

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

July 2020 · Volume 52 · No. 7



The Long-living Economic Legacy of Pandemics and Plagues

**The United States:
Land of Protests**

**Why Do People
Hate the FCCJ?**

**Profile:
Meri Joyce**



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Cover shows an 18th century Italian Plague Doctor Mask. The beak was stuffed with aromatic herbs to keep foul odours and plague bugs away. Photo: Kuma Kum on Unsplash

THE FRONT PAGE

From the President

Dear members,

The month of June is when the incumbent board wraps up the year's work and holds elections for a new board. I take this opportunity to express thanks to my board for their efforts to run Club affairs in this *annus horribilis* (horrible year, for those who didn't study Latin). The year from July 1, 2019, witnessed continuation of the challenges our Club had faced since we changed our status to *shadan koeki*, adopted outsourcing of food and beverage and moved to a new location.

As the board's year began, its then-leaders were preparing to liquidate the Club, as their calculations and policies suggested we were only a few months away from insolvency. Upon the resignation of the previous president, I was elected to lead the Club for the rest of the year. I placed my main focus on stabilizing our financial health. As if we didn't have enough on our plate, we've also had to cope with human resources changes and, starting early in this calendar year, the novel coronavirus pandemic. Many members called for a shutdown, but I and others thought we needed to keep the Club as an open hub for news making and news reporting.

In the end, although an unexpected tiny virus caused global health, financial and economic problems, our Club remained intact and we were able to set policies to continue our rise. This would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our hard-working staff, and a group of highly skilled and determined board members. I would like to express, on behalf of the membership, my great respect for and thanks to them.

Special thanks go to our veteran club member Bob Whiting, who served five years on consecutive boards in the most critical times. Bob is leaving the board along with Abby Leonard, who contributed greatly to the Freedom of Press committee and awards program. Thanks go also to club member Takashi Kawachi, the former Mainichi Shimbun editor who worked hard on this board as our secretary preparing the minutes. He is leaving the board, too.

Thanks also go to our first vice president Monzurul Huq whose quiet diplomacy helped our board sail smoothly, avoiding the icebergs of corona and others perils. Treasurer Mehdi Bassiri worked hard in the current board heading the task force to negotiate a possible contract with our food and beverage provider after taking over the treasurer post from a predecessor who resigned. Mary Corbett returned to the board mid-term and is active as usual in following the details of our governing issues. Akihiko Tanabe, the newcomer to the board, waded right into complex issues of human resources, house & property and food & beverages.

More thanks to our parliamentarian, Larry Cesar, and our two kanji, Kaz Abiko and Makoko Honjo, who are leaving the board.

Thank you all for your hard work.

Special advisers Rick Dyck, Andrew Horvat, Dan Sloan and



Harumi Kumagai provided important contribution to the affairs and I thank them.

I would also like to thank Albert Siegel for helping with the production of the July issue of the *Number 1 Shimbun* while we searched for a new editor and designer after the resignations of the previous team.

Our search is now over, so please welcome Peter O'Connor as the new editor along with award-winning designer and art director Kohji Shiiki, whose work includes *Metropolis* and the Tokyo American Club magazine. I have appointed Peter as the editor starting with the August issue.

Peter has worked on and off on three regular publications: *Private Eye*, *The Times* and *The Irish Times* (the last two as a reviewer). He previously edited *The Journal of Irish Studies*, and has edited 60 volumes on media history and propaganda. This is not a conventional background for a *Number 1 Shimbun* editor, but the magazine can benefit from a change of tone, maintaining Club affairs at the core, with more involvement in Book Breaks and PAC Events, a deeper engagement with the Club's working parts, such as the restaurant, the library and even the treasury – but also aiming for some real exclusives, and real insights into the nature of Japan and of the systemic changes moving East Asia.

Finally, I want to offer special thanks to Geoffrey Tudor for his many years of service to the *Number 1 Shimbun*. Geoff has decided to retire as chairman of the publication committee with publication of the July issue.

The FCCJ, infused with momentum and energy provided by our loyal members and staff, continues its journey prepared for the good days to come.

● KHALDON AZHARI

THE FRONT PAGE

Freedom of The Press



PHOTO BY SAM BALYE ON UNSPLASH

In June the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ) issued statements through its Freedom of the Press Committee on press freedom issues in the U.S. and The Philippines.

Firstly, the FCCJ expressed its firm solidarity with journalists in the USA, who according to a report on June 1 by Nieman Journalism Lab, had been attacked by police "at least 140 times since May 28."

"It's becoming clear that attacks by police on journalists are becoming a widespread pattern, not one-off incidents," the report stated. "While violence against press-credentialed reporters covering the protests may still be dwarfed by violence against the American citizens who are protesting, incidents are piling up and are getting more attention in part because the journalists being attacked include those from large mainstream news organizations."

London Media Organization Condemned CNN Arrest

The Chartered Institute of Journalists (CloJ) in London has meanwhile condemned what it describes as "the outrageous arrest" of a CNN news crew covering the protests in Minneapolis, (USA) following the death of George Floyd."

CloJ President Professor Tim Crook (a longstanding expert and author of books on international media law) said in a May 29 statement that: "The public humiliation of a professional news team is one of the most blatant and outrageous attacks on freedom of the media that we have seen in a long time."

The CloJ, he added "stands in solidarity with those CNN journalists so improperly arrested and completely agree with CNN when they complain such behaviour means that free and fair gathering of the news is arrested too."

The FCCJ likewise stands in solidarity with journalists in the U.S. and elsewhere against attacks on legitimate and essential press freedoms.

Philippines Court Ruling Draws Alarms

In mid-June the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan and its Freedom of the Press Committee were alarmed by reports that Rappler editor Maria Ressa and former Rappler reporter Reynaldo Santos Jr. were convicted of "cyber libel" in a Philippines court for doing legitimate and necessary reporting.

In a statement, the FCCJ said, "We believe the decision is an assault on press freedom and an attempt to stifle any reporting that is critical of President Rodrigo Duterte's administration. Human Rights Watch reported that the judgment was retaliation for extensive reporting Rappler had done on Duterte's "war on drugs", which involved extra-judicial killings and police-linked death squads.

Dubious Claim

Ressa was convicted on a technicality: In 2014, she made a minor typographical change to an article linking Filipino businessman Wilfredo Keng to drug dealing and human trafficking. Keng then used "re-publication" as a basis to file a libel case and the Justice Department quickly supported that dubious claim. This comes after the Duterte administration shut down ABS-CBN, the country's broadcast network, which had also been critical of Duterte. We are deeply concerned by this pattern of assaults on the press.

Ressa herself said in her acceptance speech for CPJ's Gwen Ifill Press freedom award two years ago, that the events in her country are related to a worldwide erosion in press freedoms, saying that American President Donald Trump's attacks on the press, "give permission to autocrats (like ours) to unleash the dark side of humanity and extend their already vast powers with impunity."

Ressa now faces up to six years in prison. The FCCJ strongly believes she should be allowed to go free and to continue her important journalistic work.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Herbert Bix — Meticulous Historian



FCCJ

By CHARLES POMEROY

Born in Boston in 1938 and a 1956 graduate of Winthrop High School, Herbert P. Bix attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst before serving aboard Japan-based ships while a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve. He then attended Harvard University, where he received a Ph.D. in history and Far Eastern languages. Prior to publishing *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* in 2000, which was translated into Japanese and Chinese, he had published in 1986 his insightful *Peasant Protest in Japan, 1590-1884* that also was acclaimed for its historical detail.

Bix also earned a reputation as an astute observer of wars and empires, writing insightful commentaries in scholarly journals and the media of both the U.S. and Japan. These include some 20 articles in *The Asia-Pacific Journal/Japan Focus* between 2003 and 2015. As well, he was a founding member of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, founded in 1968 both to oppose the Vietnam war and to expand knowledge and understanding of Asian societies.

Bix has taught at a number of universities, including Hosei University and Hitotsubashi University in Japan. He is now Professor Emeritus in History and Sociology at Binghamton University in New York.



Herbert P. Bix, professor at Hitotsubashi University, looking at questioner Bob Neff (*Business Week*) at a Club professional luncheon on August 30, 2000. Bix had recently published his meticulously researched book, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, in a forthright presentation of historical detail and insights that was to bring him the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for general non-fiction as well as the National Book Critics Circle Award. Seated to his left are FCCJ President Jim Treece, Board-member Bradley Martin, and Secretary Pat Killen. The man to his right is 1st VP Firdous Khergamvala.

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

FEATURE



The United States: Land of Protests

Foreign correspondents dispatched to Japan after World War II sometimes found the assignment a bit quiet for our tastes – especially after next-door South Korea, following success of the sometimes bloody 1980s democratization movement, likewise became fairly peaceful. Thereafter, any U.S. correspondent in search of bang-bang stories following his or her Tokyo tour would have been well advised to go home. Americans always have been a rowdy people, seldom more than this year. Here are a couple of FCCJ veteran correspondents' accounts of rioting nearly three decades apart. (Bradley Martin, *Asia Times*)

First up is MIKE THARP, who was based in Tokyo for the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *U.S. News & World Report*. He was FCCJ president 1989-90.

FEATURE

The United States: Land of Protests**Remembering the L.A. Riots**

40th Infantry Division in the L.A. Riots, 1992.

On the day the Los Angeles riots erupted in 1992, I was in my *U.S. News & World Report* home office in San Pedro. I heard the “not guilty” verdict for the police officers accused in the Rodney King case on KNX Radio.

My brother, a police chief in Oregon, had watched part of the trial when he and his family visited Disneyland earlier that spring. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, he’d predicted the verdict.

So when I heard it, I knew the top of the bubbling racial cauldron that was Los Angeles would blow.

I called the Reverend Bill Johnson, a black minister I knew in Compton. “Are you preaching tonight, Pastor?” He said he was. He said I could come listen.

I drove there around 4 p.m. San Pedro is the port of Los Angeles, south of downtown. I saw and smelled smoke already curling between the glittering highrises and me.

Pastor Johnson talked about acting reasonably, about keeping faith, about civil disobedience, about race. In the back of the church, I took notes.

After his sermon I interviewed several

of his black congregation. They were mostly my age (47) and older or young kids with their grandparents.

Pastor Johnson and I were the last to leave. He was going to take the 91 Freeway east; me, west.

When we left the church, a police helicopter hovered a block over, its spotlight on a scrum of black people outside a small grocery and liquor store. They were breaking in. He went east, I started to go west. The rioters packed the street, so I slowed.

Even with windows up, I could smell smoke and fire.

I don’t know if it was a brick or a chunk of sidewalk that first hit my door side. Others followed – and shouts of “Rodney! Rodney!” Stuff splattered against my windshield and back door. Fists pounded against my window. I kept moving.

Finally I could speed up. On the 91 Freeway I felt more fear than I’d felt covering the Persian Gulf War for nearly four months a year earlier, as scared as I ever was as a soldier in Vietnam.

In those places I was with soldiers. Now I was on my own.

When I pulled off the 110 Freeway in Pedro, I stopped at the 7-Eleven going into town. I needed a beer.

At the door came this black guy my size (6’3”) about my age. We looked at each other.

“I’m sorry, man,” I said.

“Me too,” he said.

Tharp currently lives in Dallas, where he writes a column for the *Dallas Morning News*. This item originally appeared in *Connections*, a newsletter whose main readers are retired *Associated Press* staffers.

RICH READ, who wrote the second piece, was based in Tokyo 1987-1994, first as a freelancer and then as founding chief of *The Oregonian’s* Asia bureau. He served on the FCCJ board for four years. This year’s protests are the second round he’s covered in Seattle since returning home – the first being the famed World Trade Organization protests, the “Battle of Seattle,” in 1999.

Both the Left and the Right Rush to Blame Protest Violence on Outside Extremists

SEATTLE – Billy Williams, the top federal prosecutor in Oregon and an appointee of President Trump, has little doubt who is behind the violence and destruction that has accompanied nationwide protests against racism by police: the ultra-left movement known as “antifa.”

“At some point during each protest in individual cities, law enforcement has noticed a more organized effort,” he said Monday during a news conference in Portland. “Protesters fan out and engage in the same kind of criminal conduct.”

Jo Ann Hardesty, who last year became the first black woman to serve on Portland’s City Council, also blames interlopers: the ultra-right hate group Proud Boys.

“We allow white nationalists and white supremacists to infiltrate our peaceful protests ... and then create the kind of chaos and damage in our community,” she said in a video recording released Tuesday. “We must make that stop.”

As cities reel and Trump threatens to deploy the military, figures across the political spectrum have been quick to defend their own citizens as peaceful protesters while accusing outsiders of fomenting the unrest.

But they have presented little evidence to support their allegations, and like so much in the highly polarized politics of this era, most people see what they want to see.

To hear one side tell it, thuggish white men are showing up at rallies with backpacks stuffed with rocks, pipes and other projectiles, aiming to discredit the mass movement against police brutality and gain support for their own racist agenda. On the other side, the Trump administration and its supporters say

FEATURE

The United States: Land of Protests

the violence is being perpetrated by anarchists who seek to sow chaos and destabilize the government.

But the publicly available evidence for both perspectives remains anecdotal – such as an incident Monday night in Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta.

Terrance Holt, a 27-year-old black man, was standing in the middle of a small crowd of mostly black protesters when a rock flew through the air and landed a few feet from the long line of U.S. National Guard members.

As the crowd scattered, protesters identified the rock thrower as a lone white man in dark jeans, a dark jacket, a baseball cap and a mask.

“Dude, we’re out here trying to find a better way, and you’re trying to start chaos,” Holt hollered at the man, who strolled out of the park.

Television images of rioters smashing windows and looting groceries, clothing, bicycles and anything else they can grab suggest economic opportunism rather than political motives.

In some cases, allegations of outside interference are contradicted by records of who has been arrested in recent days.

In Minnesota, Democratic Gov. Tim Walz said Saturday that well-organized groups trained in urban warfare tactics were responsible for arson, looting and shooting at police officers and firefighters. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said the perpetrators were not Minneapolis residents.

“They are coming in largely from outside of this city, from outside the region, to prey on everything that we have built over the last several decades,” he said.

But Walz was forced to dial back his statement after it started to become clear that more locals had been arrested than he had realized.

One outsider who drew the attention of authorities was Matthew Lee Rupert, who traveled from Illinois to the Minneapolis protests and was charged Monday with civil disorder, carrying on a riot and possession of unregistered destructive devices.

According to a sworn affidavit submitted by an FBI agent, some of the evidence against Rupert comes from a two-hour live-video selfie in which he loots businesses, appears to light a building on fire and passes out explosives and encourages protesters to throw them at police officers.

“An explosion is audible in the video, and Rupert repeatedly yelled, ‘Good shot, my boy,’” the agent said.

In Atlanta, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said people from outside the metropolitan area ignited the violence during three nights of protest. Roughly 400 people have been arrested, predominantly for disorderly conduct and curfew violations. But according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, most of the 82 people whose names have been released are from the metro area.

In Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser told a news conference Monday that the city had reached out to community activists for any information that might help stymie the violence.

“We’re working with all of our intelligence to figure out who’s coming here,” she said.

Extremist groups have a history of traveling to stir up trouble. Members of Proud Boys, which the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated a hate organization, have traveled to Portland in recent years and clashed repeatedly with masked, black-garbed antifa activists.

But Joe Biggs, an organizer for the far-right organization who was reached by phone Monday at his Daytona Beach, Fla., home, said the group was sitting out the current protests and denied his members had any role in the violence.

Biggs attributed looting to miscreants of no particular political stripe.

“Bad people exist,” he said. “What they really want is a new 72-inch flat-screen TV.”

Antifa is a loosely organized movement whose followers say there is no membership roster or formal leadership structure. Trump wrote in a tweet Sunday that the United States would designate antifa a terrorist organization, although

it’s not clear that would be legal.

Contacted by phone Monday, a man who speaks for the group in the Portland area but conceals his identity denied that antifa had been involved in violence during the protests there. He also said activists had not seen significant involvement of far-right groups.

Among a crowd of thousands protesting Tuesday on the steps of the Minnesota Capitol in St. Paul was a 33-year-old Latina from New York who said she supports antifa and asked to be identified only by her first name, Stina.

She said antifa is not a terrorist group and that looting can serve a political purpose.

“Instead of calling it ‘looting,’ we could call it ‘reclaiming,’” she said. “Let’s talk about reparations. As soon as we realize racism is a pillar of capitalism, then we can get somewhere.”

Edward Maguire, a professor of criminology at Arizona State University, said the idea of the outside agitator or professional protesters has long been an overblown narrative pushed by local officials and politicians to downplay the level of actual conflict within a community.

“You have right-wing people blaming it on the left and left-wing people blaming it on the right, and none of that is helpful,” he said. “It’s all divisive and harmful.”

“There are a lot of locals involved in these protests, and we need to craft our response to them. It’s a little convenient to just blame everything on outside agitators.”

Richard Read, Pacific Northwest correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times*, reported from Seattle, Jenny Jarvie from Atlanta and Mollie Hennessy-Fiske from Minneapolis. Laura King in Washington and Anita Chabria in Los Angeles contributed to this report. This *Los Angeles Times* article https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-06-02/george-floyd-protest-violence-blame?fbclid=IwAR35AvcKSDtnZQ7_lbqBW7l5y-QxXFjSmsyK71kOsn7cVWuSVBhHGOK7At4 is republished with permission.

FEATURE

Why Do People Hate the FCCJ?



PHOTO BY ANNIE SPRATT ON UNSPLASH

By DAVID McNEILL

In May something remarkable happened in the world of publishing. A minor magazine that few people had taken much notice found itself at the center of a national row about the limits of free speech and parody in Japan.

The April edition of *Number 1 Shimbun*, the house magazine of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ), ran a cover that combined the logo for the 2020 Olympics with the Covid-19 virus, upsetting the organizing committee of the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The ensuing kerfuffle led to the resignations of the magazine's talented editor (Greg Starr) and designer (Andrew Potheary) and prompted Khaldon Azhari, president of the FCCJ, to call a press conference where he fulsomely apologized for causing offense.

For some, the row was a moment of schadenfreude and a chance to revisit their long-standing hatred of the FCCJ. Bloggers predictably criticized the club as "anti-Japanese". Some on the fringes demanded the government revoke the FCCJ's status as a public benefit corporation.

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/fccjの公益法人取り消しを要求します?>

An article in *Japan Forward*, the English-language arm of the right-wing Sankei Shimbun, called the club "an occupation-era anachronism" that "seeks to preserve Occupation-era prerogatives for foreign correspondents", who, needless to say, show little respect for "Japanese sensitivities."*

<https://japan-forward.com/mythbusters-self-righteous-foreign-correspondents-in-japan-claim-freedom-to-be-offensive/>

FEATURE

Why Do People Hate the FCCJ?

This framing of the FCCJ as an organization of white, burger-chomping gaijin hacks with racist contempt for the society around them is a caricature. It is also wildly at odds with the composition of the Club and its role in Japan.

Fewer than 18% of the FCCJ's 1,715 members are "foreign." The bulk of its membership comprises Japanese associate members and journalists.

They include people on the left and right sides of Japan's political spectrum, even some who have publicly called for boycotting the Club when they don't like this or that speaker, (in breach, incidentally, of the Club's rules).

Most of the Japanese members speak English. Most of the older foreign correspondents (those who keep the club running) are deeply embedded in local life, with Japanese families and children. To suggest, as some have done, that they take pleasure in the suffering of Japanese during the pandemic (or wish it could be worse so they could have something to report) is offensively wrong.

The Club was set up in September 1945 by war correspondents who opposed Occupation leadership rules on the number of journalists allowed into Japan. It has gone through peaks and troughs since: pulling in reporters during wars and crises (the Vietnam and Korean conflicts claimed the lives of dozens of FCCJ correspondents, foreign and Japanese, some of whom are memorialized in the Club's entryway); shedding reporters during the lulls in between.

One reason why the FCCJ has not collapsed under the weight of its own conceit and arrogance over 75 years, and why its members have not bolted for the door, pocketing their 13,000 yen a month in fees (for journalists) or 17,500 yen (for associates) is because it performs a useful function in Japanese society.

Every year events at the club generate multiple stories in the domestic media, whose representatives mostly use its facilities free of charge. Associates and businessmen have for decades paid for ringside seats to watch leading Japanese public figures charm, cajole or stumble in front of the global media.

I've been involved with the Club for 15 years, much of that time as chair or co-chair of the Professional Activities Committee (PAC), a group of 16 male and female journalists (including Japanese) that organizes press events. PAC fields hundreds of proposals annually from potential Japanese speakers who, for better or worse, see the FCCJ as a platform for open journalism.

Shiori Ito, for example, who accused a fellow journalist of raping her, initially came to the FCCJ because she said she could not get a fair hearing in the local media (PAC initially turned her request down because it was nervous of airing untested rape allegations (some of us still feel a twinge of shame about this but I don't think it was wrong, based on what we knew). Last December she and Noriyuki Yamaguchi, the man who had just been convicted in a civil court of raping her held back-to-back press conferences, widely carried across the domestic media. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIK_PYxpaul

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One reason why the FCCJ has not collapsed under the weight of its own conceit and arrogance over 75 years, and why its members have not bolted for the door, pocketing their 13,000 yen a month in fees (for journalists) or 17,500 yen (for associates) is because it performs a useful function in Japanese society.”

In recent years, however, an organization that once had respectful and friendly ties with Japan's establishment has found itself at odds with the establishment. This became evident in 2014 when the Liberal Democrats (LDP) and coalition partners Komeito reversed long-standing tradition and declined to send senior delegates to the FCCJ to explain their policies.

The LDP and much of the government has since avoided the Club. Last year, for example, the Ministry of Justice and Tokyo Prosecutor's Office declined repeated requests to come and discuss the arrest, detention and escape of Carlos Ghosn, Nissan's disgraced boss. Arguably this silence helped negative and sometimes inaccurate press coverage of the Ghosn case to sweep around the world. Ironically, it has also fueled claims that the FCCJ is more interested in bashing the Japanese government than listening to it. A sign that this de facto Abe cabinet boycott had ended was the press conference at the Club by defense minister Taro Kono on June 25th.

Now some might ask why should Japan's government prostrate themselves before this Occupation-era anachronism. Shouldn't foreign journalists learn Japanese and attend government press conferences, like Japanese reporters do on foreign postings (many of these reporters rely on local fixers, but point taken). The answer is yes, and a growing number do.

A more pointed question, though, might be why doesn't official Japan come to a ready-made pipeline to the world. The LDP snub began after an FCCJ press conference in 2014 by Eriko Yamatani, chairperson of the National Public Safety Commission. Yamatani came to discuss North Korea's kidnapping of Japanese citizens in her capacity as Minister in Charge of the Abduction Issue. But she was grilled instead on her alleged connections to Japan's hard right.

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Why Do People Hate the FCCJ?

Yamatani stumbled through her assignment, seemingly intent on not putting distance between her office and perhaps Japan's most toxic racist group, Zaitokukai. The event ended with Japan's top cop being shouted down by a particularly enthusiastic Japanese freelancer. She never returned.

The press conference was relished by some as the sort of scrappy encounter that helped make the FCCJ's reputation, such as it is. But where some saw rambunctious, open debate, others saw chaos. Freelancers are not allowed such leeway at the more scripted events run by the National Press Club.

Shinzo Abe and his cabinet are like governments anywhere, using control and spin, seeking to dominate the media narrative and avoid encounters where it might be aggressively scrutinized. Abe himself has not been to the FCCJ since he came with a group of LDP presidential candidates in September 2012. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, relented after 19 months of requests, then tried to have the questions scripted beforehand (an attempt, in effect, to turn the FCCJ into a government press club).

Holding powerful people to account is not easy and we can all use whatever help we can get. That's what the FCCJ is here for, but it might not always be. The Club has suffered a fall in membership (which peaked in April 2002 at 2,164), largely because of changes outside of its control: demography and the erosion of the traditional business model of journalism. Newspapers and TV companies have closed bureaus across the world. Full-time correspondents are an endangered species.

It remains to be seen whether the spat over *Number 1 Shimbun* helps hasten this decline. Many FCCJ members are furious that the club not take a more principled stand over the cover. For some, it was a wounding blow to its status as a champion of free expression. Whatever the case, the foreign vs Japanese dichotomy used by some to stereotype the club is decades out of date. More importantly, it does nothing to promote an open and tolerant society with diverse views, regardless of whether those views agree with or challenge the status quo.

Those who want the FCCJ to go out of business, should be careful what they wish for.

▼
A sign that this de facto boycott of the Club by the Abe Cabinet had ended came on June 25 when Defense Minister Taro Kono gave a press conference.

● **DAVID McNEILL** is co-chair of the FCCJ's Professional Activities Committee and a professor at the Department of English Language, Communication and Cultures at Sacred Heart University in Tokyo. He was previously a correspondent for *The Independent* and *The Economist* newspapers and for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

FEATURE

The Long-living Economic Legacy of Pandemics and Plagues

By ANTHONY ROWLEY

With lockdowns against Covid-19 easing and infection and death rates declining it would be nice to think we can breathe a sigh of relief and begin to put the pandemic behind us. But that may be way too soon when it comes to the economic legacy even assuming no major ‘second wave’ of infections.

The U.S. Federal Reserve has listed the problems that pose a major challenge to the world’s biggest economy in the short to medium term, and they are by no means unique to America. Just a few include a potential wave of business failures, continuing high unemployment plus lower wages – and a trade slump.

Other analyses suggest that the legacy of the coronavirus will persist well beyond the medium term, and that it could extend into unexpected areas of the global economy and into the financial system also.

It may take one or even two decades – a generation in effect – for the economic stagnation and price declines which have historically been associated with such terrible episodes to abate completely, according to research published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington.

And, contrary to what many stock markets appear to be anticipating as they leap joyfully back to pre-pandemic highs (even as the pandemic continues to rage), the IMF notes that “the great pandemics of the past millennium have typically been associated with subsequent low returns on assets.”

Quoting a new paper by researchers Jorda, Singh, and Taylor, the IMF focuses on events in the aftermath of 15 large pandemics that each caused over 100,000 deaths in Europe (where data has been recorded to varying degrees) since the Black Death that lasted from 1331 to 1353.

Even if the world is lucky enough to escape from the coronavirus with only a fraction of the deaths caused by past plagues, the impact of the Covid-19 in economic and financial terms



ARTWORK: KOJI SHIKI

could prove to be longer-lasting and more profound even than was the case during those terrible events.

Research on the economic fallout of Covid-19 has so far focused on short-term impacts, the IMF says. “However, as governments engage in large-scale counter-pandemic fiscal programmes, it is important to understand what the economic landscape will look like in the years and decades to come.”

That landscape “will shape monetary and fiscal policy in ways that are not yet fully understood.”

Historical studies have typically focused on single events in one country or region and have traced outcomes a decade at most, the IMF notes. But with major pandemics effects will be felt across economies because the infection is widespread or trade integration propagates the economic shock.

“The rapid and unprecedented collapse of production, trade, and employment may be reversed as the pandemic eases but historical data suggest that long term economic consequences could persist for a generation or more. The toll on economic activity so far is only the beginning of the story,” that IMF warns.

Wars and plagues are often ranked as equally disastrous but as the IMF notes they are very different in terms of economic impact. Wars destroy a country’s capital stock but trigger reconstruction once peace returns whereas plagues destroy a nation’s human capital and so no reconstruction boom follows.

What’s more, we can expect the continuation of low or zero (negative even perhaps in some cases) interest rates for the foreseeable future. While that may sound like good news for borrowers it also implies stagnant economic activity as business and household demand recovers only very cautiously.

Analysis shows that the “natural” or neutral rate of interest (the equilibrium level that can keep the economy growing at its potential rate with stable inflation) typically declines for 20 years after a pandemic and then takes a further 20 years to recover its original level.

FEATURE

The Long-living Economic Legacy of Pandemics and Plagues

The Pandemic Progress of the “Grim Reaper” Over Centuries

■ One thing that has made the coronavirus (Covid-19) appear so scary is the sheer amount of publicity it has created. Past epidemics or plagues have been far more terrible in terms of the number of people they killed, owing to inability of societies to respond effectively at the time, the IMF says.

■ The “Black Death” which originated in Asia in 1330 and went on to kill around a third of Europe’s then population or some 75 million people (according to data compiled by Wikipedia from various sources) makes the coronavirus (some 430,000 deaths as of mid June) look relatively benign so far.

■ And the “Spanish Flu” in 1918 in turn outstripped the Black Death as a killer disease, causing some 100 million deaths. None of the other 13 big pandemics noted by these sources comes anywhere near to matching the grim record of the Great Plague and the Spanish Flu.

■ Partly owing to its geographical and cultural isolation over many centuries Japan has suffered relatively less than from plagues than have other nations.

■ The so-called Spanish flu which erupted in 1918 at the end of the First World War and persisted until 1920 is the worst epidemic that Japan has suffered until the present and the death toll was infinitely greater.

■ According to official figures quoted in a Nichibun monograph, “the epidemic which stormed Japan for about half a year from autumn 1918 to spring 1919 affected 21,168,000, leaving more than 257,000 dead.” That compares with some 890 Covid-19 deaths in Japan as of the beginning of June.

■ The Japanese smallpox epidemic during the years 735 to 737 (Tenpyo era epidemic) afflicted much of Japan, killing approximately one third of the population at that time. It had significant social, economic, and religious repercussions throughout the country.



Italian Plague doctor in full kit

The IMF describes this as “staggering” and suggests that it “speaks to the large economic effects pandemics have had over the centuries.” The analysis makes use of “newly available data on yields of long-term sovereign debt stretching back to the 14th century.”

The natural rate of interest,” is an important economic barometer, it notes. “As populations become more frugal, the relative supply of savings increases; when the underlying pace of growth wanes, investment becomes less attractive, in both cases the natural rate declines to restore equilibrium.”

Still, the IMF adds,” one piece of good news is that sustained periods of low borrowing costs are associated with higher real (inflation adjusted) wages and create room for governments to finance stimulus measures to counteract economic damage.” They will need all of that room - and maybe more.

● ANTHONY ROWLEY is a former president of the FCCJ. He is a co-author of *Sustainable Investment – Impact in Asia*, published jointly by Asia Asset Management and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

FEATURE

Pingpong Diplomacy – 50 Years On



▼
Author Gregory Clark
meets Zhou Enlai

By GREGORY CLARK

Frerrenzy! That is not a word you would normally associate with our sedate Club. But there was a time....

The time was May, 1971, just 50 years ago. The World Table-Tennis championships in Nagoya had just ended. Rumors said Beijing would be inviting all teams present to visit China after the games. In those days invites to China were rare. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was still under way. Its reports of internal chaos and external hostility were intimidating. Foreigners trying to get into China risked much.

But there were also reports that said that the invitations represented some change in Beijing's policies, that it was finally looking for some kind of opening to the outside world after five years of destructive Cultural Revolution isolation. For those of us who had been looking into China from Tokyo for years, here was a news chance not to be missed. Requests for visas to cover team visits poured into Beijing's usually unreceptive ears.

Early off the mark, April 9, to receive what they said were 'laconic replies' to their visa requests were well-known China watcher, John

FEATURE

Pingpong Diplomacy – 50 Years On

Roderick of AP (he had met the communist leadership in their caves pre-war and knew them well, he said) and the NBC office here headed by veteran correspondent John Rich (later Club president) with Jack Reynolds, as technical expert. They were told they could only cover the pingpong visit of the U.S. team and nothing else. Even so, we could only watch with envy as they set off. Their daily reports were headline news, culminating in a meeting with Premier Zhou Enlai himself, where he congratulated them for opening the pathway into China.

As Tokyo-based correspondent for The Australian at the time I like every other Australian correspondent in town (all three of us) was on the phone immediately trying to get hold of the Australian team manager, a medical doctor John Jackson from Adelaide, to find out if he too had an invitation. But no invite he said bluntly and that was that. We could only guess at the problem, something to do with Canberra's virulent anti-Beijing policies at the time maybe. Even so, and as a former China hand who had the language, I did not want the chance to slip away. I invited Jackson to contact me if he came to Tokyo later and, as a result of misunderstandings, he ended up staying in my apartment. There by chance, I discovered he had in fact been invited to Beijing but had been instructed by someone in Canberra not to accept. When I asked whether he did in fact want to go, and got the answer I wanted, I immediately sent a telegram in his name to the sports authorities in Beijing saying he now wanted to go to China with his team and with one correspondent (you guessed who). The reply was immediate: Come with your team, and the correspondent.

But by then there were only three players left in Japan and they lacked funds. So in exchange for the mini-scoop I was offering to provide, my newspaper promised to pay the team's fares to China, via Hongkong. And so off we went, first for pingpong games in Guangzhou, then Shanghai – where we were told that another Australian correspondent, a Mr Ssuu.. would be joining us – and on to Beijing. There too we got the headlines we wanted – 'first Australian newsmen into China since 1949' – and our select meeting with Premier Zhou. Mr Ssuu.. it turned out was the feisty Max Suich of the

Fairfax media group who had demanded and finally got a visa after discovering what I had been up to. The only other correspondent allowed in with us was a Vince Matthews of the Melbourne Herald (Melbourne was the base of the one pro-Beijing Communist party in Australia).

Back in Japan the FCCJ organised a special event where we would relate our impressions. Roderick spoke about China as being 'an innocent world in which the religion called Marxism, Leninism and Mao Tsetung thought remains untarnished'. Reynolds said he was impressed by the 'intensity of the faces' as seen through the camera. Suich said how disappointed he was (though at first glance he added). He wondered perceptively how the intellectual strength of the Chinese would survive the damage of the Cultural Revolution. I had to agree. John Rich, the diplomat as ever, said little.

Reynolds summed it up saying that to expect us to be experts on China was like trying to write Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire after covering ten days of the Games in the Colosseum.

Today we realise just how important our visits had been. Zhou, a moderate in the Chinese leadership, had long struggled with the Cultural Revolution hardliners. He had organised what is now called the Pingpong Diplomacy in a desperate effort to outflank them. It worked, and together with another moderate, Deng Xiaoping, had pulled China back from the precipice. It's nice to think that some of us might have helped.

Back in our home countries the effect was dramatic. The publicity given pingpong diplomacy opened the way for Henry Kissinger and then Richard Nixon to make their policy about-turns over China. Back in Australia the government had been forced to do the same, and may well have lost its 1972 election as a result.

For the Club it was a chance to see itself as the gateway into China. But it immediately stumbled over the problem of membership for Taiwan media people. Not much has happened since.

● **GREGORY CLARK** is a longtime regular member of the FCCJ, a Tokyo correspondent for *The Australian* and a former diplomat and academic.

PROFILE

Meri Joyce



RODRIGO REYES MARIN

By DAVID McNEILL

As Kumiko Torikai, a doyen of Japanese interpreters once said, good interpreting is like air – nobody notices it until it is polluted. On the few times interpreters stand out it is usually when they make a mistake. Meri Joyce can be said to have thus quietly and assiduously toiled at the FCCJ for years, her seamless bilingual skills underpinning countless major press conferences. As any interpreter will tell you, however, behind that seemingly effortless surface is a lot of effort.

The building blocks of Joyce's Japanese were laid in the small town of Hakushu in the Japan Alps. As a teenage exchange student there in the late 1990s, the Melbourne native had to adapt quickly. First to go was her image of Japan as a uniformly high-tech society. "The only computer in school was in the principal's office and he never turned it on," she recalls. Five English books sat

on the shelves of the library, where she was banished during English lessons to save the teacher's blushes. Children ran from her on the street.

"It was challenging," says Joyce, smiling, during a recent interview on Zoom. But she was also lucky enough to find what she calls a "very welcoming" homestay family for the duration of her one-year exchange in Yamanashi. She is still close to them. "Within that insulated community it was not exactly warm but familiar. It was also part of what I was looking for. And because it was so isolated it was a good place to learn Japanese."

Like many FCCJ luminaries, happenstance paid a part in her journey to Japan. She had won a scholarship to Indonesia but the fall of the country's leader, Suharto, in May 1998, and the subsequent violent unrest put paid to that. Joyce doesn't know why she took to Japanese life so easily. She had spent the first three years of her life here (her Australian father's job took him to Tokyo), and though she remembers almost nothing about it, perhaps the roots were planted then. In any case, at Melbourne University two years later, she opted for a Japanese component in her politics degree, spending a year in Kyoto (2002-3) where she says she conquered the language.

She stumbled into her profession, beginning as a student when she interpreted for, among others, *hibakusha* survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Seeing how language and words could be a bridge between different issues was very powerful," she says. In 2005, she joined Peace Boat, the Japan-based NGO. Her first three-month voyage as a volunteer interpreter was, in her words "right in at the deep end" – travelling to about 20 different countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe, interpreting daily for Japanese experts on board and local visitors who came to talk.

Political activism is the other side – perhaps the most important side – of her life. She still works with Peace Boat and spends half her life outside Japan, much of it campaigning against nuclear weapons or for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, a network of civil society organizations. Her activism began in high school. "It was during a period in Australia when there were huge protests around the uranium mining (much of the uranium was exported to Japan). It was also the time of Seattle and the (anti-globalization) WTO protests." Her stay in Kyoto University coincided with the U.S.-led war in Iraq, when debates about Japanese involvement raged in student dorms.

It was through interpreting press events for nuclear-related NGOs after the Fukushima nuclear accident that Joyce came to the attention of the FCCJ. She found

PROFILE

Meri Joyce



Interpreter Meri Joyce takes notes during a press conference by Lee Young-Chae, professor at Keisen University and Rui Matsukawa, member of the House of Councillors Liberal Democratic Party, who are speaking about possible solutions to Japan-South Korea tensions, Wednesday, July 24, 2019.

ALBERT SIEGEL

the club a good fit: her activism had given her the skills to interpret social issues, in an industry where the bread and butter work is on the corporate conference circuit. “I’m never going to be a completely bilingual person but being involved in the social and political side of what’s going on in Japan gives me a cultural context that I might otherwise lack.”

She does up to six events a month at the FCCJ. “It’s like a sport - you have to do it often and stay agile.” A natural news junkie, she skim-reads all the main daily Japanese newspapers to keep on top of what’s going on. “It is a very heavy responsibility,” she accepts. “Your choice of language expressions, getting the accuracy of what they’re saying; the tone and the message. I do take it very seriously,” she says, especially when it’s an “ongoing” legal or political issue. “There are dozens of hours of preparation that go into a one-hour presser,” making sure she can cope with the gig by knowing as much as she can about the speaker.

One way of making the job easier is to build a rapport with the speaker - difficult when most arrive a few minutes before they take the FCCJ stage. “The technical terms are easy to prepare for but knowing the nuances is the hardest thing.” As for politics, she has learned to roll with the punches. “You will be interpreting for peo-

ple right across the political spectrum and often you will have to say things you would not say yourself - including using discriminatory language. It is even more important that you be accurate and professional because if you water down what they say it is not going to accurately portray what they say. That took a lot of training.”

Among her FCCJ highlights was interpreting for the lawyers of Carlos Ghosn, Nissan’s disgraced boss, and trying to explain the nuances of “sontaku” during a press event for Yasunori Kagoike, the president of an ultra-nationalist school at the center of a political scandal involving Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife. And who could forget meeting Pikotaro, the extravagantly bedecked surrealist crooner who scored an unlikely global hit in 2016 with Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen. “I still have children of friends who come up to me about that.”

● **DAVID McNEILL** is co-chair of the FCCJ’s Professional Activities Committee and a professor at the Department of English Language, Communication and Cultures at Sacred Heart University in Tokyo. He was previously a correspondent for *The Independent* and *The Economist* newspapers and for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

LENS CRAFT

By Photographer Members



Yoshikazu Tsuno

Japan Air Self-Defense Force's acrobatic team, Blue Impulse, fly over Tokyo Skytree in a salute to medical workers during the height of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, Friday, May 26, 2020.

LENS CRAFT

By Photographer Members



Rodrigo Reyes Marin

Demonstrators wearing face masks protest against racism and violence by police during a Black Lives Matter rally through Tokyo's Shibuya district, Sunday, June 14, 2020.

LENS CRAFT

By Photographer Members



Masatoshi Okauchi

Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge is lit like a rainbow after the state of emergency was lifted, Monday, May 25, 2020.

CLUB NEWS

New Members



SHIGENORI KANEHIRA
(REGULAR MEMBER)

Is an anchor of the investigative news program “Hodo Tokushu” (Weekly News Special) of TBS. He has been working for TBS for more than 43 years. As a TV journalist, he has covered many stories, including the collapse of the Soviet Union while he was Moscow Bureau chief (1991-1994), the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars as the Washington D.C. Bureau chief (2002-2005), the end of the Cold War (1989-1991), North Korea issues (1999-present) and so on. He loves being a TV journalist. He says the longer he does this work, the more convinced he becomes that it is a vital public service because, despite the changing media landscape, the journalist’s role is to provide factual eyewitness accounts. He thinks that’s especially true amid today’s armchair blogosphere-cum-journalism.

He was born in 1953, at Asahikawa City, Hokkaido.



HARUKA NUGA
(REGULAR MEMBER)

Is a Tokyo-based video journalist for the Associated Press (AP). Her main area of coverage is Japan, covering stories from natural disasters to unique cultural happenings. Before joining the AP, she was a TV news producer at Reuters, creating video content as a camerawoman and an on-air reporter. Haruka started off her journalism career with Bloomberg TV in Hong Kong, which is also where she grew up. She graduated from the University of Hong Kong with a bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Psychology.

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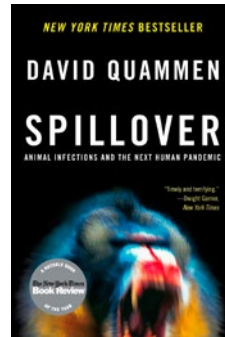
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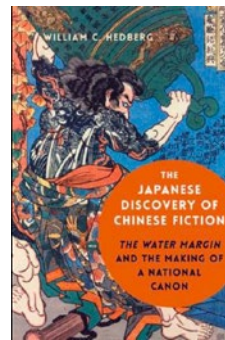
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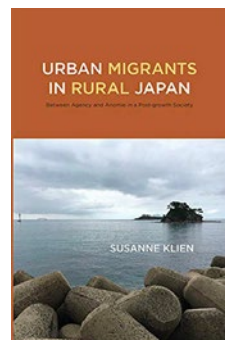
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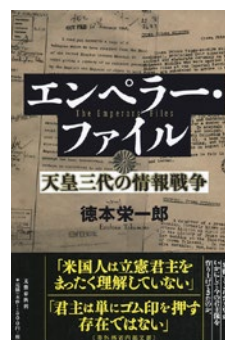
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エンペラー・ファイル：天皇三代の情報戦争
Eiichiro Tokumoto
Bungeishunju
Gift from Eiichiro Tokumoto

CLUB NEWS



Join the Film Committee

On Wednesday, July 15 at 7:00 pm for a sneak preview of “Kushina, what will you be,” our first screening of a female-directed, female-centric film in more than a year. Moët Hayami’s enigmatic first feature imagines a beautiful, beguiling world, hidden deep in the mountains of Japan, where women have created a colony without men, living off the land and cultivating cannabis to trade for the necessities they can’t grow. When an anthropologist appears one day with a male guide, after searching for this matriarchal utopia for years, she unwittingly alters their lives forever. Hayami and two of the film’s stars, Yayoi Inamoto and Miyuki Ono, will be on hand for the Q&A session. (Japan, 2018; 70 minutes; in Japanese with English subtitles) – **Karen Severns**

Dear colleagues at the FCCJ, Especially the veterans among us

During the “corona break”, I was kindly asked to research and write a short biography about my late predecessor as Tokyo Correspondent for Danish media, Mr. Svend Nyboe Andersen. The request came from his daughter, who is one of my good old friends. Now the worst corona paralysis seems to be over, but I am of course finishing the work. This kind of detective work into the past fascinates me. The book will be published early next year in Danish.

“Svend Andersen”, as he was known at the club, was a very active member from 1965 until 1967 and again from 1971 until 1977. He chaired several committees and was a member of the board once, after having been a candidate several times. He spent innumerable evenings and nights at the workroom, organized chess tournaments and art exhibitions and put his mark on club life in many ways. If any of you have memories, good or bad, about anecdotes, episodes and achievements during Svend Andersen’s time at the club, I would be grateful to hear from you.



▶ Svend Nyboe Andersen

My email address is arc@asgerrojle.com
 ASGER ROJLE CHRISTENSEN
 (Long-term regular member of the FCCJ from Denmark, six years from 1989 until 1995, and again the last six and a half years)

CLUB NEWS

In Memoriam – Hal Foster

We regret to inform members of the passing away of Hal Foster, a longtime journalist and journalism professor with nine years of experience in Japan. He was 75.

The Miami native worked at for *Stars and Stripes Pacific* in Tokyo from 1979-86 as a news editor and executive editor.

He later was assistant managing editor at the *Asahi Evening News* in Tokyo, a business writer and editor at the *Los Angeles Times* and

a special correspondent for *USA Today* covering the war in Ukraine.

Over the years he was both a regular and professional associate member of the Club.

He was a media professor at the University of Idaho and died of a heart attack at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on June 10th.

Foster is survived by his children Angela, 48, and Dan, 47, and two grandchildren.

In Memoriam – Stefano Carrer

(See June edition for obituary. These are later tributes from friends)

Stefano Carrer was the rare foreign correspondent in Japan who covered the country, but also took Japan deep into his heart. He did not simply cover Japan for his readers and audience, but presented the country with a love for the place and people, and Japan became his second home. His loss is great for his family and friends, and for those over the years with whom he shared his words and insights about the country. We would like to share some memories.

He traveled throughout Japan, often in the company of fellow journalists from other countries. Starting as a pen reporter in his early days in Japan, Stefano gradually moved to video for Il Sole 24 Ore. This was a transition that not everyone could do, but he managed it in a short period of time. Newspaper reporters now are asked by editorial bureaus to handle video, and many still feel uneasy handling video cameras. However, Stefano was quick to learn, and simply flooded his editorial office with video reports from Japan on issues, ranging from cos-play to Yasukuni visits. During his decade-long tenure in Japan, Stefano also covered every important story in the country. He later returned to the country to cover significant events after he was reassigned to his editorial office in Milan. I met him for the last time in Osaka for a G-20 summit. He was also the only foreign correspondent who had accompanied the now Emeritus Heisei Emperor on his last official visit to Vietnam and Thailand.

At the FCCJ, his warm presence was reassuring to friends and acquaintances. He talked about matters from his personal experience that were rich and colorful. This is what made him an eternal traveler willing to take any hardship for the sake of news coverage. I remember how eager he was to visit the border areas of Bangladesh and Myanmar to cover the Rohingya refugee crisis in 2017, although he couldn't go due to bureaucratic restrictions on both sides of the border.

Stefano was a true representative of media in the changing news world – always true to his convictions. His small video camera was with him wherever he went. I fondly remember that on some press tours he humbly requested me to hold the camera and record while he would continue narrating.

Stefano was not only a fellow journalist in Tokyo, but a pleasant companion with whom I've travelled around Japan. I remember during a press tour to Hokkaido that I joined him in a rafting competition. Neither of us were master rafters, and Stefano told me a story about always ending up on the losing side when someone joins an Italian. In death you don't disappear, Stefano! Your dedication, professional integrity and warm smiling presence will never be forgotten.

Monzurul Huq

I ran into Stefano on a Milan street just after he moved back from Tokyo. Life in Milan wasn't as exciting for Stefano, although he was busy and occasionally got away for short business trips. In Italy, he looked for every chance to stay in touch with Japan, such as Japan festivals, the Japan-Italy Business Group convention, the Far East Film Festival, and the Uniqlo Milan opening. If an event had anything to do with Japan, Stefano was there. He told me that he couldn't decide whether to join a gym or buy a car because he tried to postpone any decision that could tie him to the city. He was always ready to leave for Japan.

He took advantage of his Milanese salary-man status and looked after his parents, his niece Cristina, and often spent weekends at a second house in the countryside of Lombardy. He loved to go for walks in the mountains, resting at a local hot spring, and drinking his favorite Nebbiolo red wine. He was passionate about opera and we went to the Scala theatre in Milan. He invited me to the ballet as well and I gave him a cherry tree that had become too tall for my terrace in return. He took it to his parents' house and his father planted it in their garden. He told me to visit to see how tall it had become.

Italian ambassador Giorgio Starace said: "I met him here in Japan, and he impressed me with his high professionalism and humility... He was a great man, and it's a great loss for all of us." Indeed, Stefano was a generous, unpretentious intellectual whose stories inspired us, and his memory we shall keep always.

Nanako Yamamori



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