setting out for protégé industries lines of conduct that were usually followed, though sometimes under protest and often after modification.

In MITI's case the protégés included the electronics, petrochemical, motor vehicle and steel industries and the textiles sector then still powerful.

Similar teams of bureaucrats and related companies existed in other sectors such as post and telecoms and pharmaceuticals. While this might seem a far-fetched comparison it now strikes me as something like the age-old European term “sheep farming,” with companies cast as the sheep and bureaucrats as highly trained sheep dogs.

The Japanese sheep farmers were getting results. During the 18 months after I wrote my pessimistic 1974 new year's feature Japan moved from what had seemed like semi-bankruptcy to what we admiringly (or uncomfortably) began to call chronic surplus. The balance of payments was in the black by \$3.6 billion in fiscal year 1975. The overvalued yen of December 1973 was back to being undervalued.

At the FT in London the debate was between admirers of the world's possibly most competitive industrial nation and a bevy of commentators who set out to prove the impossibility of doing business with the country because of non-tariff trade barriers (NTBs) and so called “positive” lists of approved imports in some of the most sensitive sectors (anything not listed was disapproved). It was characteristic that when the paper discussed such things in its editorials we often referred, not to the country by name, but to “The Japanese.”

● **Charles Smith** is a veteran of 45 years with the Club, including 11 years as *Financial Times* Tokyo bureau chief and two stints as bureau chief of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. He lives in Tokyo and continues as an FCCJ regular member.



America Last: Asia-Pacific Trade Negotiations Under Trump

by ANTHONY ROWLEY



Aggressive bilateralism has been the hallmark of US president Donald Trump's approach to foreign trade deals from the day he entered the White House. So why his apparent about-face now with regard to the multilateral Trans Pacific Partnership agreement that he previously shunned?

Coming on the eve of Trump's decision to bomb Syria the decision by Trump to have his officials reexamine the case for US participation in the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), as the TPP has now been re-named, could be seen as a "conversion on the road to Damascus."

But if the surprise move means anything beyond the US leader's penchant for toying with ideas,

throwing them away and then expecting others to pick up after him, it signals a belated realization that multilateralism can be useful even to a president who puts "America first" in everything.

There is strength in numbers. By quitting the original twelve-nation TPP agreement Trump robbed himself of support from Japan and others on key issues such as demanding better protection of intellectual property rights by China. But this is only one part of a much larger story.

The TPP was more than simply a free trade agreement or even a broader economic partnership agreement. Promoted aggressively by former US President Barack Obama and by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, it was in effect a device to manage the rise of China as an Asia-Pacific power.

Its membership would have included two of the world's biggest economies – the US and Japan – along with Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. And it would have accounted for more than 40 per cent of global gross domestic product, or value added.

More than just that, the TPP would have been a powerful rule-setting body in everything from trade and investment to labor rights, foreign investment, the environment and intellectual property. It was designed to be a super-sovereign body with power to enforce its rules.

In his zeal to undo just about anything done by his predecessor Obama and to practice “the art of the deal” with individual countries, Trump overlooked the fact that the US would have been in a powerful position to call the shots within the TPP and in Asia.

Instead, he created a kind of power vacuum into which was drawn the rival Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership composed of the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus Japan, China, India, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea.

For many Asian nations (Vietnam and Indonesia, to take just two examples) that RCEP is an attractive proposition in that its rules do not demand handing over large chunks sovereign power to a newly created authority in the way that the original TPP would have done.

China, a critically important trade and investment partner of many Asian countries, likes this looser arrangement too, as its freedom to continue operating a state-dominated economy would remain intact under RCEP (which is now at an advanced stage of negotiation).

Meanwhile, to Trump's surprise and chagrin, Japan and ten other Asia Pacific economies did not fold in response to his decision to quit the TPP, did not agree to stick to bilateral trade and investment as he proposed. Instead, they decided to push on with a revamped TPP.

This means that the Asia Pacific region now has two viable regional trade and economic groupings – one of which, the RCEP, has the potential to serve as a regional security arrangement also. The only power left out of both is, ironically, the United States itself.

Instead of admitting his error in making such hasty moves in this politico-economic chess game and attempting new diplomacy, Trump threatened trade wars centering on the imposition of US import tariffs. He riled China and Japan in this regard and they are now making common cause against him.

China's President Xi Jinping, meanwhile, has deftly sidestepped confrontation by offering to review tariffs on some Chinese imports and to reexamine the issue of intellectual property rights. Such diplomacy seems aimed at cooling the US leader's ardor for impetuous action.

It also appears aimed at calming the waters while China moves ahead with building economic, military and diplomatic might in Asia and beyond. As some policy experts note, China is bent on achieving the position of regional hegemon in Asia and Trump appears to be aiding this objective.

The US president now has reason to fear that his country is being pushed to the sidelines as he seeks to overturn his predecessor's “pivot toward Asia,” which saw the TPP as a critical instrument in achieving this goal. Under Trump, the US has been wishing itself into the wilderness.

Trump may have picked up on the fact that the US is unlikely to receive an open-arms welcome from all eleven other members of the original TPP if it insists on a “substantially better” deal than Obama negotiated as a condition for re-entry. New Zealand for one is cool toward accommodating the US.

The CPTPP in its diluted form could be one that appeals to more Asian countries (including China) that were not so keen as the former Obama administration on a so-called “high level” agreement. This could mean that the CPTPP and RCEP end up looking not so different from each other.

In that case, China for one could end up being a player in both, or even a merged version of the two, while the US finds itself on the outside of both the CPTPP and RCEP. If so, Trump will have only himself to blame for tearing up the original TPP agreement.

Even Japan's trade minister, Toshiyuki Motegi, has cautioned that it would be difficult to renegotiate the TPP to suit the US (even though Abe, the prime minister, appears ready to accommodate any wish of Trump's).

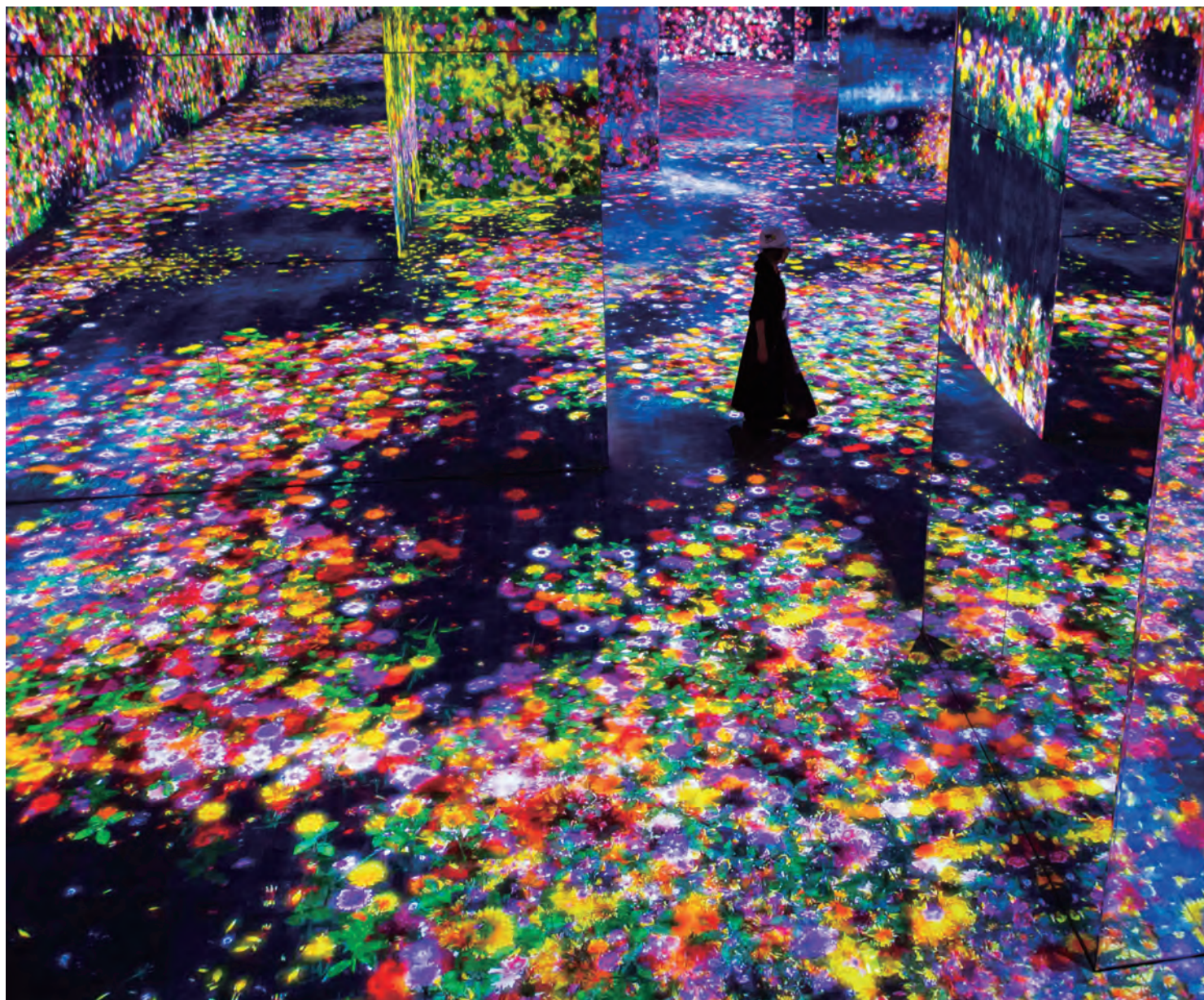
What's more, Abe is looking increasingly like a lame duck leader in the light of recent revelations of alleged cronyism on his part. So, even if Abe does promise to smooth the way back in for Trump he may have difficulty selling the idea to the Japanese parliament and people.

The US could also find greater resistance than Mr Trump has expected in persuading Japan to give it greater access to agricultural and motor vehicle markets under a prospective bilateral trade deal between the two countries – especially in the event we soon see a post-Abe administration.

There are plenty of reasons why Trump should be casting glances at the CPTPP again. But he should not expect to demand reentry on his own terms after spurning the arrangement with haste and derision the moment he came to office.

● **Anthony Rowley** is a former Business Editor and International Finance Editor of the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review* and has spent some 40 years writing on Asian affairs from Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo. He currently writes for the *Singapore Business Times*, among other publications.

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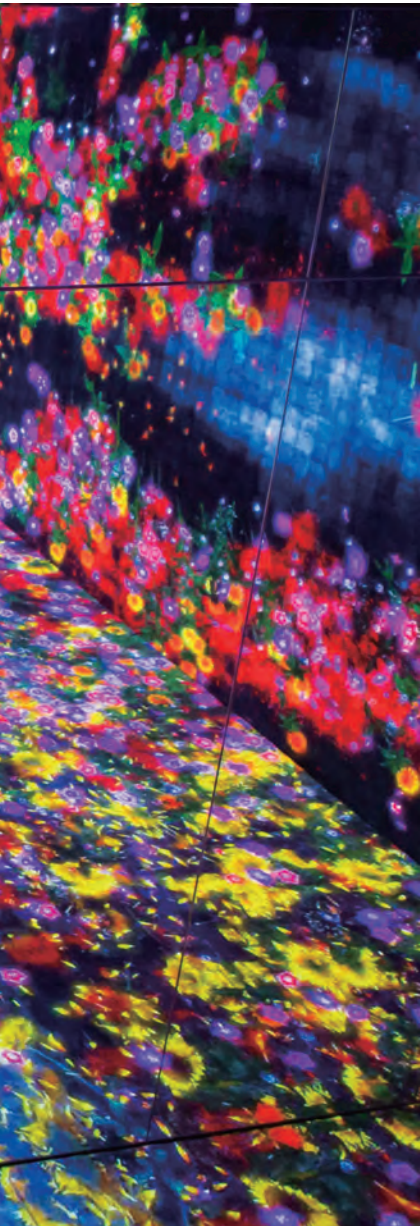
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Last Month in Photos

Club Members Share Their Best Shots



2



3

1. A staff member stands on a digital installation during a media preview of the MORI Building DIGITAL ART MUSEUM: EPSON teamLab Borderless on April 26, 2018 in Tokyo, Japan. The new digital museum, a collaborative project between the real estate developer Mori Building Company and digital art collective teamLab, is scheduled to open in the Odaiba area of Tokyo on June 21, 2018. Photo by Tomohiro Ohsumi



4

2. Members of the media look at a digital installation during a media preview of the MORI Building DIGITAL ART MUSEUM: EPSON teamLab Borderless on April 26, 2018 in Tokyo, Japan. The new digital museum, a collaborative project between the real estate developer Mori Building Company and digital art collective teamLab, is scheduled to open in the Odaiba area of Tokyo on June 21, 2018. Photo by Tomohiro Ohsumi

3. A mounted archer wearing traditional Japanese costume participates in a horseback archery "Yabusame" event at Sumida Park in Asakusa district on April 21, 2018, Tokyo, Japan. The annual event is held in Sumida Park by horseback archers aiming arrows at a target from a galloping horse. Photo by Rodrigo Reyes Marin

4. Anti-Abe protesters gather in front of the National Diet Building chanting for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's resignation on April 14, 2018, Tokyo, Japan. Organizers claim about 30,000 protesters joined the rally demanding Abe's resignation for the Moritomo Gakuen and Kake Gakuen scandals. Photo by Rodrigo Reyes Marin





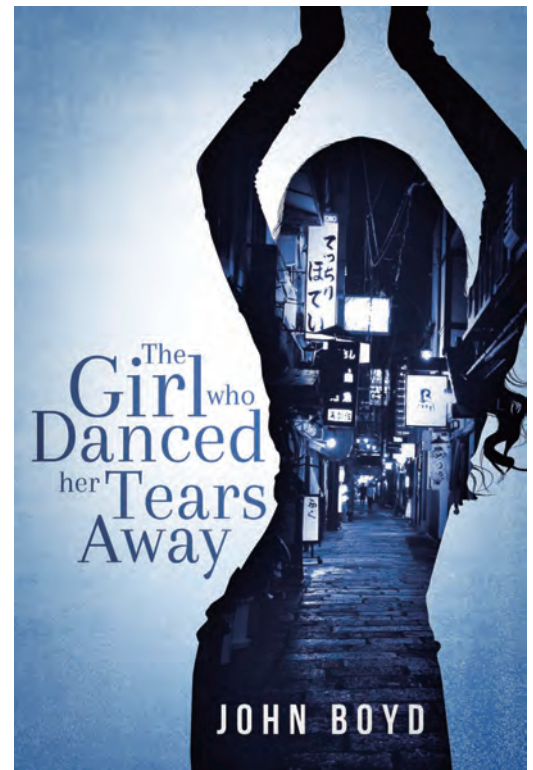
May Photo Exhibition

MEGUMI ASAOKA

Saigon

The first time I visited Saigon was in 2003 and I have returned a number of times since to photograph the city and its people. It has been a period of transition for this war-torn country. Buildings are rising under the *Doi Moi* (new change) Policy. The effects are particularly evident in the area around Ho Chi Minh City, which has been undergoing a major facelift. With a map, I traveled on local buses and walked through the different communities. The area across the river was soon to disappear. Houses were falling into decay as tropical flora sought to reclaim the land. I could not stop taking photographs. Around every corner I turned, there was something that needed to be preserved on film before it was lost. Physically, much has changed since I first started traveling Ho Chi Minh. One thing that has not changed is that many of its residents still refer to the city by its former name. For them, Saigon will always be Saigon. Behind the facade of lights and color that screens the city, the daily life of the local people goes on much as it always has.





Reminder: Book Break

“Killing Time in Tokyo” and “The Girl Who Danced Her Tears Away”

by JOHN BOYD

**Tuesday, May 22, 2018 from
6:15 pm to 8:30 pm
(The talk will be in English)**

The idea for *Killing Time in Tokyo* (fiction) came about after John Boyd, the author, was approached by a yakuza in a Yokohama pub many years ago. Both the man and his boss who was sitting near by were dressed more like respectable businessmen rather than the then movie image of punch perms and flashy suits. Boyd presumed they were keizai (economic-focused) yakuza and that the boss was interested in learning English, so Boyd turned down the invitation. But afterwards, he got to thinking what might have happened had he

agreed. Eventually, his imagination took over and *Killing Time in Tokyo* is the result.

The Girl Who Danced Her Tears Away (fiction) involves an English girl who goes missing in Japan when working here as an English teacher. Her elder sister back in Liverpool drops everything and goes to Osaka to search for her, and she vows revenge when she learns of her sister's fate. Boyd had the basic idea for this novel long before Lucie Blackman disappeared in Tokyo in 2000. But he incorporated certain events from that tragic happening into his novel, and owes a previous Book Break author, Richard Lloyd Parry, a tip of the hat for writing *People Who Eat Darkness* because his poignant account of Blackman's disappearance and death provided Boyd with background for his own story.

The author will spend the latter part of the evening explaining the nuts and bolts of how he went about self-publishing the two suspense thrillers on Amazon—the world's largest bookstore. He will explain how he chose the titles, acquired the covers, and wrote the book descriptions. He will also take you through the process of publishing a book manuscript and how to decide on pricing so that you receive up to 70% of the sales price—compared to the typical 12% paid by traditional print publishers.

John Boyd has been freelance writing for over 30 years. Old Japan hands may remember his long-running column *Computer Corner* that appeared weekly in the *Japan Times* during the 1980s and '90s. Currently, he strings

for the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) *Spectrum* magazine, writes for a variety of outlets on a variety of subjects, and he's begun work on his second novel in *The Girl Who Danced* series that he plans to turn into a trilogy. Both novels are published as ebooks and can be read on any Amazon Kindle or on PCs, Macs and smartphones with the free software Amazon provides.

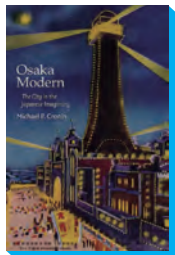
The library committee is offering a cocktail party - "Meet the Author" - starting at 6:15 pm, followed by dinner at 6:45 pm (Menu: TBD). Drinks can be ordered on a cash basis from the bar in the room. Book Break charges are 2,100yen / 3,500yen (members / non-members) per person. The member price is applicable to members' guests.

- To FCCJ members: Sign up now at the reception desk (03-3211-3161) or on the FCCJ website. To help us plan proper seating and food preparation, please reserve in advance, preferably by noon of the day of the event. Those without reservations will be turned away once available seats are filled. Reservations cancelled less than 24 hours in advance will be charged in full.

- To non-members: Sign up now at the reception desk by email (front@fccj.or.jp). Please reserve and pay in advance by Thursday, May 17. Those without reservations will be turned away once available seats are filled. No refund is available unless the event is cancelled for the reasons on our part.

New in the Library

1.



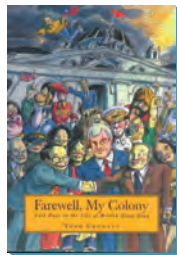
Osaka Modern: The City in the Japanese Imaginary
Michael P. Cronin
Harvard University Asia Center

2.



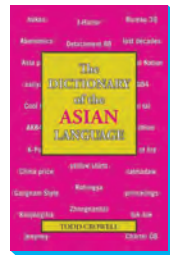
The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea
Bill Emmott
The Economist Books

3.



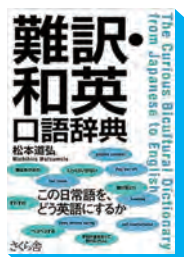
Farewell, My Colony: Last Days in the Life of British Hong Kong
Todd Crowell
Blacksmith Books
Gift from Todd Crowell

4.



The Dictionary of the Asian Language
Todd Crowell
Blacksmith Books
Gift from Todd Crowell

5.



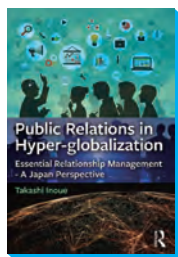
Nanyaku. waei [gokan] jiten
Michihiro Matsumoto
Sakurasha
Gift from Michihiro Matsumoto

6.



2020 nen tokyo orinpikku. Pararinpikku wa tero taisaku no regashi ni naruka?
Keiichi Yoshikawa
Kindaishobosha
Gift from Keiichi Yoshikawa

7.



Public Relations in Hyper-globalization: Essential Relationship Management - A Japan Perspective
Takashi Inoue
Routledge
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PITCH US YOUR STORY

Please send your story ideas to no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp, and be sure to note whether you have (or have access to) visuals. Our rates are ¥20 per published word, ¥20,000 for a front cover photo. Photo essays: ¥15,000 for full-page photos and ¥5,000 for smaller shots. All payments will be made in credit to your member account.

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