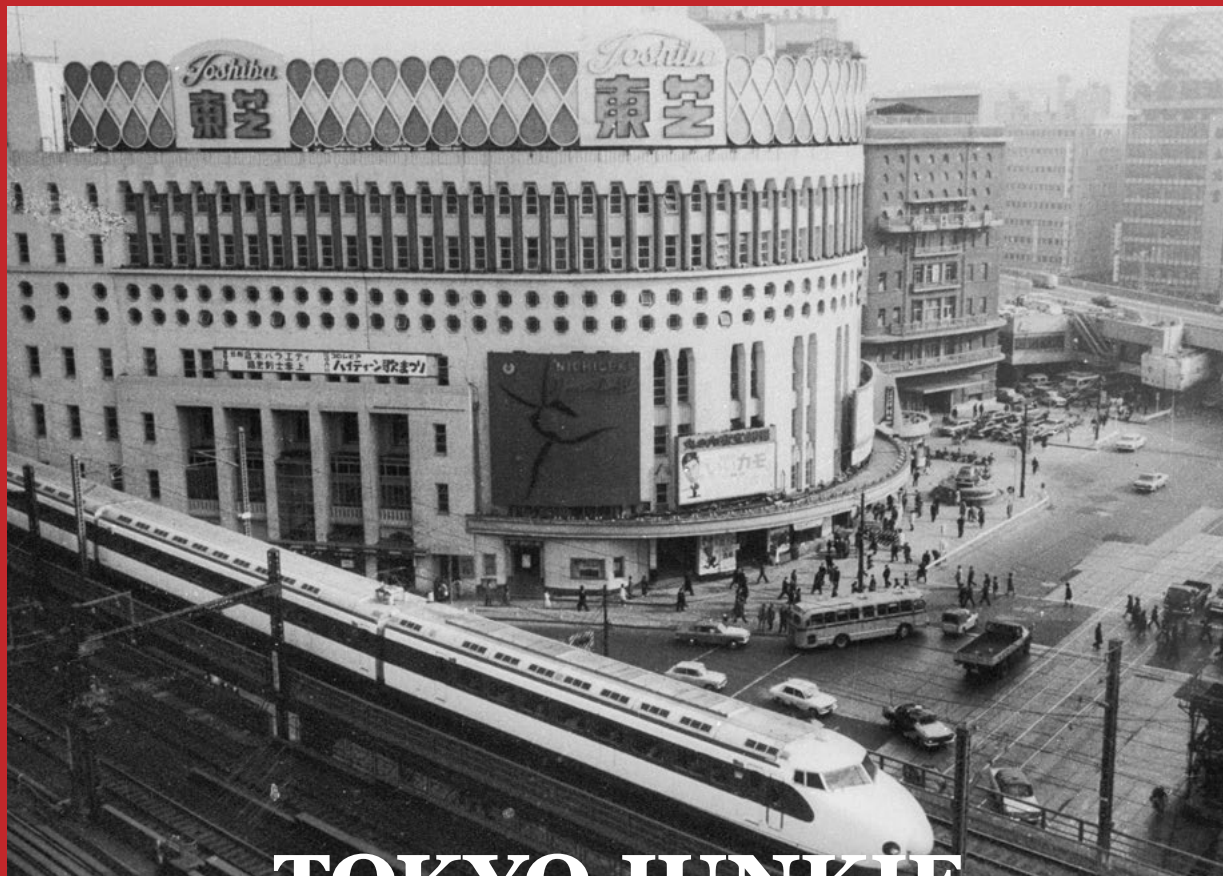


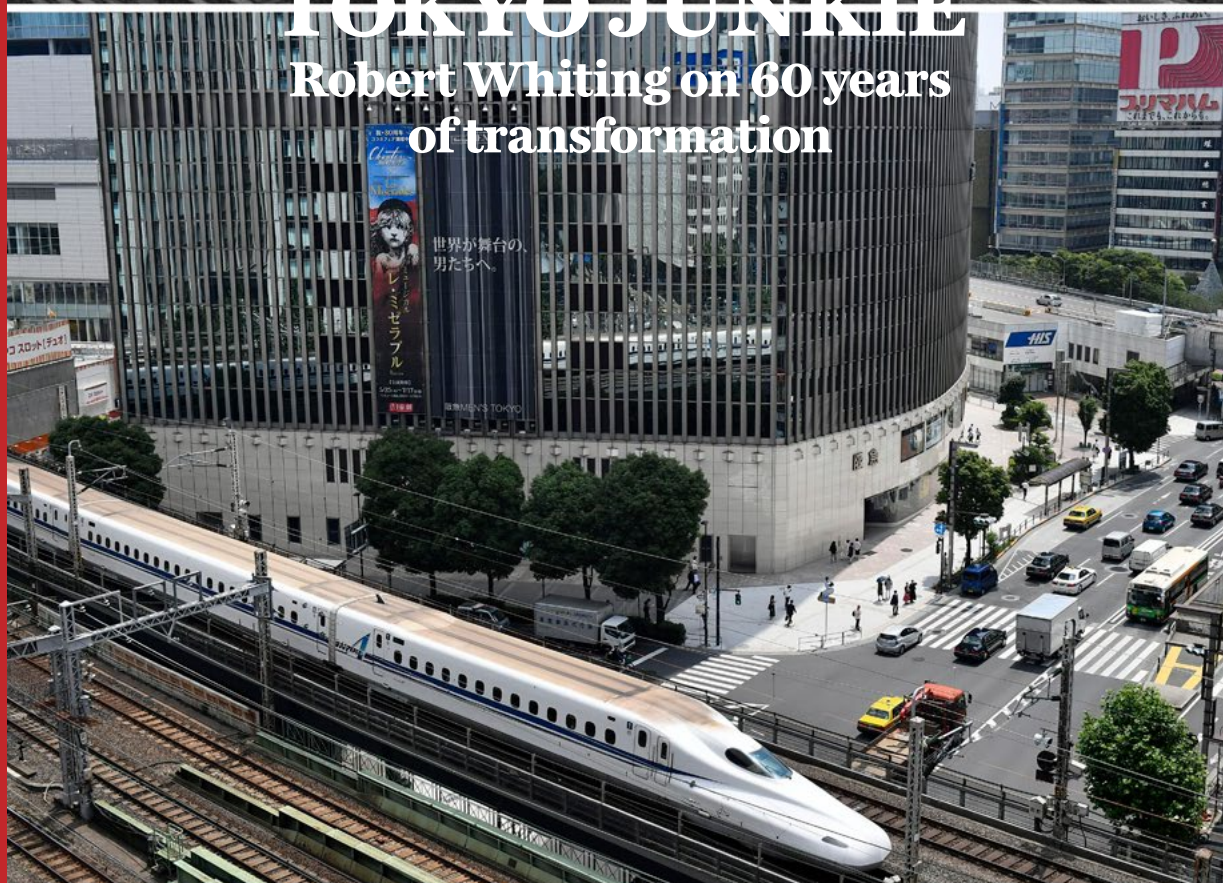
NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

April 2021 · Volume 53 · No. 4



TOKYO JUNKIE

Robert Whiting on 60 years
of transformation





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In this issue

JUSTIN McCURRY

This month's issue of the *Number 1 Shimbun* has a decidedly retro feel to it, starting with Robert Whiting's reminiscences about his early days as a journalist in Tokyo and tales of the rich fabric of life to be found in the FCCJ's former premises in Yurakucho. Both accounts are taken from Robert's new Book, *Tokyo Junkie* – a welcome addition to my spring reading list. Richard Varner and Peter McGill have kindly contributed tributes to Peter Hazelhurst, *The Times'* former Asia correspondent, whose many career highlights included an interview with Nelson Mandela when he was still apartheid South Africa's most wanted man. Mark Schreiber has averted pandemic cabin fever by getting out to retrace the footsteps of Japan's wartime prime minister, Hideki Tojo, walking umpteen miles in search of locations associated with his time in office and his postwar trial for war crimes. Looking forward, Chie Matsumoto explains the motivation behind a new media platform, *Unfiltered*, while Suvendrini Kakuchi reports on Miri Yu's recent *Book Break* appearance. Finally, congratulations to everyone who won prizes in this year's Swadesh DeRoy Scholarship awards. We will be showcasing some of the successful submissions in the magazine, beginning this month with Maria Elizabeth Thomas's stunning photographs.

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Cover: Top: A shinkansen bullet train passes through Yurakucho in December 1964, two months after it made its debut. Nichigeki Music Hall is in the background. Bottom: A shinkansen in the same location in June 2017. Nichigeki Music Hall has been replaced by the Hankyu department store. Photos: AP

THE FRONT PAGE

From the President

Dear members,

Today marked one of the highlights of my time so far as president of the club. I was honored to take part via Zoom in the awards ceremony for our Swadesh DeRoy Scholarship. The quality of this year's entries on the theme of "Isolation and Engagement: Japan at a Turbulent Time" was phenomenal, as you will see if you take a look at the winning photos, which are on display near the reception. The award-winning print article will appear in a future issue of the *Number 1 Shimbun*. The younger generation may be suffering in all sorts of ways under the pandemic and state of emergency, but they have certainly not lost any of their energy or creativity, and that gives me great hope for the future of journalism. I'm only sorry I wasn't able to meet any of the winners. I'd like to thank the Scholarship Committee co-chairs Abby Leonard and Kazu Takada for their hard work in organizing a highly successful competition, despite the extremely difficult circumstances.

Turning to more mundane, but important, matters I'd like to thank all those members who voted on our budget and business plan for the coming fiscal year, as well as on several proposed changes to our rules. The results were announced by email for those who weren't able to attend the General Membership Meeting, so I won't explain them here, except to note that the budget was passed, along with a slightly increased levy to replace the one that comes to an end this month. As you will have noticed, we introduced a new web-based voting system for the first time. After the hiccups in last year's Board election, which ended up wasting a lot of time and money, as well as causing heartache for a number of members, it was one of my priorities to modernize our voting system when I became president. While there are a few details still to iron out, I think the new system is clearly far superior to email voting and will help us improve efficiency and cut costs. My sincere appreciation goes to Reed Stevenson, who brought his tech skills to bear on the introduction of the new system and to Kanji Vicki Beyer for a heroic effort in improving and



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clarifying parts of our bylaws. While proposed amendments to the Articles of Association did not reach the required two-thirds majority on this occasion, we will be putting them to the vote again, possibly in June.

As always, a raft of interesting events continues at the Club. To highlight just a couple - next month sees a screening of "Umibe no Kanojotachi," a fictionalized account of the plight facing some of the foreign workers who come to Japan on the technical intern training program. Do also make time to watch our topical press conference with Myanmar activists, available on YouTube, if you weren't able to attend.

From my office desk I can see the cherry blossoms starting to peep through in the Imperial Palace gardens, reminding me that time's flying toward the end of the current Board's term. We'll try to pack as much progress as we can into the final few months.

● Isabel Reynolds has been reporting for Bloomberg in Tokyo since 2012. She has lived in Japan for more than 20 years and been a regular member of the FCCJ for most of that time.

COVER STORY

KISHA CLUB / BLACKLIST

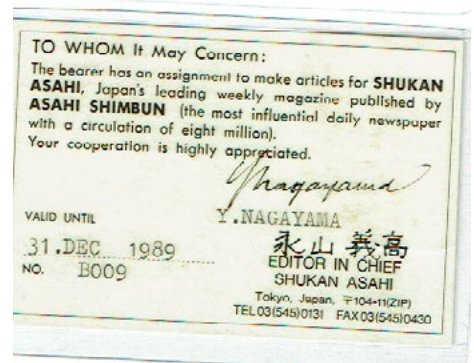
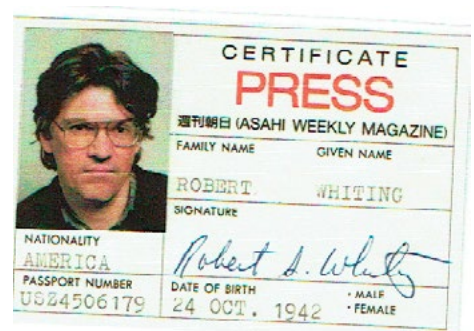
TOKYO JUNKIE EXTRACT

ROBERT WHITING

The Japanese tendency to organize, a possible hangover from centuries of feudalism, manifested itself in many areas of life, from micromanaged corporations to a by-the-numbers healthcare system that leaves little time to get to know your doctor. My field, journalism, was no exception. The regulating mechanism was a Japanese invention called the *kisha* (reporter's) club, which oversaw news-source access and content control and did it with great zeal. It differed substantially from the system in the United States.

In the US, if you wanted to interview someone, you got the individual's phone number and called him or her directly to ask if they would talk to you. If you had any kind of respectable media credentials, you could get into most press conferences if there was room for you. It was an open and free system. In Japan, however, the open and free exchange of information was impeded by the aforementioned *kisha* club system. And it was a serious impediment.

Every organization of any size, from the prime minister's office to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to the Yomiuri Giants, had a *kisha* club. Journalists who wanted to report on the activities of those organizations had to be accredited by the relevant club; access to representatives of the organization in question and their press conferences, as well as advance access to press dispatches and copies of other official statements, was limited to club members. The only individuals who could join a *kisha* club were reporters from the daily newspapers and TV/radio organizations. Magazine reporters and freelancers were not allowed. Each *kisha* club had a captain elected by the reporters who controlled access to



The only individuals who could join a *kisha* club were reporters from the daily newspapers and TV/radio organizations. Magazine reporters and freelancers were not allowed.

kisha club Q&A sessions—and made sure the questions asked did not ruffle any feathers. It was a scandalously biased system. In return for being granted access, reporters were expected to write what they were told.

As Andrew Horvat, a former AP journalist familiar with both Western and Japanese press reporting customs, once explained to me: “In the West, we are taught to pursue the scoop, to get information other reporters don’t have. That’s how you build a reputation. In Japan, you are taught not to make waves. Publishing a scoop will make everyone else in the *kisha* club uncomfortable and ruin group harmony, so they avoid doing it.” That analysis remains largely true today.

Reporters in Japan could get around these restrictions by selling their stories to the weekly and monthly magazines using pen names or by simply giving their research to fellow report-

KISHA CLUB / BLACKLIST

ers operating outside the *kisha* club system, so there was always a way for important information to get out. But to do that was also to invite expulsion from the *kisha* club or other forms of retribution if the truth were discovered.

I learned my own painful lesson in this regard in 1985 when I was asked by the prestigious monthly magazine *Bungei Shunju* to write an article explaining the American view of the Japanese *kisha* club system. I accepted the assignment, researched, and wrote the article. I included several examples of how the reporters' clubs had prevented members of the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan from doing their jobs.

One such example involved the South Korean political dissident Kim Dae-jung, who had been living in exile in the United States. Kim was an important political figure—charismatic, fearless, and determined to overturn the brutal authoritarian regime of Park Chung-hee in the Republic of Korea (ROK).

Kim had finished second in the South Korean presidential election of 1971, narrowly losing to Park, and he believed a subsequent automobile accident he was involved in to be an attempt on his life. He fled to Japan to start an exile movement for democracy, accusing the Park regime, which had turned into a military dictatorship, of corruption and ballot-box fixing.

On August 8, 1973, while attending a conference at the Grand Palace Hotel in Tokyo, Kim was kidnapped by agents of South Korea's intelligence agency, the KCIA, working with local ethnic-Korean gangsters. He was drugged and taken to Osaka, where he was put aboard a boat, which then headed into the Sea of Japan in the direction of the Korean Peninsula. The agents bound and gagged him, attached weights to his feet, and made ready to cast him overboard. But then suddenly, a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) helicopter appeared overhead and fired at Kim's captors, warning them by loudspeaker to cease and desist. Informants had alerted the Japanese government, which then dispatched the JMSDF to pursue Kim's vessel. The boat Kim was on was subsequently escorted by the US military to Seoul, where US Ambassador Philip Habib was waiting to intervene on his behalf.

Kim remained alive. He was put under house arrest and banned from ROK politics. He elected to stay but continued to speak out to foreign



DAVID STETSON

Robert Whiting

reporters and was subsequently imprisoned for two years for criticizing the Seoul government. He was then arrested again in 1980 on charges of sedition and conspiracy and sentenced to death. Amnesty International, Pope John Paul II, and the US government interceded, and Kim was granted exile in America. He taught at Harvard University until 1985 when he suddenly announced he was returning to his homeland and would hold a press conference at Narita Airport during a stopover on his way to Seoul. It was a big story, one of the biggest of the year. *New York Times* Tokyo correspondent Clyde Haberman dashed out to Narita Airport to participate in the press conference, but he was not allowed to enter the pressroom because he was not a member of the Narita Airport *kisha* club. Haberman furiously protested. There was some pushing and shoving, but in the end he was still not allowed inside.

I wrote about Haberman's experience in the *Bungei* article and quoted him as saying that closed-door policies of the type that prevented him from attending the Kim presser would damage Japan's reputation around the world, especially in light of the nation's growing imbalance of payments and accusatory cries of unfair trade. The magazine containing my story came out on a Friday morning. At 10 a.m., I got a call from a Mr. Odano in the Foreign Ministry,

KISHA CLUB / BLACKLIST

“Who are you, Mr. Whiting?” he asked. “Why are you writing stories like this critical of Japan?”
“I am a freelance journalist living in Tokyo,” I said, “and I am writing this story because it is a story that needs to be written. Japan has to stop being so insular and open itself up or it is going to incur the wrath of the world.”

demanding that I report to him immediately to explain the article. It was apparently the job of his office to examine all potential controversial stories in the media. More curious than concerned, I decided to go. Besides, it was only a short cab ride from my Akasaka apartment to the drab Gaimusho offices in Kasumigaseki, near the Imperial Palace moat and the Metropolitan Police Department.

Upon arriving I was escorted to a conference room for an “interview” with Mr. Odano, who, in person, looked the part of a bland government bureaucrat in a blue suit and dark tie.

We exchanged name cards, as ritual required, mine saying “Author, Journalist” and his “Foreign Ministry,” and then he began to grill me in English.

“Who are you, Mr. Whiting?” he asked. “Why are you writing stories like this critical of Japan?”

“I am a freelance journalist living in Tokyo,” I said, “and I am writing this story because it is a story that needs to be written. Japan has to stop being so insular and open itself up or it is going to incur the wrath of the world.”

I was being overly dramatic, but what the hell; it was my first foray into the inner sanctum of Japanese bureaucracy and I figured a little bombast would suit the occasion. I also believed there to be more than a few grains of truth there.

“Yes, I understand that point,” Odano replied. “But *who* are you and why are you writing stories like this?”

“Did I make any errors in my story? Is there something wrong with my analysis?”

“No, no. But I want to know who you are and why did you write this story?”

It went on like this for two or three hours. Other Foreign Ministry officials were brought in and they asked me essentially the same questions, forcing me to recount the details of my time in Japan to them.

I told them about the books I had written and the columns and magazine stories I had done, but every time they would come back to the same question.

“Yes, but who are you really and why are you writing stories like this?”

Franz Kafka could not have scripted it better. Finally, they let me go and I went home. As soon as I walked in the door the phone rang. It was my wife calling from Geneva. She sounded alarmed.

“Bob, what on earth have you done?”

“What do you mean what have I done?” I said.

“I just got a call a call from an official in the Japanese consulate here in Geneva. He asked me, ‘Who is Robert Whiting and why is he writing stories criticizing Japan?’”

Amazing, I thought. Very impressive. I intentionally hadn’t told Mr. Odano or any of his cohorts that I was married to a Japanese woman and that she had recently been hired by the UNCHR and dispatched to Switzerland. How they found out, I still don’t know. The War Office?

I didn’t hear from the Foreign Ministry again about this issue, but *Bungei Shunju* editors told me the government had complained to them. And it was their guess that the Foreign Ministry thought I was working for the CIA or some other intelligence agency and was trying to undermine the stability of the nation of Japan somehow. Perhaps it had something to do with bilateral trade friction, which was heating up at the time.

Wow. I thought. All this for an article on *kisha* clubs?

That wasn’t quite the end of the story, however. That summer I headed off to Geneva, and when I came back through Narita in September, I was pulled out of line at immigration and taken into an office, where an immigration official sat me down and began the questioning. It was the only time that had ever happened to me entering or leaving Tokyo.

“Who are you and why are you coming in and out of Japan so often?”

Eventually they let me go and stamped my passport, but it was an unnerving experience. As veteran journalist Sam Jameson, then the *LA Times* Tokyo correspondent, explained to me one day at the Foreign Correspondents Press Club of Japan, high above Tokyo on the twentieth floor of the Yurakucho Denki Building: “You have to show your love for Japan. If you do, they will leave you alone. Criticize too much and you’re asking for trouble.”

Unfortunately, asking for trouble seemed to be a big part of my journalistic MO.

It came again after my 1986 interview with Warren Cromartie, who had joined the Yomiuri Giants in 1984. In it, he stated that executives in the Giants front office were “racist,” noting that they showed far less respect to the then Giants manager Sadaharu Oh, half Japanese and half Chinese, than they did to the previous manager, Shigeo Nagashima, a pureblooded Japanese.

KISHA CLUB / BLACKLIST

►
Sadaharu Oh,
left, and Shigeo
Nagashima at a
Yomiuri Giants
spring training
camp in 1967



“I’m a black son-of-a-bitch,” Cromartie said, “and I can spot a racist a mile away. They were just rude to Oh in general. But they kissed Nagashima’s ass. Oh, in my opinion, is worth ten of Nagashima.”

The interview was published in the December 1986 issue of the Japanese monthly *Penthouse*, nestled amidst nude photos of women with their vital areas airbrushed out, as required by Japan’s obscenity laws. Two months later in a meeting of PR representatives from Central League teams, the Yomiuri Giants rep, a former reporter named Wakabayashi, announced that I was to be banned from entering the Giants’ new park, the Tokyo Dome, as a reporter, beginning in 1987, for two years. I could buy a ticket, if there were any left that is, and go in; but I was not allowed on the field or in the press box.

“I’m here to guide the media,” he was quoted as saying, “and we can’t have gaijin ball-players expressing their *honne* (true feelings) to *gaijin* reporters.”

The team took no action against Cromartie, however. He had finished the season with a .363 batting average, 37 homeruns and 98 RBIs, leading Yomiuri to the Central League Championship. In fact, they gave him a new three-year contract with a huge raise.

Blacklisted along with me was my friend Masayuki Tamaki, one of Japan’s leading sports journalists, who had also written articles critical of the Giants.

Tamaki, one of the smartest people I had met in my time in Japan, broke the mold. A big, bearded ex-rugby player with a deep infectious laugh and an iconoclastic bent, he had dropped out of Tokyo University, Japan’s most ferociously competitive gateway to elite careers in business and government, to begin a career as a freelance journalist—at a time when freelancing was more-or-less unheard of in Japan. I particularly admired his penchant for asking direct, uncomfortable questions and setting things out the way he saw them. He once drew the ire of the High School Baseball Federation for writing that the ubiquitously shaven heads of the high school baseball players (a mass demonstration of pureheartedness) participating in the annual summer tournament at Koshien looked like those of inmates in a Japanese prison.

He criticized the Yomiuri Giants severe training methods in a magazine article and so upset the front office that the following year in spring training camp he was forced to wear a yellow hat while covering training on the Giants practice field—a symbol to Giants players that he was to be viewed as an adversary and to not respond to his questions.

From that time on, PR guru Wakabayashi made it Giants policy that any publication wanting to interview a Giants player had to submit a list of questions in advance for approval. In addition, the publication had to submit the finished article for approval as well. There was also a required fee of several hundred dollars to be divided between the team and the player.

This policy stayed in place for years. In 1991, for example, an NBC News crew wanted to interview former Major Leaguer Phil Bradley about his experiences playing with the Giants. As requested, they submitted a list of five questions:

1. How do you like Japan?
2. How do you like playing Japanese baseball?
3. How do you like playing for the Yomiuri Giants?
4. How do you like playing for your manager?
5. How does your family like living in Japan?

The Giants front office ruled out questions 2, 3, and 4.

Wakabayashi, a former journalist who had pursued a scoop or two himself during his long career, insisted that his employer, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the world’s largest newspaper, was indeed dedicated to the pursuit of truth and justice—just not all the time

COVER STORY

FCCJ: DRUNKEN BRAWLS

TOKYO JUNKIE EXTRACT

ROBERT WHITING

The move from Kamakura to Tokyo's Toyosu neighborhood was a stroke of genius, entirely conceived, planned, and executed by my wife in 2009 upon her retirement from the UNHCR, before the area came into prominence as the planned site of the 2020 Olympic Village. With many athletic venues like the existing Ariake Sports Center in the immediate vicinity, not to mention its selection as the location of the massive new Tsukiji Fish Market, the real estate value skyrocketed.

Also, it was good once again to be living in the center of the city, where Tokyo's legendary energy and discipline showed no signs of abating, although men now wore makeup and skinny suits. It was striking that despite the presence of fast-food outlets everywhere—McDonald's, Shakey's, Wendy's, et al.—the city's denizens somehow managed to avoid the obesity epidemic that had hit the United States, a country that was more and more being defined by overweight people, potholed highways, and vending machines that didn't work.

From our high-rise residence we had a spectacular view of the spanking-new Sky Tree (2012) in neighboring Sumida. It is the tallest broadcasting and observation tower in the world (and second tallest structure after the Burj Khalifa). A three-stop subway ride took you from Toyosu on the Yurakucho Line to the Ginza, with its high-end stores and moneyed Chinese tourists. I bought my first iMac and MacBook Pro at the flagship Apple store there. iPhones, tailored for Japan by Softbank, were all the rage, shoving Panasonic and other domestic flip-phone manufacturers out of the market. Half the pedestrians on the street were now checking email and texting on iPhones as they walked.

Easy access to the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan was another of the pluses of living in Toyosu. I had become a member decades earlier, and the club had played an important role in both my work and social life. I even served on the Board. I particularly liked the Main Bar, located on the twentieth floor of the Yurakucho Denki

Building, which offered a panoramic view of the Tokyo skyline and ring-side seats to many a drunken argument between journalists. Now it was just four stops and a one-minute walk away, which meant I could join in the fun every night.

Established in 1945 by and for journalists who landed in Japan at the end of World War 2 with Douglas MacArthur, the Club provided essential services to facilitate the task of transmitting the news of Japan to the world when no such facilities existed in war-torn Tokyo.

At the time, except for a few magnificent Western-style buildings and the Imperial Hotel, which survived the incendiary bombing in the last days of the war, there was barely an identifiable street remaining. With the help of the Occupation authorities, the journalists had quickly secured some living and workspace in a ramshackle former restaurant, moving in five to a room, not counting their new live-in Japanese girlfriends, using sheets for partitions. This annoyed BBC correspondent John Morris, who prudishly insisted that the sex act was meant to be performed in private.

"Drunken brawls were frequent," wrote Morris in a memoir entitled *The Phoenix Cup*, "and there were times when firearms were discharged in the club. It was a cross between a waterfront sailors' bar and a brothel."



FCCJ: DRUNKEN BRAWLS

▶ Whiting, right, hosts a 2017 press conference at the FCCJ by Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred.



The FCCJ played a central role in coverage of major news events throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, including the Olympus and Nissan scandals, both of which illustrated the perils of being a foreign executive in a Japanese company.

The FCCJ quickly became the hub of the international community that reemerged from the ashes of war. Unlike the US service-men and members of the Occupation Headquarters, who had privileges to procure American supplies at the military exchanges, most journalists in Tokyo had to make do shopping at local stores, which rarely carried what they wanted. Any kind of half-decent whisky, cheese, or ice cream was very hard to come by. Club members, who hailed from all over the globe, wrote home to family and friends for recipes. Japanese cooks working at the FCCJ were given survival courses for making pizza and hamburgers, which they had never seen, much less tasted.

Before long the regulars congregating each day in the bar were a Who's Who of the region's most celebrated writers—including Pulitzer Prize winners who had covered the front lines of World War 2, Korea, and Vietnam—as well as politicians, entertainers, royalty, and Asia's busiest spies.

James Michener would be holding court in the dining room, talking about his latest novels to be turned into hit movies in the years since his breakaway blockbusters *South Pacific*, *Sayonara*, and *The Bridges at Toko-ri*, all of which deeply influenced the world's view of the Asia-Pacific region. Ian Fleming could also be seen at the FCCJ night after night in 1962 with former colleagues from the *Sunday Times*, doing research for *You Only Live Twice*. Every businessman and spymaster of note needed to be there, such was the convergence of news and deal-making at the club. Walls were covered with photos of famous individuals who had made appearances: Muhammad Ali, Gina Lollobrigida, Ronald Reagan, Willie Nelson, the Emperor and the Empress of Japan, a young and surprisingly articulate

Donald Trump, Roger Moore, George Soros, Rachel McAdams, MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred. The Crown Prince and Princess Michiko danced together at the Club's fortieth-anniversary party. A famous prize-winning Italian journalist made history late one night by entertaining a young lady on the nineteenth-floor Club pool table, completing his task despite an unexpected interruption by a Club employee. The flustered employee bowed, apologized for the intrusion, and quickly exited. The journalist bowed back from his semi-prone position and resumed what he was doing.

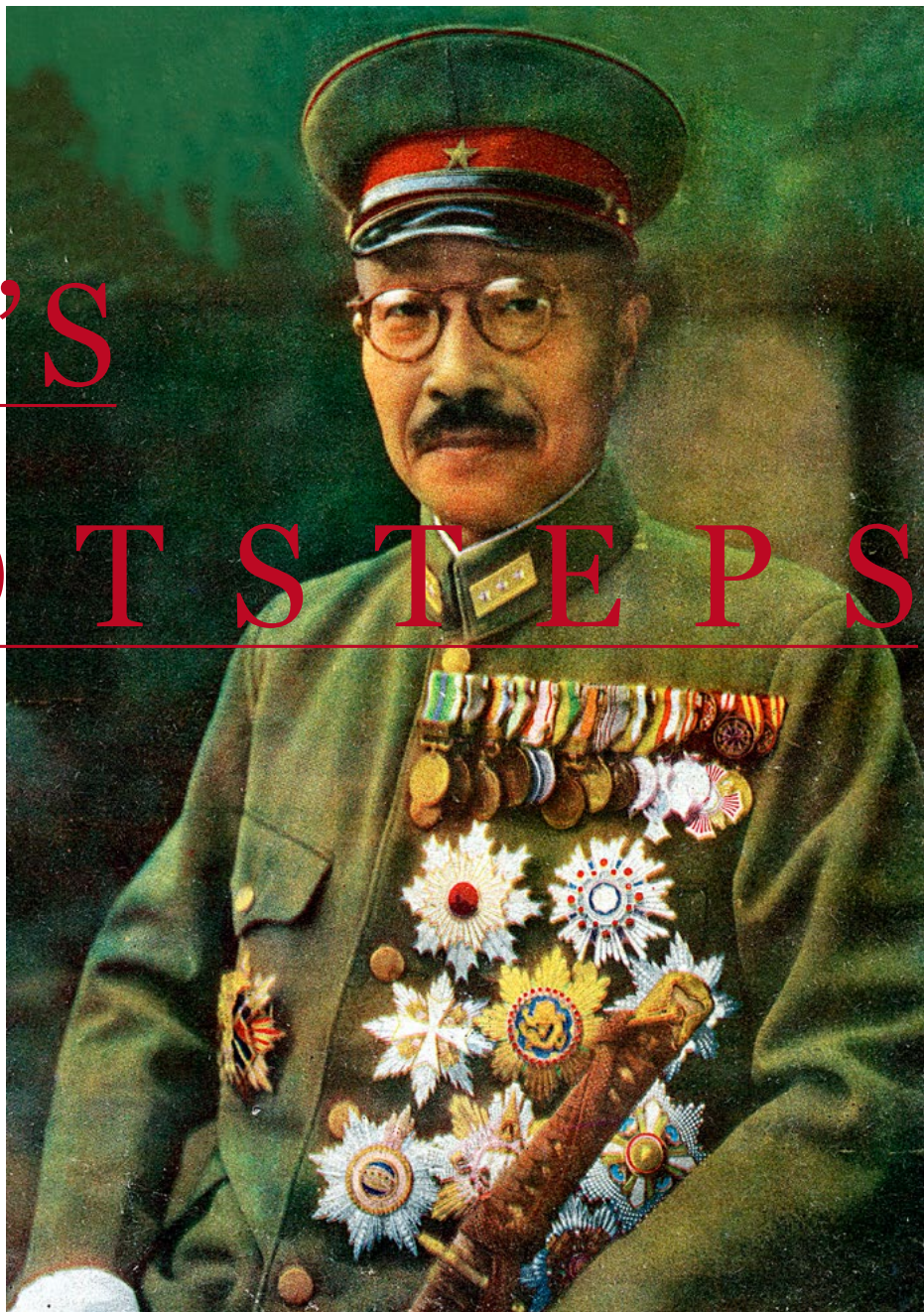
The FCCJ played a central role in coverage of major news events throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, including the Olympus and Nissan scandals, both of which illustrated the perils of being a foreign executive in a Japanese company. Olympus appointed England's Michael Woodford as CEO in 2011, but he lost his job shortly after he disclosed a major accounting fraud. Woodford was fired, and the scandal led to the resignation of the company's entire board and the arrest of several senior executives, but he was later awarded £10 million in an out-of-court settlement with Olympus over his dismissal. Woodford had abandoned an earlier proxy fight to take control of the company after it became apparent Olympus's institutional investors were uncomfortable with the Englishman's combative style. Lebanese Carlos Ghosn became hugely famous in Japan, first for leading the restructuring and revival of struggling Nissan Motors in 1999, then later for his arrest in the winter of 2018 for allegedly understating his compensation, a circumstance brought about by his enemies within the corporation. Ghosn spent months acquainting himself with Japan's criminal justice system, undergoing interrogation several hours every day without his lawyer present and sleeping in an unheated cell with the light on all night. Eventually granted bail, which cost him more than ten million dollars, but denied permission to see his wife, Ghosn fled to Beirut, smuggled out in a box from Kansai Airport.

In the midst of a national press corps that ranked last among G7 nations in the annual Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, the FCCJ remained resolutely independent, giving a voice to political protestors and refugees frequently turned away from Japan's National Press Center, including the Dalai Lama.

FEATURE

IN TOJO'S FOOTSTEPS

**TOKYO IS A
TREASURE TROVE
OF SITES CONNECTED
TO JAPAN'S WARTIME
PRIME MINISTER**



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MARK SCHREIBER

Last December, I learned from a colleague that I was living fairly close to the former residence of the late Army General and former Prime Minister Hideki Tojo. After determining its location on my computer, I drove over for a look-see on the morning of New Year's Day.

Perhaps as a pretext to get me out of the house during the pandemic, I then embarked on an effort to deepen my admittedly shallow knowledge of the man who served as Japan's prime minister from October 1941 to July 1944. While

this article adopts a piecemeal approach, what I have learned so far has made me want to delve deeper into the life of the man who, during the first years of World War II, was lumped together in Allied propaganda with Hitler and Mussolini.

The son of an army general with roots in the former Nambu domain of Iwate Prefecture, Tojo was born on December 30, 1884, in what is now Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward. He spent most of his life in the capital, and died there, executed by hanging in Sugamo Prison on December 23, 1948, making him one of the last of the leaders of Axis powers and their client states to be put to death after the war.

▲
An official portrait of Tojo disseminated on December 2, 1942 during the first anniversary of the Great East Asia War.

IN TOJO'S FOOTSTEPS



▲
Kwantung Army HQ; right: Bancho Elementary School

As a boy, there was little doubt Hideki would follow his family tradition of serving in the military. He first attended the Bancho Elementary School, located close to Ichigaya Station, and later a nearby branch of the Peers' School (Gakushuin).

In March 1905, Tojo received his commission as a second lieutenant in the infantry of the Imperial Japanese Army. In 1912, on his third attempt, he gained entry into the Army War College, a stepping stone to the senior ranks. This achievement was said to have greatly pleased his father, who died the following year.

In 1918-19, Tojo was sent to Siberia as part of the Japanese expeditionary force that intervened in the Russian Civil War. After World War I armistice, he served as military attache at the Japanese embassy in Berlin between 1919 and 1922.

From 1 March, 1937 to 30 May, 1938, Tojo served as chief of staff of Japan's Kwantung Army. Its headquarters in Ryojun (Lushun or Port Arthur, now a district of Dalian city), has been preserved as a museum.

In August 1937, he commanded the Chahar Expeditionary Force in a victory against Nationalist Chinese troops in Operation Chahar. He was recalled to Japan in May 1938 to serve as vice-minister of war. In July 1940, he became army minister in Fumimaro Konoe's second cabinet and left an indelible stamp on the wartime conduct of Japan's soldiers.



Eri Hotta wrote in Japan 1941:
Countdown to Infamy.

On January 8, 1941, Tojo introduced "Instructions for the Battlefield," elaborating on ideal soldierly conduct. The code ... included the notorious passage, "Do not suffer the shame of being captured alive." This order glorifying death would be taken as a command to commit suicide in the face of impending capture and would come to have a devastating impact. It was printed in booklet form, and was distributed to every soldier despite the country's serious paper shortage. And ordinary citizens could purchase the phonograph recording of Tojo's recitation of it.

Following the resignation of Konoue, Tojo was appointed prime minister on 17 October, 1941, in the vague hope that he could somehow control the hawks in the military. But by this time the forces had been put in motion to wage war against the Western powers, and Tojo found himself in an untenable position.

In the room next door [in the prime minister's residence], Tojo's wife Katsu slept with two daughters, who were still schoolgirls. She could easily hear the sounds of documents shuffled and Tojo pacing the floor, which suggested something consequential was about to happen. On the night of December 6th and the early hours of December 7, Katsu and her daughters heard sobs. At first suppressed, the sobs became louder and turned into unrestrained weeping. Katsu rose from her futon, opened the door in the hallway and peeped into the room. There she saw her husband crying while kneeling in the "seiza" position on his futon. Tojo, a soldier

IN TOJO'S FOOTSTEPS

► Tojo's former residence;
bottom images: Heiwajima
motorboat race course



who always brimmed with self-assurance and who never demonstrated weakness, cried, making no attempt to brush away his tears. Katsu and her daughters sensed [his] demeanor was on the verge of collapse, and seeing him in that state caused them to weep as well.

— From *Tojo Hideki to Tenno no Jidai*, Masayasu Hosaka, (Chikuma Bunko, 2005)

In response to a question concerning the difference between himself, Hitler and Mussolini during the 81st session of the Diet on 5 February, 1943, Tojo said:

“Tojo the person is merely an ordinary citizen...I am not in the least different from any one of you. Only I have been given the responsibility of ... prime minister. That is where we differ. Such a person shines only when shone upon by the light of His Majesty, and without that light I would be as nothing. I am able to be honored because I enjoy the trust of His Majesty and is [sic] appointed to this position. Therein I am of an entirely different character from the gentlemen of Europe who are known as ‘dictators.’”

— From *Party Politics to Military Dictatorship*, Shinobu Seizaburo, (1967)

One thing Tojo shared with his two European counterparts was having been targeted for assassination. Historian Masayasu Hosaka, writing in *Nikkan Gendai* (March 23 and 24, 2021), documented five plots hatched against Tojo's life in his waning months as prime minister. The best known was a scheme by Tomoshige Tsunoda, an army major and veteran of the fighting in China. Infuriated by Tojo's fabricated proclamations of “great victories,” Tsunoda, together with a police judo instructor named Ushijima, hatched a plot to kill Tojo by suicide-bombing his car. Their scheme had the tacit approval of Gen. Kanji Ishihara, a vocal opponent of Tojo. Tsunoda was arrested in September 1944 – after Tojo had already resigned – dismissed from the army and sentenced to two years in prison.

Tojo's former residence at Yoga 1-chome, 10-4, Setagaya Ward (described as “modest”), is identified by this marker. The property now belongs to the Rissho Kosekai religion. When American intelligence officers came to arrest him on September 11, 1945, he attempted suicide using a pistol taken from a captured American airman.

After discharge from the U.S. military hospital in Yokohama, Tojo was confined at the former Omori POW camp, situated on reclaimed land in Tokyo's Ota Ward. The spectator grandstand of the Heiwajima motorboat race course roughly occupies the footprint of the original camp.

The most unpopular man in the Omori camp is Hideki Tojo, the man who led them all in the war as premier and war minister. Now, because they consider that he failed ... and shamefully bungled his suicide in September, all but the most despicable of his fellow prisoners ignore Tojo. They seem to feel that he is technically dead. They do not admit him to their walks in the prison compound. They do not play “Go” with him. When he seats himself at meals, they scrupulously avoid his table. And when he walks out of his barracks, they casually get out of his path.

— “Lord Tojo is treated with silent contempt by camp's other prisoners” (*LIFE* magazine, 12 November, 1945)

IN TOJO'S FOOTSTEPS



► The witness dock from which Tojo testified can be seen in the photo's center.

On December 8, exactly four years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Tojo was transferred to Sugamo prison. Hosaka wrote that his MP guards at Sugamo, pleased to have such an illustrious personage under their watch, “regularly pilfered Tojo’s soap, toothbrush and towel as souvenirs”.

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, held from May 1946 to November 1948, took place in the grand hall of what was formerly the Imperial Japanese Army Academy. Now

called the Ichigaya Memorial Hall, it is situated within the Japan Defense Ministry complex. The remaining wing of what was a much larger building has been restored to its original state and is open to the public for daily tours.

On November 12, 1948, the tribunal handed down death sentences to Tojo and six other class-A war criminals. Details of their final days were recorded by Sugamo prison chaplain Shinsho Hanayama. At 5 pm on December 22, the seven were served a last meal of rice, miso soup,

IN TOJO'S FOOTSTEPS

► This monument, in a small park adjacent to the Sunshine 60 building in Ikebukuro, was erected on the site of the Sugamo Prison gallows. The inscription reads “*Eikyū heiwa wo negatte*” (for the sake of eternal peace); bottom: Kuboyama crematory in Yokohama, site of Tojo’s cremation.



grilled fish and meat. They went to the gallows just after midnight on December 23.

Former Tokyo governor Naoki Inose is convinced that the date the seven Class-A war criminals went to the gallows was purposely selected by Gen. MacArthur.

MacArthur must certainly have been aware the date coincided with the crown prince’s 15th birthday, and the staging of the executions on December 23 was intended to serve as a “delayed action device”. In MacArthur’s mind, when Crown Prince Akihito eventually ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne and December 23 became a public holiday, Japanese would receive a not-so-subtle annual reminder that the emperor and other members of the imperial family were able to evade prosecution for war crimes. But MacArthur’s stratagem was foiled by Hirohito’s longevity. Four decades were to pass and by the time the emperor’s birthday became a new public holiday on December 23, 1989, few Japanese recalled the date’s significance.”

— Naoki Inose in *Shukan Gendai* magazine (December 26, 2008 - January 2, 2009)

Tojo’s cremated remains were not sent to his family, and accounts vary as to what actually happened to them.

Citing a declassified transcript of a meeting of the G2 Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, held on November 26, 1951, “... it was the consensus of this group that any such action (to a request for the remains) would be extremely inadvisable ... the answer should take the line that the remains of the persons involved were irretrievably destroyed ... At the time [disposal of the remains] was treated as a closely guarded secret and even now, the facts are uncertain.”

— *The Secret Journey of General Tojo’s Ashes*, Eiichiro Tokumoto, Number 1 *Shimbun* (August 2015)



Torii gate at the Yasukuni Shrine

Moves toward Tojo’s rehabilitation came well before the controversy over his enshrinement at Yasukuni. In 1950, the Japanese government designated Tojo’s status not as an executed criminal, but as “having died while in performance of public duties,” thereby entitling his widow to a survivor’s pension and military pension.

On October 17, 1978, Yasukuni shrine’s head priest, Nagayoshi Matsudaira, secretly enshrined 14 class-A war criminals, including Tojo. The enshrinement came to light the following April and remains a sticking point in Japan’s relations with Asian countries to this day.

● Mark Schreiber writes the Big in Japan and Bilingual columns for *The Japan Times*.

FEATURE

JAPAN UNFILTERED

A NEW, AD-FREE MEDIA PLATFORM FOCUSES ON THE MARGINALIZED AND VOICELESS

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unfiltered

a cooperative of readers and writers giving a voice to the marginalized

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ANALYSIS

CHIE MATSUMOTO

Many of us who have worked in journalism and clashed with editors and sponsors have at one point or another toyed with the idea of starting our own media platform. We fret about independence, but running a media company without corporate sponsorship is very difficult.

Last December, I and several friends decided to grasp that nettle with Unfiltered.coop, it is an ad-free online news site that has started taking slow but steady steps towards being an independent news organization.

Unfiltered is owned by journalists and read-

ers who hold its shares. The news platform is paid for by membership and subscription fees. The cooperative currently has 12 journalists - most of them women - from Japan and several other countries.

Our aim is to collectively protect media independence and focus on underrepresented sections of society. We want to protect and promote their rights and to become, in a real sense, the people's press.

The reason we choose a cooperative model also lies in an attempt to steer away from the tech giants (Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon) and choose a cooperatively owned domain.

JAPAN UNFILTERED

The idea to establish a new Internet news site came about because some of us felt the need to break free of the restrictive and unfair gatekeeping that exists at news organizations.

Women are still in a minority in the media industry. Some of our reporters have fought with editors who dismiss stories that contain the word “gender”, or who say that stories about gender issues “don’t sell.”

Reporting on labor issues invites potential conflict with advertisers and corporate sponsors when disputes emerge at these companies. Even when they don’t, executive decisions at media organizations may assume otherwise.

Media and journalists exercise *sontaku* at their companies and tend to filter out information that might provoke reprimands or discipline by bosses, or be met by resistance when they try to challenge the status quo.

Sometimes there are clear signs of pressure from the establishment. Journalists themselves can often become institutionalized, because, for example, they are considered privileged (at least in Japan), and that can lead to misjudgments about a story’s news value.

The sense of privilege enjoyed by corporate journalists interferes with reporting when the voices of the underprivileged and underrepresented are screened out.

The cooperative style of Unfiltered encourages fairer gatekeeping and newsroom management.

Rather than operating based on a pyramid-style newsroom presided over by a chief editor, with multiple reporters working at more junior levels, Unfiltered members think horizontally, which means no one member has more power or authority than another. There are no managers.

We believe the absence of hierarchy among Unfiltered members will help keep them closer to the ground and better able to report on the needs and concerns of ordinary people. Its objective is to dig deeper into the lives of these people and identify social issues that other media organizations might miss.

Unfiltered journalists are motivated not just to tell stories but to empower their interviewees and the people who feature in their stories, and to generate grassroots social movements.

Those of you who have worked in overseas media may well share my irritation when editors thousands of miles away ask us to find “quirky Japan” stories, or when that time

Women are still in a minority in the media industry. Some of our reporters have fought with editors who dismiss stories that contain the word “gender”, or who say that stories about gender issues “don’t sell.”

comes around again to report on annual or seasonal events.

While recognizing the importance of monitoring politics and the economy (which admittedly comes with its share of quirkiness), we pay much closer attention to three groups whose contribution to Japan is often overlooked: women, foreigners and workers.

For example, we have recently written about overworked staff at public health centers during the Covid-19 epidemic, and will soon run a series of interviews with immigrants that sheds light on the lives of people who seek asylum in this country, revealing a side to Japan that is rarely seen.

Joining Unfiltered by itself does not create people who are fair and equal minded, so we aspire to continue training and educating ourselves to instill a better understanding of social and minority issues, as well as to improve our journalistic skills.

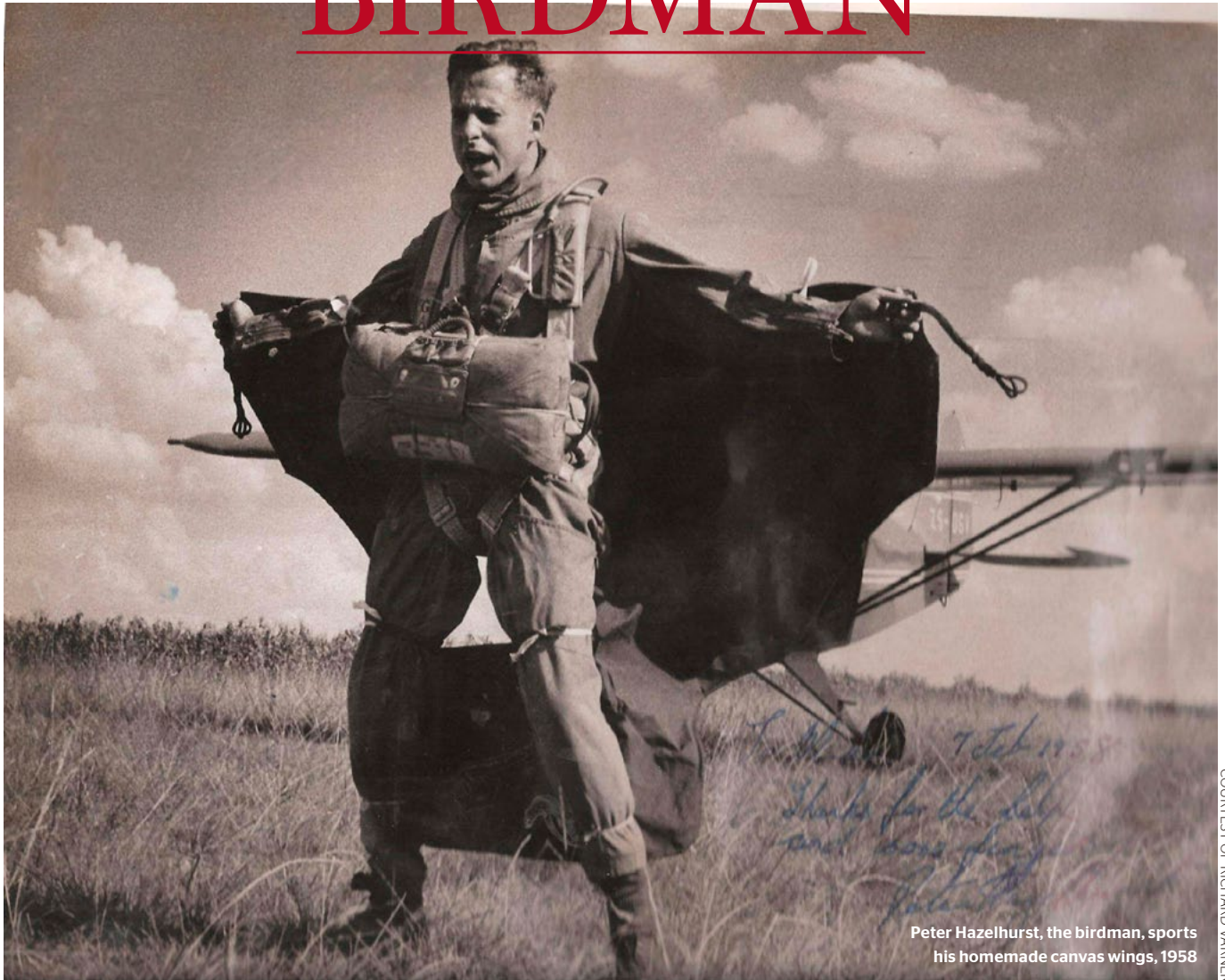
We also plan to promote exchanges between our reporters and readers, many of whom are interested in learning from journalists and hearing their “untold” stories. These exchanges will also give readers the opportunity to discuss the issues and challenges they face in their daily lives, and for journalists to act on them.

Taking on the role of watchdog of people in power means we inevitably encounter pressure, and even threats. Journalists need a secure and safe space to pursue their mission to keep democracy safe. We hope to make our own small contribution.

● Chie Matsumoto is a journalist and an adjunct media instructor in the Faculty of Law at Hosei University

OBITUARY

FLIGHT OF THE BIRDMAN



Peter Hazelhurst, the birdman, sports his homemade canvas wings, 1958

COURTESY OF RICHARD VARNER

REMEMBERING PETER HAZELHURST, AN IRREPRESSIBLE REPORTER WHOSE ADVENTURES TOOK HIM FROM APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA TO THE FALL OF SAIGON

RICHARD VARNER

“They took off the blindfold. Sitting in front of me was Nelson Mandela, the most wanted man in South Africa.” - Peter Hazelhurst, writing in *The Sunday Express*, May 14, 1961, about Mandela’s last interview before his release from prison in 1990.

Peter Hazelhurst skirted the edge to protect Nelson Mandela from the South African Gestapo, shrewdly inserting the blindfold ruse into the lede of his story. After the piece ran, Peter was hauled in and squeezed by the iniquitous Colonel A.T. Spengler,

of the police’s Special Branch, the notorious unit that harassed anti-apartheid groups with tactics from spying to torture and assassination. Spengler wanted to know where Peter had found Mandela. The pressure was intense because The Special Branch had a history of doing away with people who’d rankled them - such as Mandela and Hazelhurst. The young journalist, still in his twenties, didn’t crack.

Peter once said to me with his devil’s grin: “I told the bastard Spengler to read my story ... I’d been blindfolded.” Spengler was infuriated, knowing in his gut the blindfold was a dodge to cover Mandela’s tracks, but in the end, he was ordered to let

FLIGHT OF THE BIRDMAN

the cheeky pressman go, albeit very reluctantly and only after hours of brutal questioning. The South African regime was evil, but not stupid. Peter's Mandela story was already out there, so if the South African reporter, with his English ancestors, abruptly disappeared inside the Special Branch, the international hulla-baloo would have only fed the Mandela legend.

Back then the threat of black revenge haunted white South Africans like Spengler, and the thought of paying for apartheid's sins with their blood scared the bejesus out them. In 1961, Mandela granted this interview to allay such fears, telling Peter he promised "a new non-racial constitution to bring about a new non-racial and democratic South African society".

On February 11, 1990, some three decades later in Cape Town, Mandela repeated his assurance after his release from prison. "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities," he said.

Listening to this speech all those decades later, Hazelhurst was stunned by how Mandela had left prison with his non-racial message unchanged. Mandela's biography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, describes his 27 years of incarceration -the many days he spent perched on a rock pile making little ones out of big ones, all the time prevented from seeing his children. I spoke with Peter in December 2020 back in his beloved South Africa, not long before he died of Covid-19. His last words were of how inspired he still was by Mandela leaving prison untarnished by hate, ready to hone his ideal of non-racism into a weapon to kill apartheid. Peter died, however, believing that much had been left undone.

It's easy to kill an enemy in the mountains but hard to kill the one in the heart.

Chinese General Wang Yangming (1472-1529)

In the late 1950s, Peter broke into journalism in the most unlikely of ways. He started out as a birdman, a rare species of skydiver who jumped out of airplanes without a parachute. Instead, they used canvas wings, and Peter's were homemade, double stitched by his aunt to prevent them from coming apart at the seams. Peter did fudge it with an emergency chute pack, which is no doubt why he was one of the rare surviving former birdmen. His daredevil antics caught the attention of the press, and Peter was interviewed by a reporter who would later recruit him as an apprentice pressman, as they call reporters there. Churning out stories for *The Sunday Express*, Peter was befriended by people such as anti-apartheid activist Ruth First, who was later assassinated by a letter bomb made by the Special Branch, according to Peter's sources. Ruth had recommended Peter to Ahmed Kathrada, Mandela's prison mate, who in 1961 showed up at Peter's office in search of a trustworthy pressman with the guts to risk interviewing Mandela.

HIDE-OUT INTERVIEW WITH WANTED MAN

Native leader says: "Violence is out"

MAN UNDER COVER

By Peter Hazelhurst

THEY took the blind-fold off, sitting in front of me was Nelson Mandela, the most wanted man in South Africa.

The underground leader of the National Action Council, the guiding spirit behind the May 31 demonstrations, sat at his desk in his secret headquarters and gave his first interview to a White reporter since he went into hiding two weeks ago to avoid arrest before May 31.

During the 15-minute interview, Mr. Mandela declined to say: "The demonstrations are not aimed at Whites - English or Afrikaans-speaking - but directly at the Nationalist Government and the Republic."

Mr. Mandela said he had given that no violence is to be used in the demonstrations.

This is only the first in a series of complete, planned over several years to end the

Nationalist Government.

To prove that the demonstrations are not anti-White, Mr. Mandela showed me the original plans and drawings for the demonstrations. These showed that the Council also called on anti-Republician Europeans to show their disapproval of the Republic.

Mr. Mandela mentioned a "starting" statement to be issued about May 27, which would "boycott the Government" and "White South Africa" and that the demonstrations are intended to be peaceful and non-violent.

At street corner

I stood waiting on a lonely street corner last night after receiving an anonymous telephone call. A large car pulled up and I saw a man in a dark suit. "If you want to meet Mandela, get in the car."

When we drove off, I was told to sit on the floor and a blind-fold was put over my eyes. . . We drove around for half-an-hour until I was told. Then the car stopped and I was helped out and hurried through a door.

The blind-fold was removed and Mr. Mandela rose from his desk to greet me. Wearing a black polo-neck jersey and khaki slacks, the new leader of Black South Africa told me he was prepared to answer White South Africa's uncertainty about the forthcoming demonstrations.

Assurances

The underground headquarters seemed to be in a small house. The room where Mr. Mandela had his desk was separated from the rest of the house by curtains.

With him were two other gentlemen who were not introduced. Mr. Mandela, 65-year-old attorney, sat back and gave assurances about the forthcoming demonstrations.

"White South Africa has nothing to fear from our side," he said. "The main purpose of the three-day demonstration is to express to the Nationalist Government our disapproval of a minority of the people of South Africa."

"We would welcome the cooperation of any group of people to cooperate with us against the Republic. We think the Republic will remain further racial suppression and more exploitation of non-Whites by the Nationalist Government."

Only the first

"When the National Action Council was started at Pretoria, it decided to plan a campaign of action to end the Nationalist Government. The May demonstrations are the first in a series of campaigns."

Mr. Mandela could not give details of subsequent campaigns. But he returned: "We certainly will not start any violence. That would play right into the Government's hands."

I asked him what the National Action Council was aiming at. His reply: "A national convention of all groups of the country which would form a new non-racial constitution to bring about a new non-racial and democratic South African society."

A knock at the door interrupted the interview. Mr. Mandela did behind the curtain. The door was opened and an Indian came in.

Mr. Mandela whispered a few words to him and told me: "I'm sorry but you will have to go now. I have some urgent business to attend to."

I was blind-folded again and led out to the car. Again the driving and zig-zagging, until I was dropped in the centre of Johannesburg at the same street corner.

Mr. Mandela, who presided at a "starting" statement on May 31.



Hazelhurst's report on his interview with Nelson Mandela in *The Sunday Express*, May 14, 1961



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RICHARD VARNER

Hazelhurst and Amed Kathrada, half a century after Kathrada introduced him to Mandela

Peter is remembered for this Mandela interview, but his reporting in 1966 of the Rhodesian embargo finally sent him over the border, fleeing his beloved South Africa as *persona non grata* - a fortuitous break that led eventually to his internationally renowned byline. Clearly, he'd caught the South African government with its breeches down. He'd been stringing for papers in the UK, where Prime Minister Harold Wilson had been reluctant to invade Rhodesia to overturn white rule and opted instead to support an embargo purportedly to force out Ian Smith. Peter suspected the embargo was a charade, and Rhodesia did last another 13 years. The country's survival was due in no small part to South Africans who were eager to prop up whites in Rhodesia, and Peter had picked up a report of Afrikaners sending convoys of oil-laden trucks over the border at night to break the embargo.

FLIGHT OF THE BIRDMAN



COURTESY OF RICHARD VARNER

Hazelhurst, then almost 70, on his last birdman jump

Peter and his wife, Jo, drove up north toward the Limpopo River, which divided the two countries, for a whiff of what was happening and saw black clouds of diesel exhaust layering the sunset from hundreds of tanker lorries revving their motors in the brown fields as they waited for darkness to descend so they could steal across into Rhodesia. Peter left Jo in the car to take a quick look around, but she soon found herself encircled by blue-eyed Boers. She artfully launched into a tirade about how her husband had left to buy farmland but had got lost, “[It’s] unfortunate for us ... but, pray, what business is this of yours?” she asked in a daunting voice that could scare hell out of the devil. And so, the formidable Jo Hazelhurst sent those Afrikaner security-men, likely from the Special Branch, on their way with their ears stinging. According to Peter’s account, her indomitable spirit saved their lives, for the embargo breakers could have murdered them in cold blood and would have done so with impunity had they realized what her husband was doing.

In 1967, Peter and Jo, now stateless, landed in London, where William Rees-Mogg was editor at *The Times*. Peter’s Mandela interview and exposé of the so-called Rhodesian oil embargo were his credentials. During his job interview at *The Times*, the conservative Rees-Mogg spoke but a few pithy sentences. “Peter, hullo. Good finally to meet you. I’m shipping you out as our Asia Correspondent. Before you leave, do spend some time in our library and look over the clips,” he said.

Rees-Mogg had sent Peter out to report on half the world’s people. “That’s what it was like to have worked at the old Times of London ... you went where the story took you and not to follow anybody’s agenda,” Peter once told me. He reported for *The Times* for 15 years, covering everything from wars to high tech robots, and visiting every country in Asia except Laos and North Korea, only to get canned by Rupert Murdoch. He moved on to the *Straits Times* of Singapore and after seven years there, suffered the same fate, only this time at the hands of Lee Kuan Yew.

The Hazelhurst anecdotes are legion – from the hilarious to the perilous. In 1969, he’d been assigned to write about the wedding of the crown prince of Nepal, but the king had left instructions at the gate that no one with a foreign press ID was to be admitted to the sacred ceremony. Peter pocketed his press card, and instead flashed at the baffled guards the back of a box of Chiclets chewing gum as his “ID”. He was the only foreign reporter to get access.

On April 27, 1975, three days before the fall of Saigon, Peter and Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer, Michel Laurent, were in Xuan Loc, Vietnam, when incoming mortar shells started to burst near them. First in front of them, then behind, and then a third in front of them, only closer this time – a lethal exercise Peter recognized as bracketing. He hissed at Michel: “We need to get out of here.” The French photographer winced, but his eye remained stuck to his camera viewfinder. Peter took the now angry Laurent by the elbow, dragging him away, just before a fourth shell exploded where they’d just been standing. The next day, Laurent wanted to go back to the scene with Peter, who said no. “If we go back, we die,” he said. That day – April 28, 1975 – Michel Laurent did go back to Xuan Loc, where he became the last foreign journalist to die in the Vietnam War.

Peter lived to report the fall of Saigon ... and then for another 46 years. He accomplished much, winning the UK’s International Reporter of the Year award (Britain’s answer to the Pulitzer) in 1971 for his stories on the Bangladesh Liberation War. Peter was beloved by many, but hated by some: South Africa’s Special Branch, despots and media magnates. But he once told me how he was singularly proud to have had the honor of researching and designing the plaque hanging in the FCCJ that bears the names of his colleagues – fellow foreign journalists like Michel Laurent who had died in Indochina.

About 15 years ago, when Peter was pushing 70, and nursing a back already bowed from his birdman injuries, he got the urge to skydive just one more time and asked the local jump club in Johannesburg to take him up in a plane. Given Peter’s legendary status in South Africa as the last surviving birdman, the club reluctantly found a way to comply. Peter thought the jump had gone so well that he wanted to do it a second time. At that point, we knew that the only way we could stop him was to threaten to tell Jo.

Peter spent his latter days using a wheelchair due to back injuries dating to the 1950s. “The wheelchair is super-charged, and, of course, I always wear a crash helmet so I can tear around the retirement village,” he joked.

There was only one Peter Hazelhurst: birdman, pressman ... and friend.

Cheers, Old Son.

● Richard Varner is a retired television journalist. He served on the FCCJ board of directors in 1987 and is the author of *The Journalist’s Children*, a novel about life at FCCJ 30 years ago.

OBITUARY

PETER HAZELHURST

AS I KNEW HIM



Peter Hazelhurst interviewed at home in Johannesburg by Fuji TV, 7th December 2012

PETER MCGILL

The FCCJ in the early 1980s could be slightly intimidating to a young journalist. Deference to elders was expected, and often the wisest course was to keep a respectful distance.

Turn the corner into the main bar on the 20th floor of the Yurakucho Denki Building and you would often pass three old men playing liar dice. The American invariably smoking a cigar had been in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. The diminutive Frenchman would occasionally display a tattoo on his forearm from Auschwitz. The gent in white hair who spoke German-inflected English and perfect Japanese was deceptively shabby; his father had studied music under Gustav Mahler and was a brother-in-law of Thomas Mann. It would take years to gain the confidence of some of these old timers.

Peter Hazelhurst was utterly different. To start with, he was rarely still, but paced the FCCJ floors like a hungry fox. When he paused prowling, it was to pick up a toothpick, or steal a French fry, and he would sit with hands clasped on a chair rest, ready to spring to his feet. I wondered if he missed smoking cigarettes.

New FCCJ members would soon make Peter's acquaintance and find themselves listening to his daring escapades and scoops. (The only instance where Peter may have been a tad elastic with the verité was his entry into journalism. Did he really parachute, almost literally, into a newsroom? His brother David, to whom he bore an uncanny resemblance, became a newspaper hound in South Africa in the late 1950s and was also lauded as a press legend on his death in 2015.)

PETER HAZELHURST AS I KNEW HIM

► Peter Hazelhurst with Emiko McGill and Ayaka, FCCJ, 13th November 1988



Peter was possessed of a ready and disarming charm. There was warmth and openness, and genuine interest in and care for others. This combined with boyish enthusiasms, and a puckishness that showed in an impish grin and twinkling eyes.

The closer you were to Peter the more likely you were to fall prey to his pranks. Robert Whyment, who tragically died in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, was a good friend as well as sparring partner. Whyment wrote for the *Guardian* while Peter was with *The Times*. On one occasion, they both agreed on a tactical truce. Neither would file that night. Peter kept his word, but pretended to have broken it, forging a head office ‘herogram’ congratulating him on an outstanding scoop. He ensured Whyment read it the following morning. Whyment’s fury at the “betrayal” was one of Peter’s favourite anecdotes.

Peter also had a keen eye for absurdity. In the bowels of the old FCCJ Library, he told everyone of a gigantic tome called *India at a Glance*.

By the time I knew Peter, he was relaxing into his work as Tokyo correspondent for the *Straits Times*. Fortunately, or not, the demands made by the *Straits Times* on its Tokyo correspondent were far from onerous, and were easily met by Peter, who worked out of the FCCJ with invaluable Japanese language assistance from Koichi Ishiyama.

This left plenty of time for Peter to pursue personal interests. Chief among them was the new world of Japanese video discs. The FCCJ

video room on the 18th floor became Peter’s man cave to which we were all invited. Few of us managed to resist his film suggestions.

Peter could be very persuasive, and in another life, would have made a first-rate salesman. It was thanks to Peter’s energetic promotion of a new Brother electric typewriter-cum-mini-word processor that Whyment, Georges Baumgartner and I each bought one - and soon regretted it!

When I was still 24, I asked Peter for advice on an exotic holiday destination. Peter urged me to take Emiko, my future wife, to the “tropical paradise” of Sri Lanka.

We duly arrived in Colombo in July 1983, blissfully unaware that 16 years of civil war was about to erupt. From the swimming pool of the Galle Face Hotel, we progressed by car into the interior, touring tea plantations, staying in the colonial Hill Club, visiting the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy. It was while we were being chauffeured around botanical gardens that news came through on the radio of Sinhalese massacres of Tamils. It was not long before we heard gunshots, saw smoke rising from buildings and bodies floating in a lake. Twenty-four hour curfews were imposed during “Black July” and we were only able to reach the pristine beaches of Trincomalee by giving a free ride to a chief of police. We shared a compartment of the first train to Colombo with armed soldiers. At a Tamil refugee camp, soldiers pointed their rifles at me. Thankfully, their officer used to read *The Observer* while training at Sandhurst and was pleased to meet one of the paper’s correspondents. There was strict censorship, but from our room at the Galle Face, I managed to phone through a story which made the front page of *The Observer*. David Lammers, then with the Associated Press in Tokyo, asked me to smuggle some rolls of AP film back to Japan.

Our daughter Ayaka was born in 1988. Twenty-five years later, she was working for Fuji Television in London when Nelson Mandela died. Ayaka was sent to South Africa for coverage of the funeral. She learnt how Peter had secretly interviewed Mandela as a most wanted man and later testified at his trial. Ayaka arranged to meet Peter at his Johannesburg home and Fuji broadcast her interview.

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● Peter McGill was president of the FCCJ from 1990-91

BOOK BREAK

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS



FRESH FROM WINNING THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD, MIRI YU EXPLAINS WHY HER KOREAN BACKGROUND IS CRITICAL TO HER WRITING

SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI

The award-winning author Miri Yu is committed to shining a light on the lives of marginalized communities. Yu, who was born in Japan but has South Korean nationality, has won plaudits for her sensitive portrayals of their struggles and dreams. Her latest book, *Tokyo Ueno Station*, won the 2020 National Book Award for translated literature, for the English translation by Morgan Giles.

During a recent Book Break at the FCCJ, Yu said her writing was a vehicle for people whose voices are rarely heard. “The core focus in my

writing is to listen carefully to the stories of people who are treated as if they are no longer human in our society. I document their lives to tell the truth,” she said.

In *Tokyo Ueno Station*, the spirit of the dead protagonist, Kazu, who was born in 1960, the same year as the current emperor, Naruhito, relates a story of sadness and vulnerability, incorporating themes of a migrant laborer from northeastern Japan and his work on Olympic construction sites in Tokyo, as well as the March 2011 triple disaster.

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS

“My particular experience as a Korean in Japan inspires my creativity”



Kazu lives in one of the so-called ‘tent cities’ in Ueno park, foraging for food and visiting soup kitchens. Arriving from depressed cities, Japan’s homeless are mostly elderly, male blue-collar workers who provide cheap labour to sustain the city’s many construction projects. They eke out a living, and block out their pain with alcohol, all the time setting money aside to support their families back home.

Yu’s characters live, isolated and ignored, in the park, which is known for its chrysanthemums and cherry blossoms. The stark contrast between the majesty of the flowers and the lives of the park dwellers shatters the commonly held image of modern Japan as an affluent society, its people cocooned in gleaming cities. Japanese society, says Yu, hides things it would rather others didn’t see. In that way, her writing forces us to reckon with our own place in a complacent society.

Yu is exploring a similar message in a book she is currently writing. Titled *JR Jobansen Yunomori Eki*, it will focus on the lives of workers currently braving the risk of radiation as they help decommission Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, which was wrecked by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Yu approaches her writing meticulously, spending days interviewing the men from her home in the Odaka district of Minamisoma, a

city located near the nuclear plant, where runs a bookstore called Full House and a theater space called LaMaMa ODAKA.

Her background makes her forensic examination of Japan’s underbelly all the more convincing. She is the eldest of four children born into a poor Korean household whose mother fled during the 1950-53 Korean War and later worked as cabaret artist in Japan. Her father repaired machines in a pachinko parlor, a sector of the gambling industry managed mostly by ethnic Koreans deprived of other opportunities to progress in their adopted country.

Yu’s parents struggled to provide for their children, and their marriage ended in divorce. Confronted by an abusive father and bullying at school, Yu graduated from middle school and spent time wandering around in search of a new beginning, a journey interrupted several times by thoughts of killing herself. The discovery, with the help of Japanese artists, of her artistic talents helped her emerge from that tunnel.

“My particular experience as a Korean in Japan inspires my creativity,” Yu said. “My contribution to Japanese literature is where I have found a place as a writer, added Yu, who won the prestigious Akutagawa award in 1996 for her novel *Family Cinema*.

Yu spoke of her love of hiking in the Japanese Alps and the close relationship she has developed with her neighbours in Odaka, who call her “Miri-san”. Her bookstore and theater space are incredibly popular, and she hosts a local radio show that recently interviewed more than 600 disaster survivors.

She is among several members of the ethnic Korean *zainichi* community who have turned to writing.

During and immediately after Japan’s 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean peninsula, many Korean authors wrote about identity and belonging in works published in Japanese.

Research has also uncovered how the Chinese and Korean languages influenced early Japanese literature. *Man’yōshū*, a collection of eighth century poetry, includes Korean works.

That continuous assimilation between two close geographical neighbours has created a rich seam of Korean literary creativity in Japan. Yu’s success is yet another landmark in that process.

● Suvendrini Kakuchi is Tokyo correspondent for *University World News* in the UK.

FCCJ SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The FCCJ is delighted to announce the winners of this year's Swadesh DeRoy Memorial Scholarship awards

Pen

Winner:

Kaori Kohyama, Waseda University

Runner-up:

Shoko Naito, University of the Sacred Heart

Video

Winner:

Momoko Hatakeyama, Chuo Univeristy

Runner-up:

Himari Semans, Waseda University

Photography

Winner:

Maria Elizabeth Thomas, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University



FCCJ SCHOLARSHIP PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER

JAPAN'S CHANGING WORKFORCE AND GENDER ROLES

MARIA ELIZABETH THOMAS, A STUDENT AT RITSUMEIKAN ASIA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY, ON THE IMAGES THAT SECURED HER THE PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE IN THIS YEAR'S SWADESH DEROY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



The resident drag queen of Beppu, puts some finishing touches to her makeup

I live and study in the town of Beppu in Oita prefecture. Beppu is known for its hot springs and for its cultural diversity - due in part to the booming student population at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. There is a wonder and a mystery in the way that the students and local inhabitants coexist. Japanese culture is steeped in conservative ideals of heteronormative gender roles and modesty, but my photography reflects the changing landscape of gender roles in Beppu. Our generation is radically challenging the ideas of binary roles in society. My photographs reflect the power of the female body in expressing sexuality, men embracing makeup and the breakdown of gendered fashion. The future of gender as we know it is fluid and limitless, and my hope is that my photos express that and show others that even in a tiny town like Beppu, change is on the horizon.

I intend to invest my prize money in professional camera equipment (the photos I submitted were all taken on a friend's camera). I also plan to travel around Japan, meet people and capture the daily lives of marginalized sections of society.

JAPAN'S CHANGING WORKFORCE AND GENDER ROLES



Top: My Friend "Onion" eats sushi in front of a convenience store

Bottom left: Rossi, a cisgender male from the US who danced professionally for the Houston Ballet before coming to Oita to teach English. I photographed him in front of this tree on a rainy day, and was taken by the juxtaposition of the tree against his form. He still dances on the weekends and hopes to get back to it full-time soon

Bottom right: Andi - a dear friend of mine - a cisgender male from Indonesia poses in the alleyways of Kitahama in a tube top that he said is "the fiercest piece of clothing" he owns.



CLUB NEWS

New members

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER****TOMEO ROBERT D. GRESSARD**

“Tomeo” was born in France of a Caribbean mother and a Polish-German father, and so was introduced to cultural diversity at a young age. He relocated to the US at age 13 to complete his

studies in Chicago. With a mixed background in art (music) and international diplomacy and public relations, he spent time in New York around recording celebrities working with Keith Diamond’s production company. Tomeo was later introduced to Japan and started making trips to Asia, completing several successful consulting and concept architecture projects and business establishments. Eighteen years ago, on the birth of his second child, he set up a public relations organization to improve Japan’s global communications and corporate governance. The resulting Marine Foundation was launched in Tokyo in March 2013. The foundation is now registered on five continents, where it helps develop regional economies. Tomeo believes that the path to happiness is to serve others for the betterment of society.

**REGULAR MEMBER****RENÉ SLAMA**

has been appointed as AFP’s Tokyo bureau Chief. An experienced international journalist with AFP for more than 35 years, he was previously posted in Dubai, Bangkok, New Delhi, Islamabad, New York, London

and Paris. Altogether, he has spent almost a third of his career in Asia. He was the AFP Bureau Chief for Pakistan and Afghanistan (1989-1992), for South Asia (2000-2004) and for South-East Asia (2005-2009). He also headed the AFP Dubai bureau, covering the Gulf and Yemen, between 2014 and 2019. Earlier, René Slama was an AFP correspondent at the United Nations in New York (1993-1997) and in London (1984-1986) during the Thatcher years. As a political reporter in Paris (1987-1988), he covered presidential and legislative elections during the Mitterrand era. Besides journalistic activities, René Slama has carried out several missions for AFP’s management (1998-1999 and 2010-2013) to develop new information services on the internet. Recently, in 2020, he took part in a process to reform the AFP-Paris newsroom. Slama is a graduate of the Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme (ESJ) of Lille in France. He is married and has three children.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

KOICHIRO NISHIHARA is a physician who worked in hospitals until 10 years ago, but now conducts traveling medical examinations. His work has taken him to the scenes of natural disasters and incidents throughout the country,

particularly in Kagoshima prefecture and Fukuoka prefecture. He would be delighted to discuss his work with members of the FCCJ.

**PROFESSIONAL JOURNALIST****ASSOCIATE MEMBER****HIROKO INOKUMA**

Freelance

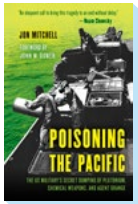
**ASSOCIATE MEMBER****NOBUO WAZAKI**

Phillip Securities Japan

CLUB NEWS

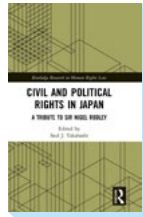
New in the library

1



Poisoning the Pacific: The US Military's Secret Dumping of Plutonium, Chemical Weapons, and Agent Orange
Jon Mitchell
Rowan & Littlefield

2



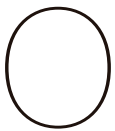
Civil and Political Rights in Japan: A Tribute to Sir Nigel Rodley
Saul J. Takahashi (ed.)
Routledge
Gift from Lawrence Repeta

3



Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy
Stephen Wertheim
The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Join the Film Committee



On Tuesday, April 20 at 7 pm for a sneak preview screening of *Along the Sea*,

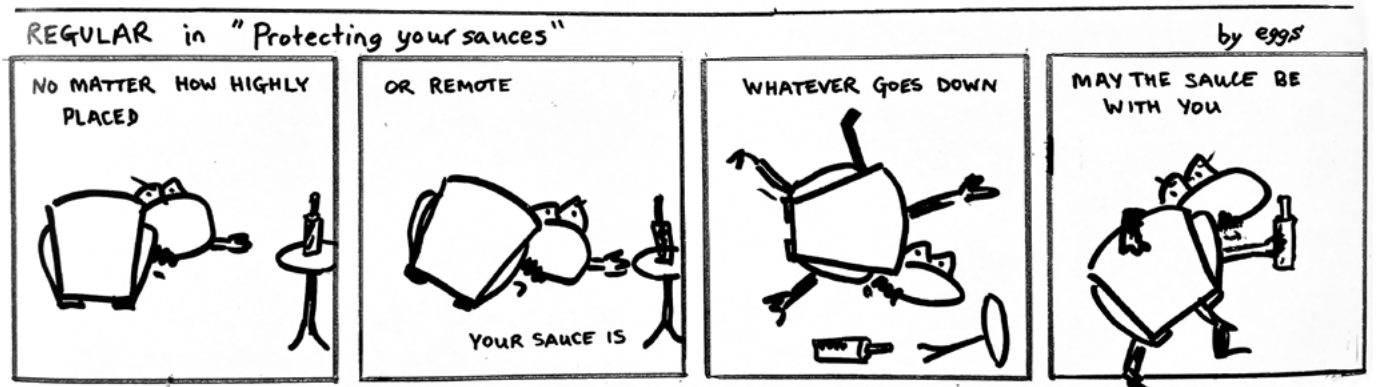
the timely new docufiction from director Akio Fujimoto, who brought his award-winning Japan-Cambodia coproduction *Passage of Life* to FCCJ in 2017. His sophomore feature illuminates the plight of Vietnamese technical trainees in Japan, providing rare access into lives and struggles that are gravely underrepresented on the big screen, even as immigrant numbers increase. *Along*



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the Sea takes another torn-from-the-headlines subject, focusing his compassionate lens on three young Vietnamese women who feel compelled to flee from their exploitative employer, although it means losing their legal status. They begin new work in snowy Aomori and their living conditions improve ... until one day, an urgent hospital visit is needed. With no ID, no care can be provided, and this leads the young women to make a dangerous decision. Fujimoto and producer Kazutaka Watanabe will be joining us for the Q&A session. (*Along the Sea*, Japan/Vietnam, 2020, 88 minutes, in Japanese and Vietnamese with English and Japanese subtitles).

● Karen Severns



EXHIBITION

SOLILOQUY OF THE FULL MOON

ARTWORK BY KŌZŌ CHIBA
APRIL 5 TO MAY 7, 2021

At a time when it is difficult to ignore our concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, I am grateful to the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan for the opportunity to hold this exhibition. I recently held a virtual gallery on the Internet, an experiment that could be considered a success in regards to its health and safety measures. However, I cannot help but feel that the focus was more on the dissemination of data than the viewing of art. As an artist, I am excited at the thought of holding this exhibition in a real space, allowing people time to experience the warmth of the work as they travel through the world created in my pictures and enjoy the absurd worldview presented there. I would like to take this moment to offer my heartfelt gratitude to Bruce Osborn and his wife, Yoshiko, for making this exhibition possible, to Koike Keiko of KEPT, my father and mother for their unflagging support, and all my friends for their help.

Kōzō Chiba:

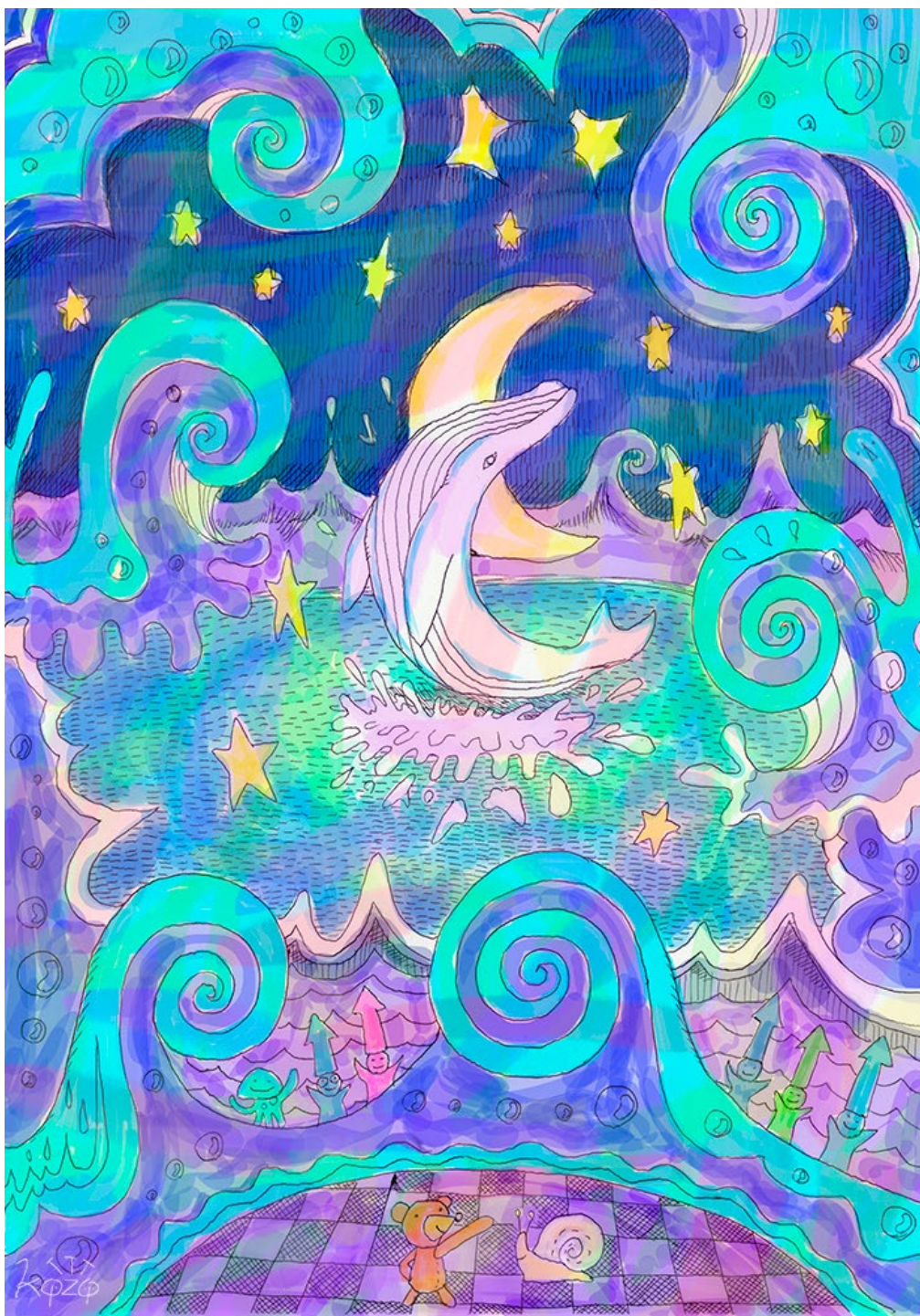
Born: November 14, 1971, the second son of the *manga* artist, Chiba Tetsuya. Studied art in Yōichirō Kawaguchi's laboratory in the computer graphics department of the Japan Electronics College. After graduation, he worked as a CG animator for Recruit Eizō Active as a VJ (visual jockey) working in collaboration with musicians and other artists in Japan, China and UK. He formed the music visual unit band Futon Logic. Among its members was photographer Bruce Osborn, who led the visual section. Performances included a concert at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. In 2011, Chiba participated in the charity event, 3/11 Charity, planned by the T-make unit comprising Naomi Masuko and the illustrator Keiko Koike. In the same year, he established the illustrator unit KEPT with Koike. Website: <http://kept.tokyo/gallery>





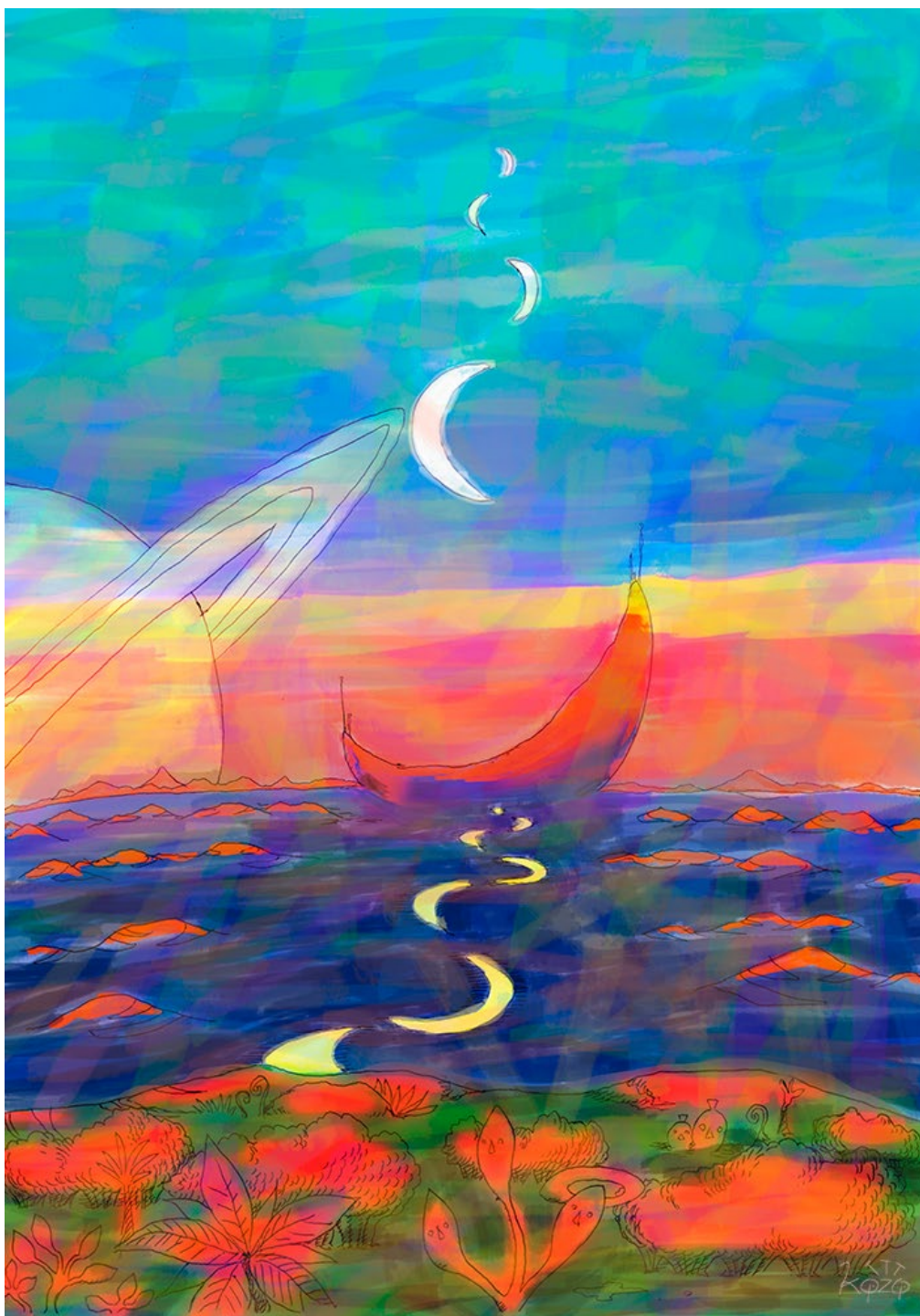
Soliloquy of the Full Moon

Di-dah, di-dah-dah, pee



White Whale

A white whale appears amid the great, cobalt blue waves.



Moon Moon River

A bright red sunrise, the flowing moon river and soaring moon tower, stretching up into the distant sky.

EXHIBITION

Soliloquy of the Full Moon - Artwork by Kozo Chiba: April 5 to May 7, 2021



Temple on the Move

Riding on the back of giant yellow cat, the temple wants to get moving so they won't sink into the ground



The Jellyfish Tale

I want to hear the story of the great jellyfish, it can be the same story, I can listen to it any number of times...



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