



NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

August 2016, Volume 48 No. 8, ¥400

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fail

FEEDING

omg

THE NEWS

wtf

LOL

Can BuzzFeed revolutionize Japan's news diet?

Profile
Photographer
Martin Hladik

Military Justice
A controversial
killing & trial in 1957

The election
Feeling a
little better?



> THEME.03
> COUNT THE BEARINGS

Q: How many bearings does it take to move the world?
A: NSK makes 2.2 billion each year

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NSK Ltd., PR Dept.
Email: pr-dept-news@nsk.com
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p12
Investigating a U.S. military killing in the '50s

In this issue

The Front Page	
From the President by Peter Langan	4
Collections: 71 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki	4
What's the fuss!? by Richard Smart	6
The "Feeling a little bit better" election by Michael Cucek	6
Profile Martin Hladik by Andrew Potheary	10
Death by firing range by Mark Schreiber	12
Lessons of the Dhaka tragedy by Monzurul Huq	14
Seeking to create a "normal" nation by Julian Ryall	15
Club News Exhibition: Kao by Shintaro Shiratori	16

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contact the editors
no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp

Publisher FCCJ

Editor Gregory Starr
Art Director Andrew Potheary
www.forbiddencolour.com
Editorial Assistants Naomichi Iwamura, Tyler Rothmar
Photo Coordinator Akiko Miyake
Publications committee members
Gavin Blair, Freelance (Chair); Geoffrey Tudor, *Orient Aviation*; Monzurul Huq, *Prothom Alo*; Julian Ryall, *Daily Telegraph*; John R. Harris, *Automobile Magazine*

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Foreign Press in Japan Justin McCurry

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

Published by the FCCJ All opinions contained within Number 1 Shimbun are those of the authors. As such, these opinions do not constitute an official position of Number 1 Shimbun, the editor or the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

Please pitch story proposals or address comments to no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp
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Cover illustration: Andrew Potheary



BIT RUSHED WITH THE column this month as I'm writing right after a bus trip from Narita and landing back in Japan from a trip to Australia.

For those who have heard the stories of warmer oceans bleaching the Great Barrier Reef, I'm afraid that based on what I saw during a few scuba dives the stories seem to have some truth to them. I was an avid scuba diver about 25 years ago, but never got to dive the Reef. A reminder that if you have items in your life bucket list, don't delay!

The news cycle is forcing a quick decompression from holiday mode, long road trips and days out on the ocean to issues related to Donald Trump, Pokemon GO, the attempted coup in Turkey and more. Our very own regular member Pio d' Emilia has been covering the events in Turkey, the latest in his distinguished coverage of the issues confronting Europe as more refugees flee to the continent to escape war in the Middle East.

It seems I've walked right into a controversy over the election of the Tokyo governor and whether all the candidates had the opportunity to air their views to the media. This touches the FCCJ directly as the Professional Activities Committee has to weigh the same question – resulting in heated debate among journalist Members around the question of the “news value” of the candidates.

For those unfamiliar with the inner workings of a newsroom, this question of news value agitates journalists every day, often causing intense disagreement over what story gets prominence.

What do residents of the world's most populated metropolitan area want from their leader? Well, according to a

Kyodo News poll before the election, Tokyo residents have the same priorities as Japan's electorate have been urging on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe: one of them being the need to fix child care. If Mr. Abe really wants to slow the population decline and get more women back into the workforce, he needs to solve the shortage of child-care facilities.

Perhaps the government didn't see this coming as they expected granddad and grandmum to step in. Whatever the cause of the oversight, urging Japanese couples to have more children while not providing adequate childcare options for working moms and dads is a serious disconnect. The Kyodo poll also had “medical and nursing care” high on the list of priorities, so it seems care facilities at both ends of the age spectrum should be prominent on the to-do list of the new governor. And then there is the preparation for the 2020 Summer Olympics . . .

Finally, this magazine was to have a major feature on the October 2018 move of the FCCJ to a new location, with pictures and plans of the internal layout, including explanations of the different functions and services at the new Club. Unfortunately, deadlines forced us to delay the feature, but the good news is that it should be ready for the next issue. We are also planning another in a series of Town Hall meetings to give all staff and members an update on the Club move and seek feedback. Members will be getting an email with the date and time of that event.

Like journalist arguments about daily news priorities, the House & Property Committee doesn't expect to satisfy all demands for what the new Club should contain, but it's trying. As of writing, childcare facilities are not on the list. (Full disclosure, I'm the chair of the H&P committee.)

Have a good August. **- Peter Langan**

COLLECTIONS

71 YEARS AFTER HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI



93% of nuclear weapons possessed by the U.S. and Russia

15,375 Total number of nuclear weapons

Sources: Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Federation of American Scientists, World Nuclear Weapon Stockpile Report, Arms Control Association

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50 min. by car
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The Tokyu Group supports Tohoku

BuzzFeed is one of those things, like Snapchat, that older people just don't seem to get. Ask anyone over the age of 35 what the site is about and they are likely to mention cats, lists, viral videos and not a lot else. But the young have gone to it in droves for news and entertainment.

The site has made a name for itself in the U.S. with coverage of issues such as the Black Lives Matter protest movement, its staunch support for the rights of people in the LGBT community and opposition to the Republican candidate Donald Trump, with whom the company terminated an ad deal in July.

In January this year, BuzzFeed arrived in Japan after an agreement was signed between the company and Yahoo Japan. "Overseas – particularly in the U.S. – BuzzFeed's brand is very strong and well known," says CEO Max Ueno, clad in a red sports jersey featuring the company's "trending" icon. "It also has impressive technology. Their editorial experience means the company has the knowledge of how to release articles in ways that increases readership. [And] Yahoo Japan, which is a very strong media company, has a platform that can bring traffic and influence to BuzzFeed here."

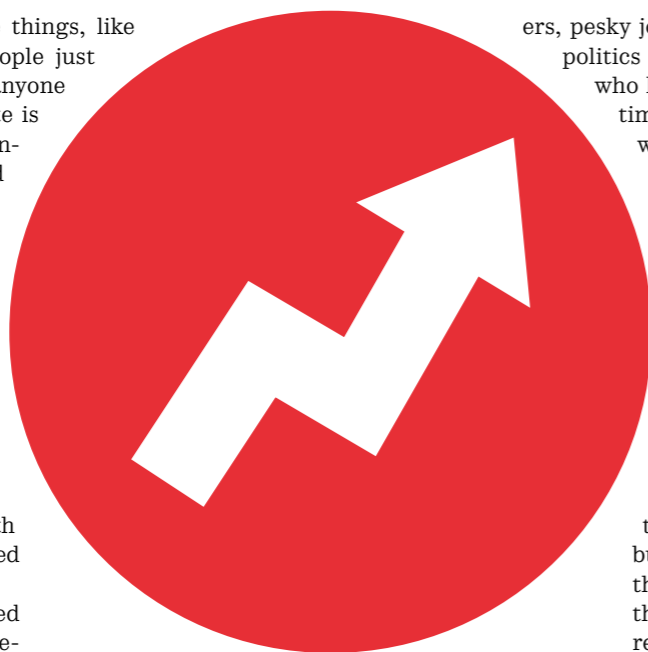
Seven months into the company's Japan venture, the signs are promising. Politicians have been trolled in creative ways, issues that were unreported by other media in disasters have gone viral and identity politics has a new platform.

Ignored but not silenced

Buzzfeed has proven it means to shake things up. When Tokyo Governor Yoichi Masuzoe came under fire for his spending habits, BuzzFeed Japan was shut out of his news conferences. The company was effectively told that it was not considered a media organization by the city administration. "It was very confusing," Ueno said.

So BuzzFeed published an article describing how it was shut out. It also used the occasion to report on Masuzoe and his shenanigans in ways unimaginable in more traditional media outlets. "Many people wanted to know how Masuzoe was involved in the scandal, and the facts, so we did write quite a lot," said Daisuke Furuta, BuzzFeed Japan's editor. "We also posted a quiz about how lawyers determined what spending was improper and proper using political funds. For example, he bought an oven to bake pizza, which was regarded as proper by the lawyers."

Journalists at BuzzFeed also found a 1992 Nintendo role-playing game that the former governor had helped to produce, titled "Yoichi Masuzoe: Until the Morning," in which players act as company employees and have to work their way up the corporate ladder while dealing with slippery co-work-



What's the fuss!?

Japanese media may be about to receive a wake-up call from BuzzFeed's new Japan operation.

by RICHARD SMART

ers, pesky journalists and the sort of office politics that will be familiar to anybody who has ever worked in Japan. At the time, Masuzoe was working as a writer and consultant, as well as making a name for himself as a talking head on the prime-time current affairs shows of the day. He appears as an advisor to the player's character during the game.

BuzzFeed had a field day. "We tried to use that software to show what kind of person Masuzoe is in a way that is interesting to our audience," Furuta said. "Our intention was not to tease Masuzoe, but we wanted to convey that there was such a game and that the content showed the very stereotypical business practices in Japan. We objectively covered that in our article and left it up to readers to interpret what the game meant."

Those business practices – sexism, after work drinks with clients, dealing with harassment through bland iterations, forcing people into jobs they would not want to do and the like – leave little to the imagination about the sort of person, at least at one time, Masuzoe was.

It would be unimaginable to see the *Yomiuri Shimbun* devoting column inches to such coverage of a game. But Furuta says

BuzzFeed sees traditional media as a source of inspiration for stories that can entertain and inform. "I come from a newspaper background," he said, "and certain stories are not run for various reasons, such as space restrictions. But our media can post those sorts of stories. That we can provide such different kinds of content means that there is room for BuzzFeed in Japan, and the audience has taken to it very well."

Digital news rivals

Furuta's optimism may be justified, but his company does face competition. Other companies, such as the Huffington Post have also moved into the Japanese market. And home-grown companies such as SmartNews and Gunosy also provide content that is primarily aimed at smartphone consumption. SmartNews, a news aggregation app, has raised \$90 million in investment since its founding, including \$38 million in a series-D round of funding announced in early July, led by the Development Bank of Japan. The Huffington Post, meanwhile, is a collaboration between the *Asahi Shimbun* and the U.S. site; last year, it surpassed 15 million unique users per month. Gunosy, which also aggregates news, went public in April and has a market capitalization of around \$37 million.

Kosuke Takahashi, the former editor of the Huffington Post Japan, noted last year that as the digital news market was growing, it was beginning to split into separate market seg-

ments. "Gunosy targets people in their late teens and early 20s," he said, while "SmartNews targets those in their early 20s to early 30s. HuffPost's selling point is international news, so we get people in their 30s and 40s, company workers."

Where does BuzzFeed Japan fit in? "The people we want to reach are the millennials, aged 18 to 34," BuzzFeed's Ueno said. Additionally, he claims, BuzzFeed has a completely different way of thinking in terms of editorial, distribution and marketing. "On the business side, younger generations are spending more time on smartphones," Ueno said. "But despite that, there are still not sufficient media to satisfy that demand. There is also a lot of possible improvement with content quality. By satisfying those needs, we can attract advertisers, who are aware there are audiences they cannot reach through traditional media." The company will launch its advertising section later this year, with a sales team of slightly less than 20.

Though contracts have yet to be signed, Ueno sees companies such as Canon, Procter and Gamble, Toyota and Nestle, all of which have previously advertised with the main site in the U.S., as potential advertisers.

"Thanks to BuzzFeed's success in the U.S. and Europe we have received inquiries from companies with international brands who have run adverts on BuzzFeed," he said.

There are, of course, reasons to be skeptical about the company's expectations. BuzzFeed in the U.S. halved its revenue target to \$250 million earlier this year as traffic to its site fell by 14 percent, leading some to suggest its peak is over. Ueno, however, is unfazed. "We are a private company, so we are not disclosing specific number for sales targets, for example, or how much we are trying to make," he said. "But Japan is one of the important strategic markets [for BuzzFeed], and that will not change." The company also has the benefit of the backing of Yahoo Japan, which is 35.5 percent owned by its U.S. namesake and has seen continual growth in recent years in sectors such as e-commerce, online advertising and listings.

Homeless in cyberspace

Part of the appeal of BuzzFeed is its lack of a real home. There is, of course, a website. And then there is also a Twitter stream, a Facebook page, an Instagram feed, a Snapchat section, Line notification and probably more. "We are trying to create content that makes a buzz on social media," Furuta said, "so we have to understand what the audience wants. More specifically, we want to know what the audience wants to know at this precise second; what will be useful to them; what will surprise and move them.

"We keep these factors in mind when looking for subjects to



Making a buzz

BuzzFeed Japan's CEO Max Ueno, top, and its editor Daisuke Furuta

cover," he added. "After articles have gone out we check data on reader numbers and share volume, and we look at the comments. We use this data to learn about our audience and use it to decide on our next stories. It's a constant learning process. This is probably the biggest difference to how things are done at newspapers."

Jonah Perretti, BuzzFeed's founder, explained in an interview for the online magazine *Matter* in 2014 that BuzzFeed does not favor the use of metrics as a measure of popularity. "As soon as you try to actually optimize," he said, "particularly for a single metric, you end up finding that the best way to optimize for that metric ends up perverting the metric and making the metric mean the opposite of what it used to mean." In other words, a focus on click rates, for example, will lead to staff finding ways to cheat the system. "Our idea is to deliver content to our audiences, rather than bringing people to our sites," Ueno said.

Issues that the company has found get traction include LGBT rights – they were clear from the start that the recent massacre in Florida was primarily homophobic – and unreported issues surrounding the Kumamoto

earthquake. BuzzFeed was the first to report on the extensive damage in neighboring Oita Prefecture after the earthquakes.

"Our coverage of the Oita onsen town of Yufuin got huge shares and was read by a lot of people," Furuta said. "At the time, the media was only looking at Kumamoto, but part of Oita was also badly hit." The story ran with the sort of tagline that makes waves across social media: "Don't forget about Oita." BuzzFeed also got a scoop on how food rations in Kyushu were withheld in order to ensure all evacuees were treated equally.

One rule, Furuta says, governs all stories: Do not sling mud. "There's a message on Perretti's public blog where he makes it very clear that the purpose of BuzzFeed is to create a positive impact. For instance, when we look at LGBT issues in our global editions, or the rights of women, we will release a variety of content [that is supportive of these communities]. In our editorial guidelines, we clearly state that our political stance is neutral. But where human rights or discrimination are concerned we do not write from both perspectives."

And that brings us back to those cat photos that BuzzFeed is often linked with. "Having a positive impact brings about so many possibilities," Furuta said. "Articles do not need to be serious. An image of a kitten, which people will consider cute, has a positive impact, as do funny videos. We are always thinking about what we can do to make a positive impact." ●

Richard Smart covers Japanese business, science and the economy for publications around the world.

The “Feeling a little bit better” election



Winning smile
PM Shinzo Abe, center,
on election night

An in-depth look at how things played out in the recent race for the upper house.

by MICHAEL CUCEK

Most elections are characterized as having smiling winners and crying losers. Though descriptions like “landslide” and “massive victory” have been banded about following the 2016 House of Councillors election, the results gave everyone reasons to smile and reasons to wince.

The predictions had been depressing. The opposition Democratic Party was going to be annihilated in the districts. The ruling coalition would romp to victory, seizing a two-thirds majority, and delaying indefinitely structural reforms in favor of a corrosive fight to revise the Constitution. More than half the electorate, demoralized, would fail to cast a ballot.

However, on the way to the bottom, the unexpected happened: the Democrats did not disintegrate and the two-thirds majority, though achieved, is unreliable. Most importantly, people showed up to vote. Not in droves, maybe, but in sufficient numbers to generate some surprises and reinvigorate the political process.

To be clear, the LDP won. Its share of seats in the House of Councillors rose from 115 to 120. Its coalition ally, the Komeito, also added five seats, returning the ruling coalition an unshakable majority of 145 of the 242 seats in the chamber.

Paired with the more than two-thirds majority the ruling coalition parties hold in the House of Representatives, the government of Shinzo Abe retains the ability to pass any legislation it desires.

To be sure, the Democratic Party lost. It shed 11 seats from what was an already significantly depleted total. With the DP clinging to only 32 seats while the LDP snatched up 55, Japan lost the last political arena wherein a competitive two-party system still existed on the national stage.

The unique four-party alliance of the DP, the Communists, the Socialists and Livelihood failed to achieve its existential goal: preventing the government of Shinzo Abe from gaining any pathway to a two-thirds majority. The pathway opened up by the 2016 election is a convoluted one, no doubt. Starting with the ruling coalition’s 145 seats and the one independent elected with LDP/Komeito approval, Mr. Abe and his allies need to add the seats of the Initiatives from Osaka (*Osaka Ishin no Kai*), the seats of the tiny militant nationalist Party of Japan Kokoro (*Nihon no kokoro o taisetsu ni suru to*) and seats of independent fellow travelers to reach the 162 seats necessary to propose an amendment to the Constitution.

MEANWHILE, THE LESSER MEMBERS of the anti-revisionist alliance went into eclipse. The Socialists and Livelihood each lost one seat. The Socialists, in fact, lost the seat of its party leader, putting the party below the five-seat limit for public funding (it will continue to receive funds thanks to an alternate standard of having won more than 2 percent of the proportional vote). The Communists

added three seats but visibly lost momentum, since their seat gains in the 2013 and 2014 elections were so much greater.

Despite all the pre-election attention, participation of 18- and 19-year-olds for the first time in a national election was largely a damp squib. Slightly more than 45 percent of these newly enfranchised teenagers cast ballots, a turnout rate nearly 10 points below the national average. Put another way, having teenagers vote reduced overall voting rates.

When these youngest voters did vote, their choices were conservative. Exit polling found that persons in the 18- to 29-years-of-age cohort voted for the ruling LDP-Komeito coalition at a rate higher than any other age bracket. Deference, not defiance, seems to have been the guide. Under the influence of Dad, Mom and high school, 18-year-olds showed up to the polls more than half the time (51.17 percent turnout). Under less direct pressure to perform civic duties, fewer than four out of ten 19-year-olds cast a ballot (39.66 percent turnout).

So it was all good news for the ruling coalition. What about everyone else?

The surprise of the election was turnout. Opinion surveys conducted prior to election day found record low levels of interest, indicating turnout would be below 50 percent. However, when the polls closed, 54.7 percent of the electorate had shown up, a two-point gain in turnout from 2013 and above the turnout even of the 2014 edition of the normally higher House of Representatives elections. For the first time since Shinzo Abe had returned to the presidency of the Liberal Democratic Party in 2012, more persons voted in national election than in the preceding contest.

ANOTHER SURPRISE WAS THE performance of the Democratic Party and the candidates it supported. The DP rolled into the election with largely the same low level of public support as it had in 2013 – about 9 percent of voters as measured by telephone opinion polls. But the outcome was significantly different. While the predecessor party, the DPJ, had suffered a crushing defeat in the 2013 House of Councillors contest, losing 27 seats while keeping only 17, the DP this time lost only 11 seats, retaining 32.

Part of the reason for the DP’s resurgence was the higher turnout. Exit polls in the last few elections have shown a consistent pattern: increases in turnout favor opposition candidates by a two-to-one margin. Put into unit terms, for every three additional voters that show up at the polls, the opposition gets two votes while the ruling coalition gets one. That advantage snowballs, quickly transforming toss-up districts into opposition wins.

In addition, while the four opposition party electoral alliance failed in its stated goal, it seems to have improved the chances of opposition candidates in the single-member districts (SMDs). Having the Communists give up their policy of running a candidate in every district seems to have produced the result political observers had always assumed true but never had had a chance to test. An alliance candidate won in 11 of the 32 SMD contests – a complete changeover from 2013, when the DPJ prevailed in only two of the SMDs. Sweetest for the opposition were the knockouts of two sitting Cabinet ministers: Aiko Shimojiri in Okinawa and Mitsuhide Iwaki in Fukushima.

In fact, it was the Happiness Realization Party – the fringe, hard-line nationalist party backed by the Happy Science cult – that replaced the Communists in their traditional role as electoral spoiler. In the aforementioned Fukushima, Aomori, Niigata, Mie and Oita prefectures, the vote totals for the Happiness candidate was greater than the victory margin of the opposition candidate over his or her LDP rival.

The appeal of Japanese victimhood and anti-foreign attitudes decreased among the electorate. The Party of Japanese Kokoro, vehicle of notorious historical revisionists and DPRK-abductees-issue opportunists Kyoko Nakayama and her husband Nariaki, failed to win a single seat. Anti-Korean/anti-Chinese hatemonger Nobuyuki Suzuki saw his share of the vote in the Tokyo district election fall to half of what it was three years ago, even as the vote for the loopy Happiness candidate stayed the same.

SOME VERY PROMINENT REVISIONISTS *did* win on July 10. Comfort-women denier Hiroshi Yamada, removed from the Diet by the 2014 electoral reversals of the Japan Innovation Party, won a seat as a candidate on the LDP’s proportional list. Now a freshman LDP legislator with a crowd of competitors, he will probably not be given the opportunities to loft provocative, war responsibility-denying, global headline-generating questions at Prime Minister Abe as he did so often in between 2012 and 2014.

Also returning to the Diet for another six-year term is Junko Mihara, whose devotion to the myths of the Meiji state is disturbing. In 2015 she stunned Finance Minister Taro Aso and the House of Councillors budget committee by using a previously unspeakable pre-1945 slogan as a justification for a change in tax law. Mihara’s blithe toss out of *hakko ichi’u* (“all the world under one roof”), one of only two phrases banned by Allied Occupation authorities, did not hurt her at

all in the polls. Indeed, the former actress, singer and race-car driver finished first by a huge margin in her Kanagawa constituency, with over a million votes. On election night, famed news commentator Akira Ikegami baited her, asking her if she believed that the mythical (at least according to historians and textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education) Emperor Jimmu was an actual historical person. Mihara answered that for her he was.

Interesting in terms of potential policy stances was the outcome of the so-called “organized vote” of the two main parties. The DP has the image of being the party of the internationalized, primarily white-collar, urban and suburban voters, but in fact, the DP’s backbone is in the labor unions. The DP’s proportional list results reflect this dependency. The DP won 11 proportional seats in 2016, 7 of which will be filled by union executives. Indeed, the DP’s top three proportional vote winners were of leaders of Rengo, the autoworkers association and Panasonic’s company union.

BY CONTRAST, THE LDP saw a reduced role for the organized vote in its proportional seat totals. While Zentoku, the private postmasters principal association, did manage to win the top spot on the LDP’s proportional list with an astonishing 520,000 votes for its candidate (so much for former PM Koizumi’s 2005 Post Office reform election designed to destroy the power of the postmasters), the next organized vote group, the dreaded Nokyo agricultural association, slipped in at only eighth on the list (236,000 votes). Overall, the LDP’s jigsaw puzzle of primary interest groups – the industry lobbies, the professional associations, former SDF officers and representatives of the War Bereaved Association (the *Izokai*) claimed fewer than half of the LDP’s proportional seats. And almost all of those were in the bottom half of the proportional list. If votes and seats equal influence over policy, the LDP is quietly slipping the grip of its anti-reform support groups.

It was all good news for the ruling coalition. What about everyone else?

Finally, the election provided a bittersweet result for the author. I had bet what little professional reputation I have on the election’s not hinging upon the LDP and its allies gaining the 162 seats necessary for a two-thirds majority. Instead, I wagered the more significant number was 57 – the number of seats the LDP would need to win to form a *tandoku seiken*, a government of the LDP only, without any coalition partners. I went as far as to guarantee the LDP would achieve this result, with an immediate, obvious destabilizing effect on the party’s current coalition with the Komeito.

In the end, the LDP failed to win 57 seats, coming tantalizingly close with 55 outright victories and one win by the virtual LDP candidate in Kanagawa. Abashed and ashamed was I.

However, two days after election my prediction came true, in a fashion. The LDP received a membership application from Tatsuo Hirano, a member of the House of Councillors not up for election. Hirano’s political party, the New Renaissance Party, had been one casualty of the election. After losing two seats, including the seat of its leader, the party immediately disbanded, casting Hirano adrift. Hirano, an opportunist of the first rank, immediately applied to join the LDP, a party he ran against only three years ago.

I felt a little bit better – but only a little bit. At this writing, one week after the election, the LDP still has not decided on whether or not to accept Hirano’s application. ●

Michael Cucek is a Tokyo-based consultant to the financial and diplomatic communities and author of the *Shisaku* blog on Japanese politics and society.



Martin Hladik

by ANDREW POTHECARY

Martin Hladik was born in Czechoslovakia in 1968, only a few months before the “Prague Spring” reformist movement was crushed under the tread of Soviet tanks. So when he grew up, it was under the restrictions of movement and thought of Soviet rule.

His father was a mechanical engineer and his mother produced exhibitions – middle class work that brought enough money only for everyday life. Even getting permission for travel was difficult.

The family once managed a trip to Yugoslavia, but only had enough money for gas and camp. Hladik’s mother prepared all food for the month’s trip in advance for the family of four.

He studied Mechanical Engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague – “a way to avoid army service” – and spent a further two years taking selected classes in photography at the Academy of Performing Arts.

Like other Soviet-bloc nations, the state gave support to sport, and throughout his youth, weekend trips to the mountains for winter skiing and summer kayaking had led to Hladik joining sports clubs. After university, he turned to his sport full time – and in 1995 joined the national whitewater slalom team following the end of communist rule.

His love for photography, however – which had dated from his childhood – eventually led him to put his kayak aside for a camera. He knew the work of the exiled Joseph Koudelka, since prints of his photographs of the 1968 Soviet invasion had been illicitly available. He also had seen the work of Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa and Douglas Duncan – the latter two known for their war photography.

Hladik was approaching 30 when he set off for New York to find work as a photographer. He had no accommodation, little English and barely enough money to buy food. He was arrested for sleeping in the park. A wedding photographer hired him, but fired him the same day after Hladik, in his hunger, couldn’t stop himself from eating the wedding food. But he got to assist the renowned Czech-born American photographer Antonin Kratochvil with his portraiture.

After returning home, he began his career as a photographer in earnest. With his girlfriend and brother he made a six-month bike trip around the eastern Mediterranean for a Czech motor-bike firm’s PR and found work on movie productions. When the Catholic charity Caritas asked him to work with them in war-torn Kosovo in 1999, the reality on the ground changed his perspective of war photography, and brought him to the realization that he was looking to

The “underground” tattoo scene was similar to the “underground,” away from prying state powers, that he’d known in his youth

shoot people in happier situations.

In 2000, he followed his Czech girlfriend to Japan after she got a scholarship for a PhD at Tokyo University, where she still works in water-related engineering. They have since married and have three children, aged 9, 6 and 4.

Hladik had visited Japan in 1995 as a kayaker, but had never thought of returning. To make a career here, he would have to build up contacts and introductions from scratch. It’s been a long road. “I’m not there yet,” he says.

“It’s still difficult. The best time was until the financial crisis in 2008 – and it has never recovered. I had a full-time assistant then, but I cannot afford that now.”

He offers still photography, video and production services for overseas photographers. “Recently,” he says, “I bought a drone for footage from the air.” But he prefers to get to know his subjects more closely – an approach used for his two books on Japanese tattoos. Back in the Czech Republic, tattoos were associated with crime or gypsies – “who did it with a fork” – so when he saw the full-body tattoos of Japan he was hooked. At the Sanja Matsuri he met the son of tattoo artist Asakusa Horikazu and later became close to the master.

Although tattoos are associated with criminal elements in Japan, too, things are changing. Hladik says: “It was never my interest to investigate who was a yakuza or not. I was under the wing of the master. I photographed for him and for my own interest.” In fact, in some ways he found the “underground” tattoo scene similar to the “underground,” away from prying state powers, that he’d known in his youth – and always very friendly.

Hladik spent two month-long stints in Tohoku after the 3/11 disaster. The photos of two girls whose single mother had died in the tsunami, were among the powerful shots later exhibited at the FCCJ. He also used the exhibition to raise a collection for the girls.

Now, after 16 years here, a return to the Czech Republic is “on the horizon.” This is partly to bring his children up at least somewhat Czech, but he also has concerns about the life of teenagers in Japan – sexualized girls and game-immersed boys – and hopes to escape that in Europe.

But until then he is looking for a project to spend time and depth on – perhaps based around the changes in Tokyo as the city gears up for its second Olympics. Offering various services, however, can sometimes leave him torn. “It’s trying to find a balance,” he says. “If I did more production work you might have more money, but then my photography suffers!” ●



Andrew Pothe Cary is the art director of the *Number 1 Shimbun*.

ANDREW POTHECARY

Death by firing range

Some 60 years ago, the killing of a Japanese wife and mother threatened the U.S.-Japan agreement on the treatment of crimes by U.S. forces.

by MARK SCHREIBER

On June 30 this year, Kenneth Franklin Shinzato, a 32-year-old civilian working at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, was officially charged with the rape and murder of Rina Shimabukuro, age 20. It was the latest in a string of crimes committed by U.S. forces personnel in Japan that continues to cause some people to question the U.S.-Japan military alliance, which has permitted American bases to remain after the end of the Allied Occupation in 1952. And while it has led to mass protests and even a mention at the recent Abe-Obama summit meeting, it was another killing six decades ago that – in terms of the sheer attention it received in the press, governments and courts of both countries – strained the bilateral relationship like no other.

The “Girard Incident” took place on Jan. 30, 1957, when a unit of the 8th Calvary Regiment was training at a firing range at Camp Weir in Somagahara, a mountainous area in Gunma Prefecture. During a break around midday, Specialist 3rd Class William S. Girard, age 21, and another soldier were ordered to guard a machine gun and some field jackets near one of the hills of the maneuvering grounds.

Local people, mostly poor farmers displaced by the expansion of the camp, were allowed to enter the area when it was not being used for training, to tend to their fields, and collect brass shell casings and lead and other metals from bullets, mortars, grenades and other ordnance. They supplemented their incomes by selling the scrap to local brokers, who in turn sold it to recyclers in Maebashi, the prefectural capital.

“Before [the Girard Incident], many of us would creep into the impact area, dig holes in which to hide, and wait for the shells to drop. We would note the spots and rush out to pick them up during a lull in the firing, then dash for cover again before the next barrage began,” a local farmer and shell scavenger told future FCCJ president Ken Ishii, who was reporting for International News Service.

THAT MORNING, SEVERAL DOZEN shell-pickers had swarmed the hills. So the commanding officer ordered that only blank rounds be used for the afternoon exercises. During the break, according to some witnesses, Girard flung some expended cartridges into the bushes – “like feeding chickens” – to watch the scavengers scramble to collect them, then fired in their direction to scare them off.

Girard’s M1 rifle had been fitted with a grenade launcher.



Shot of the shot

A Japanese magazine of the time shows William Gerard at the firing range during the investigation.

He inserted an empty rifle cartridge into the launcher, a violation of rules, and without aiming, fired over the head of a Japanese man. When the scavengers began running, he launched another cartridge, which struck Naka Sakai, a 46-year-old mother of six, in the back. The cartridge penetrated several centimeters into her back and tore her aorta, causing nearly instant death.

The shooting was not immediately reported by military or local authorities. It only became public after members of the Socialist party broke the story to Japan’s national newspapers, which published their first reports of the incident on the back pages of their Feb. 3 editions.

So SP3 Girard was headed for court. The only question was which one. In 1953, Japan and the United States had signed a so-called Administrative Agreement that established criteria for determining whether Japanese or U.S. military courts had jurisdiction over personnel involved in civil and criminal matters on and off U.S. bases in Japan. Known today as the Status of Forces of Agreement (SOFA), it gives both parties the right to waive their jurisdiction in any incident in which they feel they have a right to try the accused.

Both parties claimed jurisdiction over the case. The U.S. Army insisted Girard had been on duty and hence should be tried in a U.S. military court. The Japanese side claimed that shooting Sakai did not constitute “performance of official duty” as stated in the agreement.

On May 16, the U.S. Army, after deliberations with Japanese authorities, and probably in consideration of Japanese public opinion as well as the legal particulars, waived its claim. The next day, however, the U.S. Secretary of Defense ordered the Army not to release Girard pending further investigation.

On May 18, the Maebashi district prosecutor indicted Girard, which meant that if the waiver stood, he would be tried in the Maebashi District Court.

GIRARD’S FAMILY IN THE U.S. went to court in an attempt to reverse the U.S. government’s decision to waive jurisdiction. They were supported by veterans, politicians and others who recalled Japan’s treatment of some Allied POWs, or otherwise harbored negative images of Japan, arguing that Girard would not receive a fair trial in Japan.

For the rest of May and June, a veritable who’s who of American and Japanese leadership – from President Dwight Eisenhower, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, to Prime Ministers Tanzan Ishibashi and Nobusuke Kishi, LDP deputy Yasuhiro Nakasone, and House of Councilors member Jiichiro Matsumoto – became involved. Emperor Hirohito, drawn into the controversy by a letter from the mayor of Girard’s hometown, replied through an aide that he “could not possibly intervene in the matter because of the Japanese Constitution.”

The family’s case made its way through the courts until, on July 11, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Girard’s constitutional rights would not be denied by a trial in a Japanese court and that the jurisdictional agreement between Japan and the U.S. was proper. The court also noted that Japan, as a sovereign state, had the right to try people who violated its laws.

The trial convened on Aug. 26. Girard was defended by Tokyo attorney Itsuro Hayashi, and legally advised by U.S. Army attorney Major Stanley Levin. The prosecutor demanded a five-year sentence for *shogai chishi* (bodily injury resulting in death), which is tantamount to manslaughter. On Nov. 19, the Maebashi District Court’s three-judge bench found Girard guilty and sentenced him to three years imprisonment, suspended for four years. The judgment, Hayashi later wrote in the monthly *Bungei Shunju*, fit the statistical “average” for manslaughter cases in Japan, and was probably less severe than a court martial sentence.

American defense attorney Melvin M. Belli – who in 1963 had defended Jack Ruby against charges of murdering Lee Harvey

The U.S. government paid Sakai’s husband a condolence gift of \$1,748.32. Upon accepting the money, he remarked, “I do not thank you for it.”

Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy – attended at least one court session. Belli, though disappointed that Hayashi had dismissed his advice to showcase Girard’s wife in the courtroom, praised how the judge prevented spectators and the media from turning his courtroom into a circus in his 1960 book, *Belli Looks at Life and Law in Japan*.

In his book, Belli also described the scene at the predecessor of the FCCJ. “Hundreds of foreign correspondents sat, oiled up their typewriters, checked train schedules and, at the last minute, called for the impossible – hotel reservations at the picturesque little village 80 hot miles north of Tokyo.”

Among them was Pulitzer Prize-winner John Hersey, famed American author of *Hiroshima*, who covered the case for the

Mark Schreiber currently writes the “Big in Japan” and “Bilingual” columns for the *Japan Times*. He would like to thank William Wetherall for his contributions to this article.

Associated Press. “Before the killing,” Hersey wrote, “Girard was a kind of bumpkin clown. He drank quite a bit and ran up petty debts in the Japanese shops near his camp. He is taciturn to the point of woodenness; he failed for three days to tell his Japanese sweetheart that he had killed a woman, and she learned of the incident over the radio.”

THE BOBBED HAIR AND round face of Girard’s girlfriend, Haru “Candy” Sueyama, who he married on July 2, soon became a familiar figure in the media. She was six years older than the soldier, and the two had been living together from the previous November.

Some reports mentioned that Sueyama had been born in Taiwan and not set foot in Japan proper until age 16. Some English reports described her as a “camp follower,” and she received several threats – but she eventually earned the media’s sympathy as a woman who stood by her man and made serious efforts at social observances and religious practices.

The weekly *Asahi Guraifu* pictured her kneeling in tears before Naka Sakai’s grave in a Shinto-style family cemetery, Naka’s husband and youngest daughter standing beside her. “Who’s the big sister, and why is she crying?” the 4-year-old girl asked her father. The caption related he was lost for words.

The U.S. government paid Naka Sakai’s husband and their six children a condolence gift of \$1,748.32 (¥629,394) – an amount described as “a fortune” for someone in Somagahara. Upon accepting the money, he remarked, “I do not thank you for it.”

Girard had tired of the attention. “Now that it’s over, me and Candy would both like some quiet,” he told a U.P. interviewer shortly before he was to leave Japan. “I’ll be glad when the flashbulbs stop popping and we can live like other people. I don’t think that I need any more publicity just now.”

On Dec. 6, Girard and Haru boarded a military transport ship for San Francisco. Prior to their departure, he was demoted to private, and after reporting for duty at an army base near his Illinois hometown, he was dishonorably discharged, dashing any hopes of remaining in the military.

In October the following year, weekly magazine *Shukan Josei* ran a story about the couple, who had settled in Girard’s hometown of Ottawa, Illinois. In August, “Candy” had given birth to a girl. “Bill,” meanwhile, had bounced between jobs. The article hinted that Haru, as a foreign bride who spoke little English, led a lonely existence. But another women’s magazine, the monthly *Fujin Asahi*, reported that she was happy.

The couple had another daughter and moved to southern California. Girard died in 1999 at age 64. Haru lived until 2013, passing away around age 85.

Since the end of the Occupation in 1952, sporadic crimes by American servicemen and their dependents have rekindled the long-smoldering and emotional debate over the rationale for U.S. military bases in Japan. Okinawa, with by far the largest U.S. presence, appears to be the only prefecture that posts annual crime statistics by members of the U.S. military on its web site.

The LDP and other parties that favor keeping the U.S. bases maintain that the security, economic and other benefits afforded by their presence outweigh negative effects like the crimes, even felonies, committed by military personnel. Statistics show that crimes by members of U.S. armed forces have declined significantly over the years, and are currently below the local crime rates for Japanese civilians.

The families of Naka Sakai, Rina Shimabukuro and other victims, are unlikely to be impressed by such arguments. But their sentiments have not led to significant changes in the status quo. ●

The brutal terrorist killings of the Japanese victims were conducted by spoiled youths whose larger goals remain unclear.

Lessons of the Dhaka tragedy

by MONZURUL HUQ



FEW COULD HAVE IMAGINED that a terrorist attack could happen in a country with such close bonds to Japan, one that has not been susceptible to any form of extreme fundamentalism. So what occurred on that fateful evening on the first day of July in the capital of Bangladesh shocked the Japanese and the global community.

Dhaka, with a population of almost 12 million, is a divided city in the sense that it is, in reality, a combination of localities formed by the strict sense of social divisions in accordance with the status and material well being of its citizens. Those at the upper end have their heavenly enclaves, guarded heavily after a fatal attack on an Italian two years ago. The area is also known as the diplomatic enclave of the city, as it hosts all the foreign embassies and diplomatic residences. Among the homes of the wealthy locals and foreign nationals, including those with diplomatic immunity, are posh restaurants and dining places that are virtually out of bounds for most locals from the other end of the great divide. A meal or snack might cost them their entire monthly earnings.

So, it is mostly expatriates along with a handful of wealthy Bangladeshis who venture out to those places. And with July being a hot and humid month in Bangladesh, if foreign visitors

Monzurul Huq represents the Bangladeshi national daily, *Prothom Alo*. He was FCCJ president from 2009 to 2010.

The bodies of the Japanese victims are met at Haneda Airport by Japanese officials on July 5.

do decide to forsake the cool hotel interior for a meal, they'll go to these places that are recommended for them to visit.

The group of foreigners enjoying their weekend gathering on July 1 had no hint of their fate. But the jolly good atmosphere at the lakeside restaurant was shattered by gunmen fanatics; the end result was twenty casualties, including seven Japanese and nine Italians. Many of them were brutally killed in a savage manner that has become a sign of Islamic State fanatics in the Middle East.

The nationalities of the majority of the foreign victims raised the question of whether the two nations were specifically targeted for the killing. In fact, in two separate earlier incidents, the foreign nationals who were gunned down also happened to be from Japan and Italy. However, the circumstantial evidence of the mass killing in Dhaka suggests otherwise. It was not that Japanese and Italians were specifically targeted – they just turned out to be incidental victims.

SADLY, VIOLENT EVENTS IN which Japanese citizens have become incidental targets of attacks by Islamic fanatics are not at all new. Recent years have seen Japanese gunned down in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and elsewhere.

These were all unfortunate happenings as they were simply caught in random shootings. However, the dimensions of the Dhaka tragedy have a different perspective in that the Japanese were brutally murdered in a most cold-blooded manner, along with the Italians. With little knowledge of the tensions in the region, many in Japan are finding it hard to understand why their citizens have been victimized so savagely.

The point is that the perpetrators likely wanted to practice their savagery on any available foreign national. They probably thought would make a huge publicity splash and spread panic among foreign nationals in Bangladesh to the extent that many would decide to leave the country. The attack came at a time when the relatively better economic performance of the country has been attracting more foreign investment and business visitors.

The Islamic fanatics' goal seems to have been to hit the economy with the larger aim of destabilizing the moderately secular government – and the unaware foreign nationals provided a soft target. But was that their ultimate goal? Or was it to declare their solidarity with the mad mullahs of the Islamic State? Or was it to demand that Bangladesh should be declared an Islamic country with the full implementation of Sharia law?

But what is clear now is that they have failed miserably to reach anywhere near any of those targets. The attack also exposed the shaky ground on which they stood. Holding guns and explosives does not guarantee winning over the hearts of the people if the cause is vague and unclear.

The dead bodies of the perpetrators of the Dhaka terror attack have been rotting in the cold morgue since they were gunned down in the early morning of July 2. That they are still there illustrates a truth in a much more convincing way than the terrorist actions of those spoiled youths. No one has come forward to claim their bodies for formal burial, not even their parents, who have said they could not forgive the crime their sons had committed.

So the bodies continue rotting, perhaps offering the greatest lesson that we can take from the whole incident. Young people can become easily spoiled by misguided religious teachings that fail miserably to equate barbaric acts with heroism in the public's mind. They need to understand that the two are on opposite extremes and have completely different consequences. ●

APPHOTO

The head of a controversial political action group explains their agenda for the future.

Seeking to create a “normal” nation

by JULIAN RYALL

THE VICTORY OF SHINZO Abe's Liberal Democratic Party in the July 10 election for the Upper House of the Diet will serve as the springboard for revisions to the Constitution within the next 10 years, believes Tadae Takubo, chairman of Nippon Kaigi, or the Japan Conference. And that, he told a well-attended press conference at the FCCJ on July 13, will turn Japan into “a normal nation.”

“The fact that those who are in favor of constitutional amendments have two-thirds majorities in both houses means this is the best chance to go ahead with revisions to the Constitution,” he said. “And if I were in Prime Minister Abe's position, I would be making every effort during my term to achieve that.”

Takubo, a former head of the foreign news department of Jiji Press and a member of the FCCJ since 1975, has committed Nippon Kaigi to helping the prime minister to do precisely that. “We have many voices within our conference which have very much welcomed this result and we have released a statement to that effect,” he said. “So Nippon Kaigi will from now on be considering various different actions that we can take to move forward.”

Set up in May 1997 as a merger of two similarly minded organizations, Nippon Kaigi has around 38,000 members, including an estimated 39 percent of politicians in the Diet. Abe is listed as a special advisor to the group's parliamentary league.

In its mission statement, Nippon Kaigi says it intends to “change the postwar national consciousness based on the Tokyo Tribunal's view of history as a fundamental problem,” as well as promoting “patriotic” education and support for the prime minister paying official visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

A report compiled by the US Congressional Research Service in 2014 stated that the organization believes “Japan should be applauded for liberating much of East Asia from Western colonial powers” during the early decades of the last century and that “killings by Imperial Japanese troops during the 1937 Nanking massacre were exaggerated or fabricated.”

Equally, “comfort women” were not forced to provide sexual services for

the military during the war, while Japan was a victim of the conflict due to the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Tamosu Sagano, who wrote a best-selling book about the group's activities, described Nippon Kaigi as reactionaries determined to turn back sexual equality and to restore patriarchal values. Their vision is of “a Japan where women, children and foreigners have no basic human rights,” he wrote.

QUESTIONED ABOUT NIPPON KAIGI'S position on the war, Takubo replied, “For all countries that have gone to war, each one will have a different view of history. If you want to call that revisionism, then I'm alright with that.”

And was Japan wrong to wage war in the early decades of the last century?

“I believe that some parts were wrong and some were correct,” he said. “I do not believe we can say that one party was completely right and one that was completely wrong.”

Revising a Constitution that many conservatives believe was imposed on a defeated Japan by the Allies after the end of the war still remains Nippon Kaigi's priority. “I believe the position that Japan is in now was very accurately put forward 20-something years ago by Professor [Zbigniew] Brzezinski. He put forward in his thesis that Japan is a de facto protectorate of the United States,” he said. “And that the state is based on the three main pillars of the economy, politics and the military. In the case of Japan, however, one of these three pillars – the military – is missing and the situation is one of a completely abnormal country.”



Tadae Takubo speaking at the Club

Not being able to make its own decisions on diplomatic or defense issues for more than 70 years means that Japan has been on the extreme left of the political spectrum, Takubo claimed. “Abe is not someone who has started in the center, where a normal country is, and shifted towards the right,” he said. “He is the only politician who has made efforts

to bring Japan from the extreme left to the center, as a normal country.”

Takubo believes changes are on the way. “In regard to the 10-year vision, I believe the Constitution will be revised in this time and we will progress towards being a normal country located in northeast Asia,” he said.

“Of course, we have to avoid causing a sense of threat with neighboring countries and we need to co-exist within this region,” he added. “If we look at these next 10 years, I believe that Japan will create a military, but that it

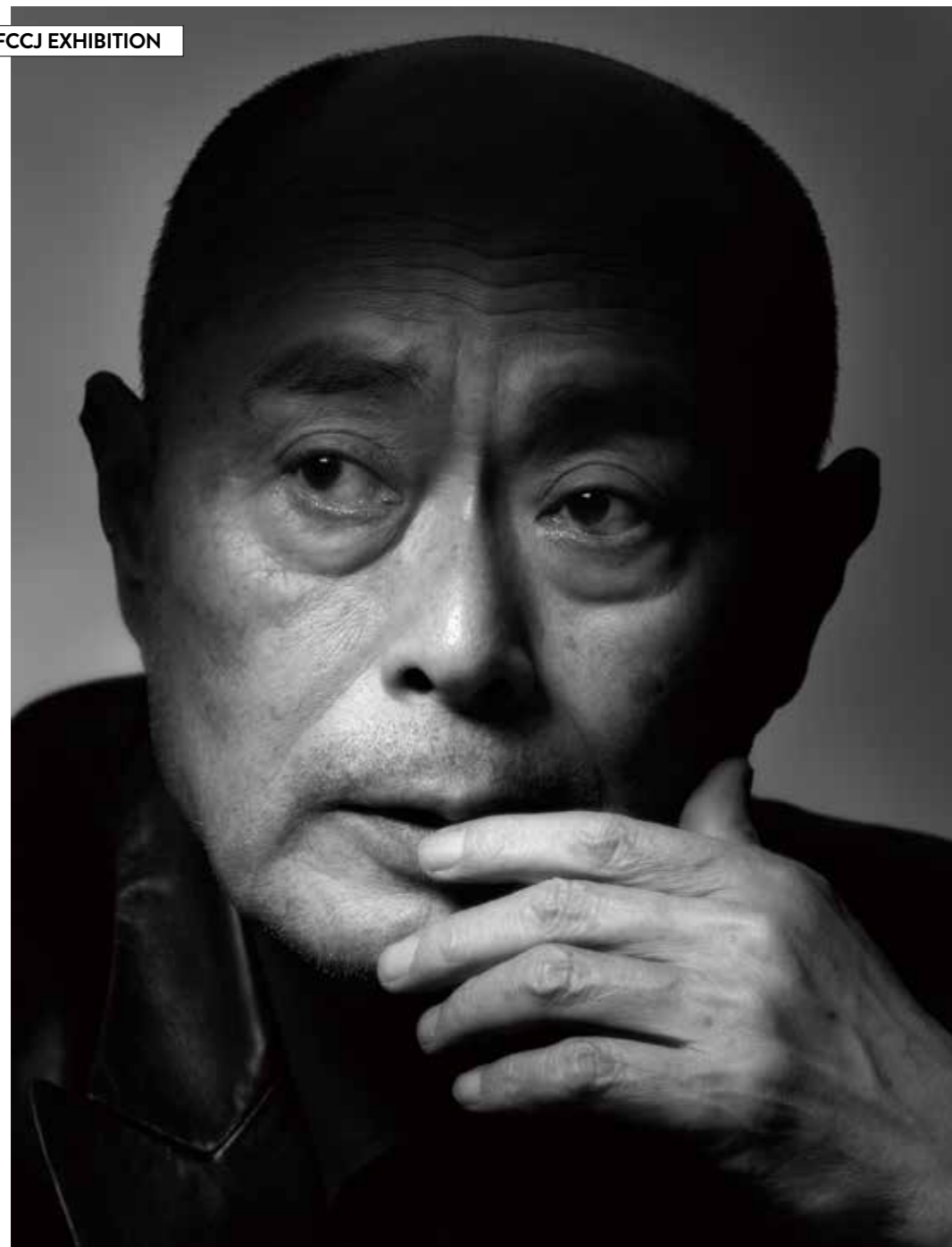
will remain under civilian control. This will be one way to prevent neighboring countries having concerns.”

Takubo also took issue with the characterization of Abe as a nationalist in foreign media reports. “I believe that the kind of reporting that is made from Japan to the outside world is very much dependent on what perspective or what standpoint the reporters are starting from,” he said.

“There is reporting which claims that Japan is in a very dangerous position at the moment, that it is very belligerent and that Abe has risen as a nationalist,” he said. “I do not, however, believe this is the case.” ●

Julian Ryall is Japan correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*.

FCCJ EXHIBITION



Left, actor Masato Ibu.
Below, singer, dancer and actress, Natsuki Mari

Shintaro Shiratori was born in Nagano Prefecture. In 1971, he joined Shiseido Photographic Studio and later joined the photography department at Hakuhodo. In 1983, he established Shiratori Photo Studio. He has received numerous awards for his work. Recently he published a sequel to his book KAO, whose portraits are the subject of this month's exhibition.
www.shintaro-shiratori.jp

Kao: photographs by Shintaro Shiratori

ONE DAY I FOUND a book of portraits entitled *Who's who in Shinano* by my great grandfather Itarou, which was published in 1908. When I turned the pages, I was impressed by his ingenious lighting technique. I realized that it was all about light and shadow. My encounter with this old book affected my portrait works. It made me feel that portrait photos are not only records but can also be an art form.

I've shot numerous portraits for advertising clients that are no longer used after the advertising campaign ends. I felt that I shouldn't let these photos - which I poured my heart and soul into - be left unknown. I added around 100 more new portraits, especially of the *dankai* (baby boomer) generation who have contributed to the country's prosperity and are now in their late 60s and facing retirement.

For the past three years I've photographed these people. Their faces overwhelmingly communicate vitality and enthusiasm for the future. I sincerely hope that the messages from the Kao Project will encourage people and bring positive thoughts. Lastly, I'd like to express profound gratitude to the people who kindly participated and cooperated with this project. ●



JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE . . .



. . . on Wed., Aug. 24 at 6:00 pm (an hour earlier than usual) to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the softcore porn genre that launched the careers of many of Japan's now-prominent directors, featuring a special preview of the upcoming releases in the Nikkatsu Roman Porno Reboot Project, a Q&A panel with the five filmmakers and a

screening of a Nikkatsu masterpiece of yesteryear, *The World of Geisha*, one of François Truffaut's favorite films. Famed directors Hideo Nakata, Akihiko Shiota, Kazuya Shiraishi, Sion Sono and Isao Yukisada will be on hand to discuss their first-time efforts directing Roman Porno, following the same format in which the films were made in their 1970s-80s heyday: on a limited budget, with only one week to shoot and a sex scene every 15 minutes or so. After the panel, stay for the many delights of *The World of Geisha*, a sumptuously beautiful, emotionally engrossing, sexy, often hilarious tale from erotic box-office king Tatsuro Kumashiro. (Japan, 1973; 69 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.) - Karen Severns

Tax Deduction Benefit | 税額控除に関して

As announced at the Associate General Membership Meeting last April, the FCCJ applied for "Tax Deduction Benefit" to the Cabinet Office as one of benefits of being *Koeki Shandan Hojin* (Public Interest Organization). On May 16, 2016 they approved our application, so now the FCCJ is able to treat the initiation fees and monthly dues from Associates as their donation to the Club.

From next year, you will have Tax Deduction Benefit if you apply on your own final return (確定申告). Up to almost 40 percent of your donation will be returned as a tax deduction.

In the case of calendar year 2016, payment received after May 16 is applicable for this benefit. The Club Office will issue a certificate/receipt for your final return after January 2017. Please contact the Club Office if you need that document.

Please access the website of National Tax Agency below or the Tax Office for detailed information about the procedure of this benefit on your final return.

National Tax Agency (No.1266 Donation for Koeki Hojin):
www.nta.go.jp/taxanswer/shotoku/1266.htm

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Club Office.

- Khaldon Azhari, Acting President

プロフェッショナル・アソシエイト会員およびアソシエイト会員の皆様、本年4月に開催されましたアソシエイト会員総会にてお伝えしました「税額控除」に関して、5月16日付で内閣府より当協会が税額控除の要件を満たしている内容の「税額控除に係る証明書」を受け取りました。

これにより個人でお支払い頂く入会金ならびに月会費は、確定申告をすることで税額控除を受けることが可能となりました。寄付額の約40%までの税額控除を受けられます。

2016年に関しましては、5月16日以降にご入金頂きました入会金ならびに月会費が対象となりますので、ご承知おき下さい。税額控除の申請に必要な書類は来年2017年1月以降に発行する予定ですので、申請されるメンバーの方は協会事務局までご連絡下さい。

尚、確定申告の手続き詳細に関しては、国税庁ホームページあるいは税務署までご確認ください。

◇国税庁ホームページ(No.1266 公益社団法人等に寄附をしたとき)

www.nta.go.jp/taxanswer/shotoku/1266.htm

■会長代行、カルドン・アズハリ



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Nexis provides access to news and information from more than 34,000 sources, including Kyodo News, Jiji, Yonhap, Xinhua, AP, Reuters, AFP, all major world newspapers and specialist news sources. Also included is a database of U.S. and international company information, biographical databases, country profiles and a U.S. legal database.

For those already in on the secret, the application form is available on the FCCJ website or from the 19F Club office.



HEARD AT THE CLUB

“The rallying point which brings together disparate groups to join the Nippon Kaigi or participate in this movement is their common interest in calling for women and children to just shut up.”

Tamotsu Sugano, author of A Study of Nippon Kaigi, at the FCCJ on July 19



REINSTATEMENT (REGULAR MEMBER)

SAID KARLSSON is a freelance journalist and photographer from Sweden, whose regular clients include the TT News agency, Sydsvenskan and RES, the country’s premier travel magazine. He is also associated with Folio, one of Sweden’s largest stock photo agencies for commercial photography. Karlsson studied journalism at Tollare Folkhögskola in Stockholm and spent two years working for Pressens Mediaservice, Sweden’s second largest news agency, before leaving the country to live and work in China, Korea and Germany. From Japan, he covers everything from politics to travel and popculture, and is also involved with TV and documentary-film production. Karlsson has been a member of FCCJ since the end of 2010.



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Japaneseness: A Guide to Values and Virtues

Yoji Yamakuse
Stone Bridge Press
Japan Company Handbook
(Summer 2016)
Toyo Keizai Inc.

RICOH Future House

A welcoming space that looks over the horizon



With labs, library, café, lounge and print shop, Future House has something for everyone.



Where does the path to the future begin? Right outside your door. Who can show where it leads? The children who will walk that path decades from now – because it will be their path not ours. Visionaries they may well be, but the researchers at Ricoh’s largest R&D center, located in Ebina, 30 kilometers southwest of Tokyo, realize they can only *imagine* the future. It’s the children outside their gate who will actually build it.

This was one key insight behind the RICOH Future House that opened in August 2015, three minutes from the West Exit of JR Ebina Station. It’s a welcoming space where kids come to discover the wonders of science and technology. More than that, it’s a place where people of all ages come to learn, celebrate, relax... and use Ricoh’s latest products. It’s one way we give back to a community that has supported our success over decades.

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To learn more, see: <http://ricohfuturehouse.jp>

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