

The magazine of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan



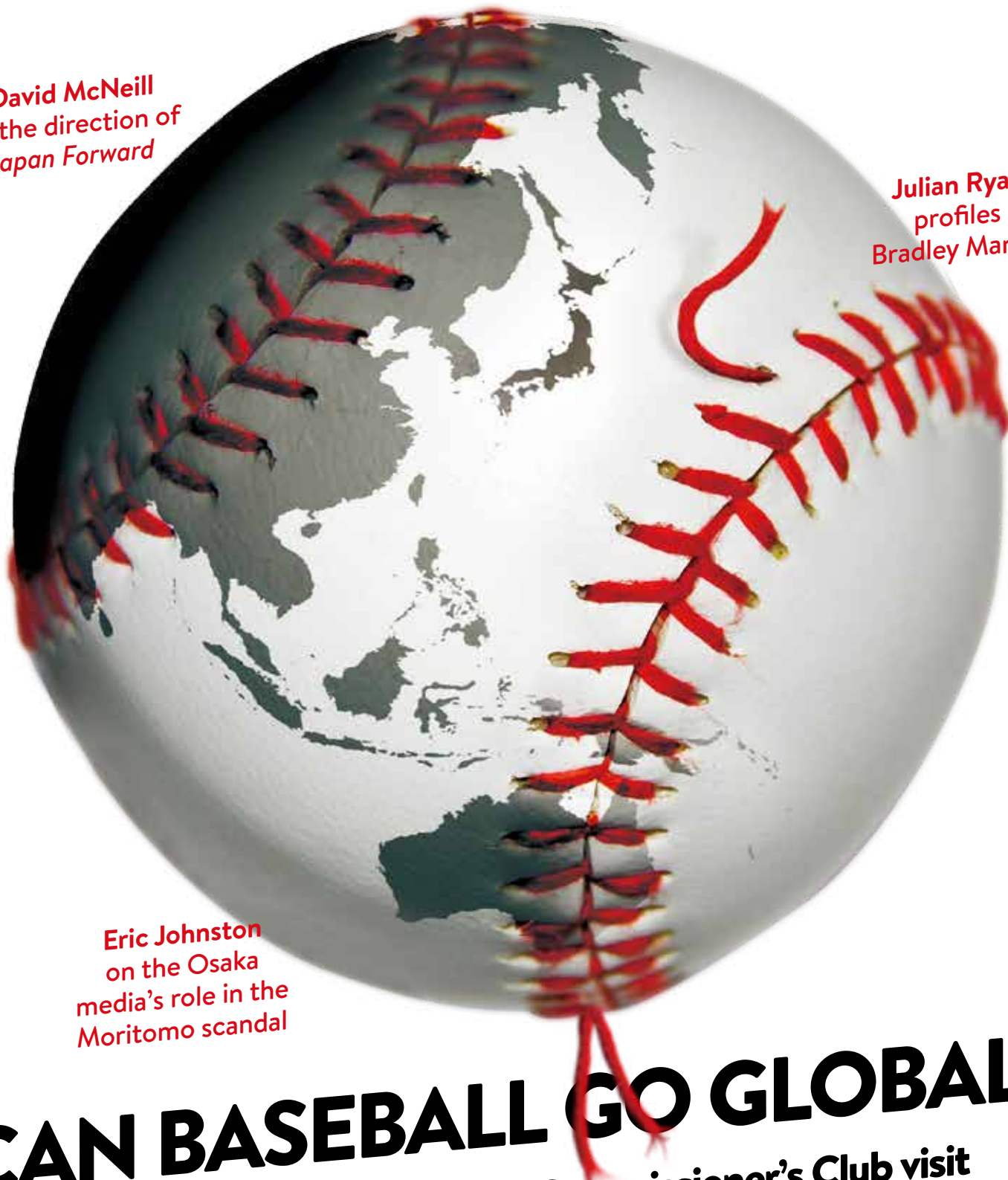
NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN



April 2017 Volume 49 No. 4, ¥400

David McNeill
on the direction of
Japan Forward

Julian Ryall
profiles
Bradley Martin

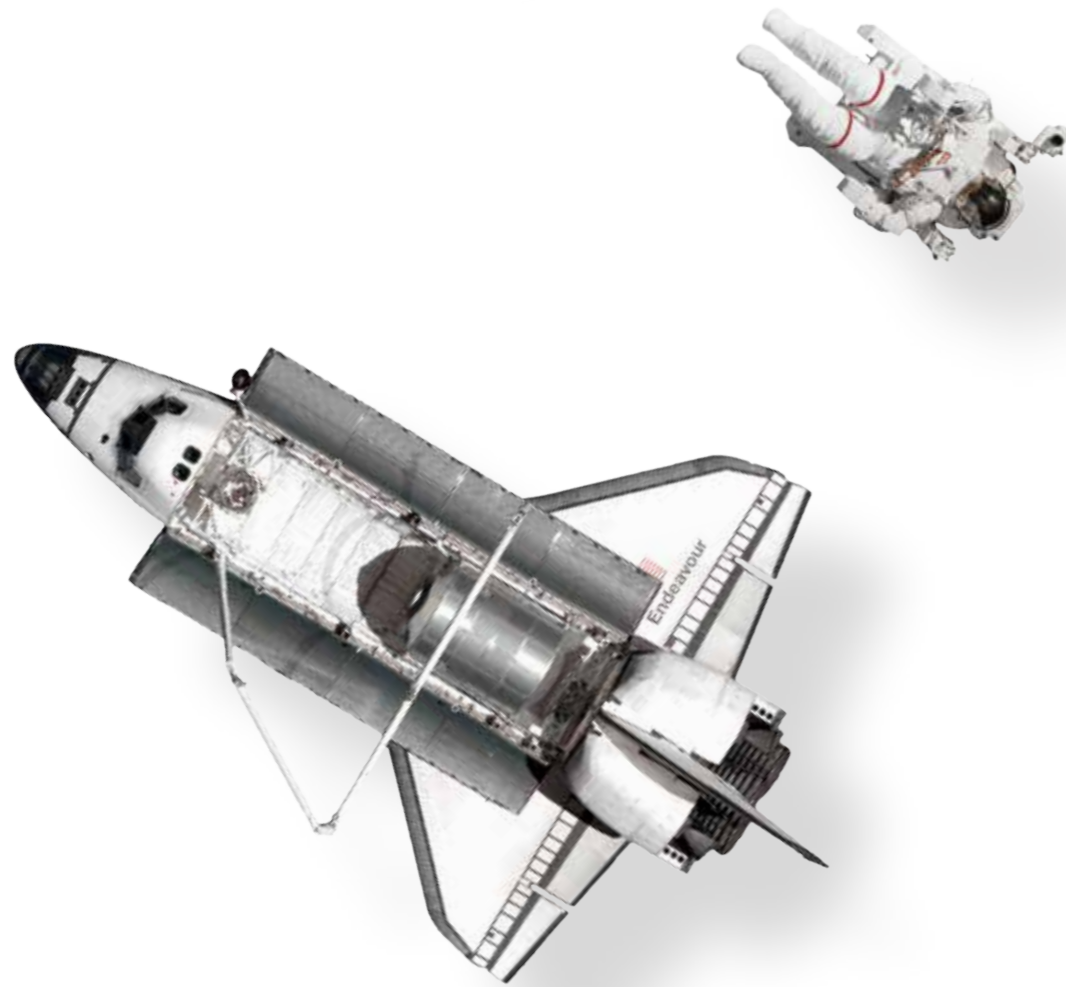


Eric Johnston
on the Osaka
media's role in the
Moritomo scandal

CAN BASEBALL GO GLOBAL?

Robert Whiting on the MLB Commissioner's Club visit

+ Jason Coskrey on covering sports in Japan



> THEME.11
> INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

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Moritomo Gakuen
head, Yasunori Kagoike

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Cover illustration: Andrew Potheary



From the President

TRYING TO GET A quorum at our March general membership meeting, FCCJ's annual budget meeting, should be a wakeup call for members. Had we not gotten a quorum – and we only made the bare minimum by less than 10 attendees – we would have had to introduce “emergency” measures to pay our bills from April. When the Club was founded, emergency measures were meant for things like earthquakes.

We had quorum problems before the Club became a Koeki (public interest) Shadan Hojin, but nothing like those we have now.

Our new bylaws, which took effect three years ago when our koeki application was approved, are the source of the problem. FCCJ's tradition of openness and transparency, which we pride ourselves on as a press organization, has regularly been trampled upon by “interpretations” of the law which are not necessarily true.

We have been told, for instance, that Members need a “court order” to see BOD meeting minutes. Our bylaws give every Member (Associate, Professional Associate, Regular and Life) the right to see “Club records” including minutes. Yet when Members go to the office to see the minutes, they are shown Article 97 of the Shadan Hojin Law, which says they need to get a court order. In other words: start a lawsuit to see records that our bylaws permit members to see.

In fact, that is not how our sponsor, the Cabinet Office, or even the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the ultimate arbiter of legal matters, interprets Article 97. Recently, four Club members went to the Cabinet Office and confronted them with the problem. They told us that the law does not “prohibit” the Club from introducing our own rules, passing a bylaw, or giving members access to BOD and other records. They said the aforementioned court order refers to ordinary citizens who do not belong to the FCCJ.

On March 16, the Club lawyer spoke to the Ministry of Justice about this issue. The MOJ official said that Art. 97 is a mandatory clause but if the entity (the FCCJ) allows Members to inspect the minutes, that would not be prohibited by this Article.

In other words, we make our own internal rules in this particular case. We don't need a court order if the membership has approved a bylaw. Which we've done: On June 10, 2015, the membership voted overwhelmingly (100-40) to approve a bylaw which said that minutes, committee reports, member lists and other Club records are now available for all members to inspect during office hours.

But the bigger picture: This current system of having to check with our lawyers every time we have a disagreement is not tenable. And ultimately, we're talking about keeping secrets from the membership. Our Club never stood for that. And it wasn't the policy before our koeki application was approved.

Next, I believe we must address the quorum problem and, concurrently, our rules for electing officers. I plan to tackle both in time for the June general meeting.

Concerning FCCJ elections, we need to go back our old system of electing our officers directly. We were told that the law requires our BOD to elect our officers and that the membership can't directly elect them. I am told by experts, as with the minutes' issue, that we can create our own election rules and that BOD elections of officers applies to corporations, not to organizations like the FCCJ.

In this regard, I believe Associate Members on our BOD should not have the right to vote for officers of a correspondents' Club, namely for the FCCJ's president, first vice president and second vice president. While I respect the contributions of our Associate Members and I consider them an integral part of our Club – after all, they account for 90 percent of Club revenues – we need to draw the line clearly.

Indirect elections, by BOD members in a closed room, which I have written about before, have caused great instability at the BOD. Now there is no president who can assure anybody that he will stay in office for longer than one week. The current rules allow five BOD members at any time (theoretically) to call for an emergency BOD meeting and hold it with a week's notice and remove a president and appoint new one.

I also believe, but need to work out the details with the Associate Member Liaison Committee, that Associate Members should elect their own BOD members. It is said the Shadan Hojin Law opposes such a rule.

I and some BOD colleagues plan to propose a series of bylaws amendments in the next couple of weeks led by an expanded Compliance Committee that we can vote on at the June GMM to help govern ourselves better and move us back to our tradition of transparency. I am optimistic the age of “lost in translation” is coming to an end.

– **Khaldon Azhari**

COLLECTIONS

PAYING A PRICE: The global war against journalists

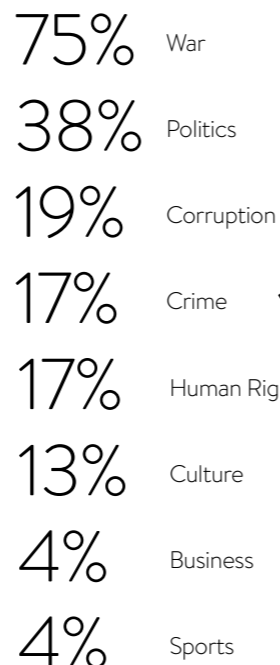
DEADLIEST COUNTRIES IN 2016



48
Total

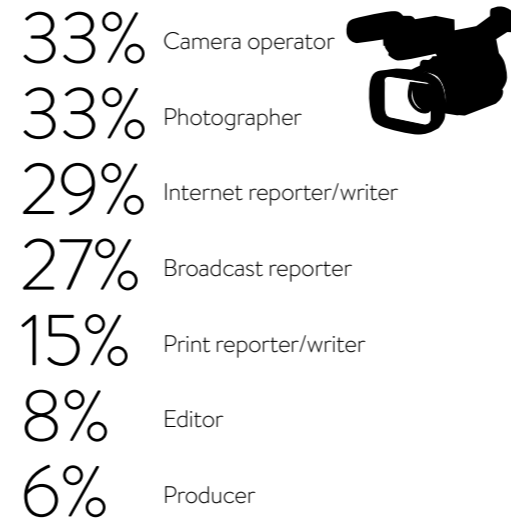
KILLED JOURNALISTS' BEAT

(more than one category applies in some cases)

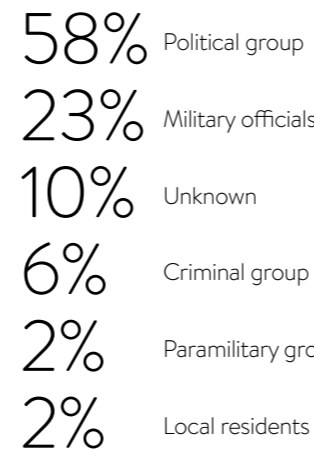


98% Male 2% Female

MURDERED JOURNALISTS' JOBS



SUSPECTED SOURCE OF FIRE



RESULT OF MURDER CASES OF PERPETRATORS

94% Complete impunity 6% Partial justice

70 Highest annual number of journalist deaths, 2007

1234 Journalists killed since 1992

Source: Committee to Protect Journalists

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE PIVOTAL AMBASSADOR

On Nov. 14, 1974, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin O. Reischauer shared with our members his views on a tumultuous year which had been highlighted by Prime Minister Tanaka's appearance at the Club a month earlier. Seated next to him is FCCJ President Max Desfor (AP). After reading Reischauer's 1960 treatise on Japan, President John F. Kennedy selected him as ambassador, a position he held for five years from 1961 to 1966. The Club was not only a venue for many Reischauer appearances, but even earlier, in 1956, was where he was introduced by James Michener to Haru Matsukata. Matsukata, the correspondent for the Saturday Evening Post, and grand-daughter of a Meiji-era prime minister, became his second wife.



Born in Tokyo on Oct. 15, 1910, the son of missionaries, Reischauer received his early education at The American School in Japan before going on to higher education in the U.S. He graduated from Oberlin and then Harvard, which led to a 40-year teaching career at the latter that centered on East Asian history and culture. He was author and co-author of many scholarly articles during his lifetime. With the advent of WWII, he pushed for participation by Japanese-Americans in the U.S. military and later called for a postwar plan for peace in Asia that would involve Japan. During the war, he also assisted the U.S. military as both a language instructor and translator of decoded Japanese military messages.

As the new ambassador, Reischauer and his wife were warmly received in 1961 by both the government elite and the population at large. His arrival coincided with Japan's transition from a poor country recovering from WWII into a major world economy that pulled it abreast of Britain by the end of his tenure in 1966. It was a pivotal time. Reischauer has been lauded for his contribution in ending the U.S. Occupation mentality and strengthening political ties between Washington and Tokyo. He supported Japan's rapid economic recovery, which he believed would create a strong middle class and make it a peace-loving democratic country. His critics, on the other hand, say that he failed to thwart Japan's excessive barriers to free trade, both tariff and non-tariff, that encouraged a trend toward mercantilism.

In 1964, Reischauer was stabbed in the thigh by a deranged Japanese youth and subsequently received blood transfusions at the nearby Toranomon hospital. Unfortunately, some of the blood was contaminated, resulting in hepatitis that would have a negative impact on his life over the next 26 years. He died of complications in September of 1990, one month before his 81st birthday.

– **Charles Pomeroy**

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

Baseball's struggle for global relevance

The U.S. game's top executive insists that last month's championship is meaningful, while dodging calls for a real "world" series.

by ROBERT WHITING

The FCCJ was recently graced by the presence of Major League Baseball (MLB) Commissioner Rob Manfred, who visited Japan on the occasion of the 4th World Baseball Classic, a tournament created by MLB to spur international interest in the game.

Manfred, a smooth, well-dressed Harvard Law School graduate in his late fifties, presides over the second most profitable sports league in the world. With 2016 a record year for industry revenues and overall business performance at nearly \$10 billion a year, the MLB trails only the National Football League at \$13 billion. In the global rankings, it is far ahead of the National Basketball Association, which takes in \$5.6 billion for the 3rd spot, and the UK's Premier League, which draws about \$4 billion a year in the 4th spot. The Japanese baseball league, Nippon Professional Baseball, is ranked 10th with revenue of \$1.3 billion dollars.

Manfred is the 10th commissioner in a long line of notable executives dating back to Judge Keensaw Landis, a man who rooted out gambling in baseball and banned several players for life for conspiring to fix the 1919 World Series, but also prolonged the segregation of organized baseball. Happy Chandler, a former U.S. Senator and governor of Kentucky, broke the color line, allowing Jackie Robinson to become the first black player for the Brooklyn Dodgers while Ford Frick, a former sports writer and National League PR executive, suspended baseball relations with Japan in 1965 in an argument over the rights to Japanese pitcher Masanori Murakami. Bowie Kuhn ushered in World Series night games, while Bud Selig, former owner of the Milwaukee Brewers, monetized the game, increasing revenue six-fold through a program of taxpayer-funded stadiums, integrated media and merchandising rights, regional TV packages and digital platforms.

Manfred, a labor lawyer, has made collective bargaining his specialty since joining MLB in 1987. It is primarily because of his efforts that the league has gone for a quarter century without a strike or a lockout.

THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC

In a wide-ranging Q&A session, Manfred touched on a number of subjects, including U.S. media reports that suggested



the 2017 World Baseball Classic held last month might be the last one. "Nothing could be further from the truth," he said with some irritation. "The WBC is broadcast in 182 countries. It is a \$100 million event . . . that has been profitable from Day One and has really grown in terms of its revenue significance and its popularity around the world. The WBC is the premier international baseball event . . . because it allows the greatest baseball players in the world to compete against each other and allows them to have that competition with the extra honor of representing their country. So I really don't know where the report came from."

Manfred acknowledged, however, that the WBC popularity is greatest in Japan, followed by Taiwan and Korea – and not the U.S., where baseball was invented. Japan won the first two tournaments in 2006 and 2009, thanks to the participation of its MLB players, including Ichiro Suzuki, Daisuke Matsuzaka and Yu Darvish. The Dominican Republic won in 2013.

As a result, games in the aforementioned Asian countries draw top TV ratings. Sixty million fans in Japan tuned in for the 2006 WBC final to witness Japan's victory over Cuba in San Diego, while a Japan-Taiwan 2013 matchup was the most watched TV program in Taiwanese history. By contrast, WBC ratings in the U.S. were, in fact, so bad that ESPN, the country's top sports network, stopped televising the games. This may have something to do with the fact that the U.S. had yet to win a medal, much less make the finals, until this year, when they won the event. The games have only been shown on MLB

“Sixty million fans in Japan tuned in for the 2006 WBC final . . . By contrast, WBC ratings in the U.S. were so bad that ESPN stopped televising the games”

TV, primarily as filler, but that may change after the Americans' showing this year.

The problem, Manfred explained, has been that the WBC is always held in March, when most MLB players are just starting their spring training. Many players have been reluctant to commit to playing for the national team and risking injury before the start of the season. Players from Japan, South Korean and Taiwan, by contrast, start their training in January and are in top shape by the time the tourney starts.

So the value of the tournament for MLB, which controls WBC global rights, is as a tool aimed at the growing international market. And though WBC ratings were sky high in Puerto Rico, for example, baseball is still struggling to catch on in China and Brazil, where the growing middle classes are an MLB target.

The other international stage for baseball is the Olympics,

with baseball back on the schedule for the 2020 Tokyo games. Manfred said, however, that he did not think MLB would ever supply players from their top rosters to play in the games. "Having players away from their teams in mid-season would alter the competition," he said. "And I don't think owners would support any kind of break in our season other than the all-star game. Continuity is the key to our competition."

BASEBALL IMMIGRANTS

Manfred also talked about being invited to Trump Tower this January to meet with the U.S. president, who is a huge New York Yankees baseball fan, shortly before the presidential inauguration. Despite the immigration issues raised by Trump during the election campaign, he does not see anything that would have an effect on professional baseball's increasingly international roster,

be it in regard to Japanese players and their families living in the U.S. during the baseball season, or players and their families from Latin America – Mexico in particular. "We are getting our visas in exactly the same way that we have for many years," he said, "and I don't foresee any changes."

The Major League debut of Superstar Shohei Otani, of the 2016 Japan Champion Nippon Ham Fighters and MVP of the Pacific League last year, however, may be delayed, though it will have nothing to do with Trump. A new labor agreement is now in place, limiting the money payable to international free agents under 26 years old and with less than six years as a professional – a move designed to put them under the same limitations as active major leaguers who must put in six years with an MLB team before earning free agency. MLB teams now are not allowed to spend more than \$6 million per year total on international free agents.

What this means, said Manfred, is that Otani will not be able to go to the MLB until the end of the 2019 season if he wants to negotiate a big free-agent contract like the 7-year, \$155 million deal that Masahiro Tanaka inked with the New York Yankees in 2014.

If Otani wants to go earlier via the posting system that allows NPB teams to send players to the U.S. before free-agent eligibility for a special posting fee amounting to \$20 million, the most he could possibly get is that \$6 million a year. That's assuming that the team that signed him wanted to spend all of its allotted pool money for free agents on one player.

Asked if a special exception could be made for Otani, grandfathering him in under the old posting rules which did not have a salary cap, Manfred replied, "Before being elected MLB commissioner, I was a labor lawyer. And rule Number One in labor negotiations is that individually driven exceptions with a union get you into a lot of trouble. As appealing as Mr. Otani is to everyone, it's important when doing a collective bargaining agreement to keep your eyes on what the rule should be for all players and not get distracted by the appeal of any one person."

Manfred dismissed the idea of an MLB franchise in Tokyo or Osaka, or an MLB Asia Division with teams in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, citing the long travel distances and jet lag, before addressing the question of a "real World Series." This is a reference to the wish of Japanese baseball leaders to hold a series between the American and Japanese champions, with

the winners claiming the title of "world champions."

The idea dates back to the days of the V-9 Giants of Sadaharu Oh and Shigeo Nagashima and the special dream of Yomiuri owner Matsutaro Shoriki to have his team, the perennial Japan champions, take on the best of the U.S. teams. MLB teams – and quite often very good ones – have often visited Japan in the post-season to play good-will exhibition games on schedules determined in the pre-season and won a significant majority of their games. The winners of the Fall Classic, however, have never made the trip.

Past commissioners have rebuffed such suggestions by saying that the level of Japanese baseball was not quite up to MLB standards. "How can the Japanese compete when American players no longer usable in the major leagues were playing regularly in Japan?" said Commissioner Ford Frick back in 1965.

"The time is not yet right," said Commissioner Bowie Kuhn in 1981. He formed a committee to study the question and that committee was never heard from again. And in 2005, Commissioner Bud Selig rejected an offer of \$100,000,000 from Softbank and Fukuoka Hawks' owner Masayoshi Son to hold such a series. "That amount of money is nothing to us," Son was told by a spokesman for Selig.

Manfred's response to this question? "We already have a real World Series and it is played in the United States every October." ●

Follow the ball

Opposite, Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred at the Club; right, Japan's Sho Nakata in this year's World Baseball Classic in Japan

Robert Whiting is the author of *You Gotta Have Wa*, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat* and *The Meaning of Ichiro* but has since been cured of his addiction to baseball.

The sports beat

Covering sports in Japan is not much different than anywhere else, requiring knowledge of the games, a curious mind and a willingness to – sometimes – bend the rules.

by JASON COSKREY

Once almost knocked down Masahiro Tanaka on a flight of stairs.

It wasn't on purpose, of course. Balance was a tenuous proposition at Seibu Dome that day. I was walking in the midst of a pack of at least eight journalists all trying to speak with Tanaka after a game while maneuvering up the stairs heading out to the parking lot. The stairwell isn't narrow, but wouldn't be mistaken for wide either, especially not with a gaggle of people going up it all at once struggling to stay within hearing range. I slipped a little, catching myself before I ended up falling face first into the white No. 18 on the back of Tanaka's red Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles uniform and possibly injuring him and his golden arm.

That was in 2013. Tanaka, one of Japan's best pitchers, would finish that season 24–0, a Japan Series champion, the Pacific League MVP and owner of Guinness World Records for most consecutive games won by a pitcher (30), most consecutive regular-season games



Take me out to the ball game

Above, the author at work; below, Japan's Sho Nakata at the World Baseball Classic in March

won by a pitcher (28) and most consecutive games won by a pitcher in a single regular season (24). Now, Tanaka pitches for the New York Yankees, and I remain grateful for having kept my balance.

It probably wouldn't have happened in the U.S. There, media are given time with players like Tanaka in the clubhouse, instead of having to catch them on their way to the team bus. But such is life covering sports in Japan. There are times the facilities, tools and general media considerations sports reporters have in other places are lacking – which sometimes effects how you report on things.

Aside from this, which does take getting used to, reporting on sports in Japan isn't wildly different than elsewhere. Where the experiences diverge can mostly be chalked up to simply being the way Japanese do things – which is, of course, a common refrain of many of the foreign players who come here. Like them, you're operating in a different environment with a different language and different cultural norms and nuances. Jeremy Powell, who pitched in Japan for eight seasons, told me once that one of the most important things for players is the "ability to have an open mind and embrace the Japanese way."

GETTING ALONG REQUIRES AT least a tacit understanding of how things work, but it doesn't mean that foreign journalists have to totally adapt to how the Japanese media operates. Sometimes we find ourselves reporting on things the Japanese media might overlook (though reporters for the tabloids, who are not afraid of retaliatory actions, tend to do this already). Stepping outside of the norms is how best-selling author Robert Whiting ran afoul of the Yomiuri Giants organization, easily the most powerful singular entity in Japanese baseball – maybe all Japanese sports – in 1990 when he reported that the club was announcing false attendance figures rather than taking the team's word at face value like everyone else. Whiting was banned from Tokyo Dome indefinitely for his troubles. He was also, of course, right.

It doesn't usually get that dramatic these days. When I reported on one notable controversy – writing in 2008 that manager Bobby Valentine claimed someone in the Chiba Lotte Marines front office had asked him to resign

PHOTO ©

– there was no kickback from the team. Oddly, though, the team did try to crackdown on reporters who were covering Valentine's firing in 2009 with media guidelines that reportedly included a ban on wearing jeans.

The kisha clubs that control the flow of information from the Japanese government also exist in sports. They're divided by region, with different sports and leagues handling things in their own way. But they don't seem as heavy-handed as those covering the government, lacking for the most part, the hostile attitude toward non-members. Leagues and organizations have been slow to embrace internet media, however, and reporters from these companies sometimes run into access issues.

Generally no reporter, kisha club member or not, is allowed in locker rooms. Some sports have mixed zones, where you wait for the players to walk by and hope to catch them. For baseball, there is just a lot of waiting for the players to come out of the clubhouse and firing questions at them on their way to their cars or the bus. Some may stop to speak with reporters, others will speak while walking, and others ignore us. It mostly depends on the mood the player is in, which depends a lot on how that day's game went. In some baseball stadiums, you can walk with the players to the clubhouse, which offers another opportunity, but that depends on the layout.

I once got into a locker room by accident. Greg LaRocca, who was playing for the Orix Buffaloes, had promised to answer a few questions, but found himself out of time. Nice guy that he was, LaRocca's solution was to pull me by the arm into the visitor's locker room at Chiba Marine Stadium and do it there. Other than a few odd looks, the Buffaloes staff didn't say anything.

ONCE YOU ACTUALLY GET to speak with the players, it's the same all over the world: we try our best to get something beyond the typical athlete clichés, something that we can make news with, or at least make our write-ups more interesting.

Some players actually seem more relaxed around a foreign reporter and tend to deviate from the normal stock answers. Some are curious as well. A meeting with the Seibu Lions'

don't always say yes to everything, but their PR staff is very good at working with the media.

Japanese reporters are usually more interested in the mechanics of what happened, rather than the narrative focus on "why" that you see many sports reports in the West take. Of course, as with all journalism, the answers are usually only as good as the question that is asked. Prior to Game 1 of the 2007 Japan Series, a Japanese reporter leaned in and asked Trey Hillman, a down-to-earth Texan who managed the Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters from 2003 to 2007, what he and his wife had discussed over breakfast that morning. Hillman just shook his head and said in his Texas drawl, "I'm not going to tell you what my wife and I talked about this morning."

Most Japanese reporters are helpful, used to the give-and-take of the media environment. Sometimes I can even be of help to them, as in an interesting experience I had during the Japan Series in 2014. Earlier that year, Hanshin Tigers outfielder Matt Murton had been caught up in controversy when something he said was mistranslated by a Japanese reporter. The mistranslation (an innocent mistake as opposed to a malicious one) seemed to infer that Murton had made a mistake on the field just because he didn't like one of his teammates. As everyone knows, the media around the Tigers is as voracious as their mascot, and the story blew up. Murton, who loved Japan and was always easy with his time for the media, was a little more measured in his dealings with the press after that.

So after Game 1 of the Japan Series at Osaka's Koshien Stadium, I walked with him back to the clubhouse, going over the game. When our conversation ended, I turned to see a throng of eager reporters' faces, desperate to know every detail of what Murton had said. Just like that, I was the main attraction in a press scrum. It was a very, very small glimpse into what we put the players through daily.

WHILE THERE ARE CHALLENGES, there is still a poetic quality to sports writing, which is one reason I like it despite the issues. The heat of battle, of competition between opposing forces, breeds great drama and stories.

“There is a poetic quality to sports writing, which is one reason I like it despite the issues. The heat of battle, of competition between opposing forces, breeds great drama and stories”

pitcher Yusei Kikuchi once extended for several minutes because he wanted to quiz me on how I ended up covering baseball in Japan. Conversely, there was a basketball player, who shall remain nameless, who couldn't have been less interested in being interviewed, and very likely would have even answered a question about the meaning of life with a curt “yes” or “no.”

Softball pitcher Yukiko Ueno was great the couple of times I've interviewed her, giving thoughtful answers, smiling through it and being generally pleasant, while Seiichi Uchikawa of the Hawks is always attentive if he's got time and one of the best interviews in baseball. As an organization, the Hokkaido Nippon Fighters are top-class in terms of access and communication. With enough lead time the Fighters staff will make a good effort to honor player requests, both home and on the road. They make their players available when possible, work to reschedule in the event either you or the player has an unavoidable conflict and are quick to respond to queries, which is rarer than it should be. They

Also, as much as professional sports are essentially children's games played on the grand stage, to the athletes, the games are a major part of their lives. They are part (not the whole) of who these people are, and the person they are helps make up the athlete they become.

Through the games and the people who play them, you can discover things that are more important than sports, their real-life triumphs and defeats, highs and lows that may also help understand why this basketball player works so hard at her craft, or, for example, why a football player's mother may have been the one to share the love of the sport with him and broken a barrier by bucking social norms and playing the game herself; in fact, her story may be the more interesting one for both social and sporting reasons.

Sports is human drama, and finding those things makes the search for them, and the hurdles you have to leap over sometimes, worthwhile. ●

Jason Coskrey covers sports for the *Japan Times*.



Bradley Martin

by JULIAN RYALL

Bradley Martin credits the burning desire to get as far away as possible from Marietta, Georgia to thank for datelines as coveted in the news business as Kabul and Pyongyang, as well as countless other corners of Asia over the course of a five-decade career.

Now 74, he gets back to Marietta occasionally to see family and friends, but shakes his head wryly when he admits, “I don’t know more than four people there who did not vote for Trump.” His first escape from Georgia was to Princeton University, where he studied U.S. and Asian history. “We had always had trinkets around the house from my uncles’ duties in the Philippines and other parts of East Asia – Chinese gadgets and souvenirs, a Buddha statue – and I just became interested in the region without knowing very much about it,” he says.

Graduating in 1964 and starting law school, Martin had no ambitions of a media career, but was a voracious consumer of the news provided by *Newsweek*. The headlines were dominated by the “wonderful war that was going on in Southeast Asia at the time,” Martin recalls, and he even seriously considered joining the military to take part in “my generation’s war.”

Instead, his wife at the time convinced him that they should both join the Peace Corps, and they swiftly found themselves teachers in Bangkok. “It took me three weeks to figure out that what was going on over the border was a stupid war that we could not win, and I was extremely angry at how I had been misled,” Martin says. “I told myself I could do better and that if I became a foreign correspondent, I would do better.”

Lacking the required experience and clips – the Thailand director of the Peace Corps was an old newspaper hand and had to explain what clips were – Martin launched a quarterly journal for the organization and, after returning to the U.S., was able to parlay his experience into a position on the *Charlotte Observer*. Cutting his teeth on poverty, race relations and urban affairs, he later moved to the *Baltimore Sun* because it employed foreign correspondents. After three years as a business reporter, he was sent to Tokyo in 1977.

“From the very beginning, I loved the place,” he says. “In those days, the Club was quite lively. There were fist fights in here and I was in at least one of them myself. You could say we were quite a rowdy bunch.”

It was also a good time to be a correspondent, though Kakuei Tanaka and the Lockheed scandal were receding into history. “Japan was interesting politically, but there was no

bang-bang,” says Martin. “That was going on in South Korea with the demonstrations against Park Chung-hee.”

Then came October 1979. “It happened to be my birthday, there had been a party and we had all had rather a lot to drink,” Martin says. “In the middle of the night, my editor rang and I thought he said that a big yakuza had been killed, that I needed to get down to the Reuters office to file and then get the first plane to Seoul in the morning.” The information seemed confused and contradictory, but Martin checked with his police contacts about yakuza killings – before learning that Park Chung-hee had been assassinated by his own secret service chief.

Over the next few years, he spent much of his time in Seoul, interspersed with spells in New Delhi and Beijing, and kept a close eye on events in Korea even after switching to the *Asian Wall Street Journal*. He crossed the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan aboard a public bus soon after the Soviet invasion in 1979 and recalls watching battles taking place around his hotel in Kabul. He was in Gwangju, South Korea, in 1980 in the latter stages of the uprising, before it was put down.

But everyone who covered Asia wanted to get into North Korea. “It was forbidden,” he says. “Eventually, I managed to get accredited to cover the 1979 World Table Tennis Championships.” He did not take in many table tennis matches, instead using the time to meet as many government officials as possible and to travel as much of the country as his minders would permit. An interview with Kim Yong-nam, now the president of the Supreme People’s Assembly, lasted five hours.

Martin’s reports were so successful that he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. They also served as the basis for his critically acclaimed book, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty*. “It was a fascinating place that was just so different from anything else,” he

says. “It was a religious kingdom where the people worshiped Kim Il-sung and I just soaked it all up.”

Martin has visited North Korea on seven occasions, including while he was writing for Bloomberg, but does not expect to be permitted to return again. An application last year to study Korean in Pyongyang was summarily turned down.

Given that *Under the Loving Care* is now 13 years old, Martin – who divides his time between homes in Hawaii and Nagano Prefecture – says he is toying with the idea of writing a follow-up, although his recent efforts have been focused on his first novel, *Nuclear Blues*, expected to be published in the next couple of months. ●

“I told myself I could do better and that if I became a foreign correspondent, I would do better.”



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

When the Osaka media took the lead

A local story exploded into a national one – pushing Osaka’s journalists to make it their own

BY ERIC JOHNSTON

It began as just another Osaka land deal gone bad, a local story pursued by local reporters, of interest only to local readers and viewers. Why had the school managed to purchase a piece of property from the government valued at ¥956 million for a mere ¥134 million?

But when the scandal surrounding Moritomo Gakuen, a private educational firm advocating a nationalist, prewar educational system, reached the Prime Minister’s Office, suddenly, what was once an “Osaka story” was now very much something larger. And when Yasunori Kagoike, the firm’s head, gave sworn testimony to both houses of the Diet on March 23 – followed immediately afterwards by a press conference at FCCJ – the story went from large to huge, with inflammatory allegations from Kagoike about the political support, and abandonment, of his cause by the PM’s wife as well as Osaka politicians. These were followed by strong denials by those he named, the result of which has been less, not more, clarity.

Japanese media coverage of Moritomo Gakuen, its educational philosophy and the parade of political figures who have found themselves caught up in it, all the way up to and including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie, is a good example of the different approaches toward covering political scandals in Tokyo and Osaka. Reasons for these differences often have to do with the basic editorial structure and corporate culture of the media organs themselves. But they can also be due to local politics, by which “local” means not only Osaka but also “local” political reporting in Nagatacho.

Developing a chronology of when, exactly, the Moritomo Gakuen scandal became news is difficult. Some media commentators point to initial reports in the local media last summer that questioned if Moritomo’s new elementary school, which was originally due to open on April 1 this year but is now postponed indefinitely, was financially sound. On the other hand, as long ago as 2012, Osaka prefecture authorities had relaxed the restrictions on establishing private schools in general at a time when only Moritomo Gakuen appeared to be pushing for the rules to be eased.

For the most part, mainstream local media didn’t explore too deeply questions about who, exactly, was behind the school. Not that some connections were a secret. One of the more prominent politicians supporting Moritomo’s educational philosophy was Takeo Hiranuma. Though now back in the Liberal Democratic Party, Hiranuma and his close ally, former Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara, tied up with former Osaka mayor Toru Hashimoto and his followers in 2014–2015 to form the first version of Nippon Ishin no Kai.

The political alliance between Hiranuma, Ishihara, Hashimoto and Osaka Gov. Ichiro Matsui would break up in late September 2015, just a few weeks after PM Abe absented himself from a contentious Diet debate on security to make a quick trip to Osaka, where he appeared on a Yomiuri Telecasting program. That same day, it was later learned, representatives from a firm hired by Moritomo met with local Finance Ministry officials in Osaka.

What exactly was said at the meeting is unknown as the Finance Ministry admitted during Diet questioning in February that notes from the meeting had been thrown away. Abe returned to Tokyo that same day. But the next day, his wife Akie spoke at Moritomo Gakuen’s kindergarten, where she was introduced as the new elementary school’s honorary principal. Akie would keep that title, and her face and greetings would be on Moritomo’s website, until the scandal broke and she resigned.

A LOCAL NATIONAL STORY, OR A NATIONAL LOCAL STORY?

Unlike the Tokyo-based media, major newspapers or television stations in Osaka lack what political reporters in the nation’s capital would recognize as a Political News section. Traditionally, the Osaka beat meant covering economics or social issues as well as metro issues like crime and the courts. Reporters were attached to Osaka prefecture and Osaka city press clubs, but their approach to politics was purely local.

Under local editors and producers, they have historically produced a style of reporting that can be more feisty and critical of government policies than the political hacks in Tokyo, but also more wonkish. Many Osaka reporters, at least in the print media, who are ostensibly covering politics have written books on local government policies. It’s quite different from the often celebrity-driven, “who’s up and who’s down?” ruling and opposition party games type of reporting that so obsesses Tokyo-based political pundits and reporters. Osaka media suck up and report the most minute and mundane details about municipal sewage disposal and water treatment, corporate zoning, the city tax code, health and welfare policies for the elderly, or the safety of local public transportation systems. Talking grand political theory and strategy with politicians or their staff or trading gossip over late-night drinks is not their first priority.

That changed somewhat when Toru Hashimoto and Ichiro Matsui decided to take their Osaka-based Ishin movement to the Diet by tying up with Ishihara and Hiranuma to form Nippon Ishin no Kai. Suddenly, reporters in Osaka were asking questions in local press clubs about national and international developments and the party’s position on everything from historical tensions between South Korea and Japan over the comfort women issue to how Hashimoto and Matsui viewed constitutional revision and the role of Japan’s self-defense forces. For Osaka reporters used to quiet press conferences on very local issues and unfamiliar with the way their Tokyo colleagues covered the Prime Minister’s Office, the Foreign Ministry and the Diet, dealing with the outspoken, highly opinionated and often volatile Hashimoto in particular was an unprecedented challenge.

They would learn, however. By February, over a year after Hashimoto retired from local politics, the Moritomo scandal was breaking. It would be propelled forward by Osaka media types who were very much outsiders to Tokyo’s

Man in the news

Yasunori Kagoike, head of the private educational firm, Moritomo Gakuen speaks at the Club after answering questions at the Diet on March 23



political establishment yet who now had the experience of dealing, often aggressively, with Hashimoto and Matsui on countless occasions. As bizarre as it sounds, Hashimoto’s constant criticism of the local media, his long harangues during press conferences where he went after newspapers like the *Asahi* and *Mainichi* that disagreed with him appears to have made some of them better reporters – tougher and more thorough.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TOKYO MEDIA’S INSULAR VIEW

So, in the beginning, when the rest of Japan considered the Moritomo story a local one at best, Osaka’s reporters had no competition from their Tokyo affiliates. Of course, while they aggressively pursued some questions, especially the detailed financial aspects of the story that could be confirmed if one searched the public records, other subjects were talked about in the press room but not always displayed prominently on the front page. These included questions like who else, besides those who were public supporters, might be involved in the scandal, and where the money to fund Moritomo Gakuen might be coming from.

Still, what was striking about the Moritomo scandal was the extent to which the Osaka media drove the story in the beginning and the extent the Tokyo media attempted to play it down, hoping it was nothing more than an early spring blizzard that would blow hard for a day or so and then calm down. That began to change in late February as it became clear there was a lot of smoke at Moritomo, even if nobody could quite see the actual fire just yet, and the Tokyo media, especially the television media, picked up the coverage.

It was also surely no coincidence that two of the more prominent members of the Democratic Party who were keeping the issue alive, Kiyomi Tsujimoto and Tetsuya Fukuyama, were from the Kansai region (and in Tsujimoto’s case, the electoral district bordering the one where Moritomo Gakuen is located). At the same time, Osaka media reporting sometimes defied the expectations of media experts who might pigeonhole one media group or another. When even Osaka-based Yomiuri Telecasting and the local affiliate of Fuji-Sankei, Kansai TV, began asking hard-hitting questions about Abe’s role in the scandal, it was clear this was a story that was not going to peter out quickly. On the other hand, Tokyo-based pundits and well-known announcers at both networks continued to urge caution about Kagoike’s claims. Especially when he told a group of visiting Diet members that Abe had, through his wife, donated one million yen, a claim she assiduously denies..

As I write this in late March, how the Moritomo Gakuen scandal will end is unclear. For the Osaka media, Kagoike’s allegations and the realization this is not just another story for the metro section has led to a more cautious approach to the reporting, and once again, a return to looking at local angles – starting with how and why Moritomo got such a huge discount on the land it purchased. In addition, those who cover the Osaka courts, the police, the prosecutors’ office, as well as the city and the prefectural governments, are expected to be quite busy as angry parents sue Moritomo, businesses file suits to get their money back, and opposition politicians in Osaka prefecture demand investigations into what happened. This will take place regardless of what happens to the prime minister or members of his Cabinet because Moritomo Gakuen is still a “local” Osaka story, even if it now has national implications.●

Eric Johnston is a staff writer with the *Japan Times*. The opinions expressed within are his own and not necessarily those of the *Japan Times*.

When “forward” means “right”

The Sankei group wants to launch a new English-language news organ that more aggressively pushes Japanese perspectives. Good luck with that.

BY DAVID MCNEILL

Foreign journalists are often blamed for distorting the image of Japan by, for example, moralizing about the quirks of its economy and politics, or peddling hardy perennials (geishas, sexless marriages, gangsters, suicide) that convey exoticism, not depth or nuance. Then there's the shrill online outrage that now greets each foreign story about historical issues such as the comfort women coerced into World War II military brothels, who have been the subject of undignified diplomatic haggling for the last two decades.

Some correspondents, such as Carsten Germis of the German daily, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, have even been accused (by the foreign ministry, no less) of taking bribes from China for writing about Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's attempts to whitewash Japan's wartime misdeeds.

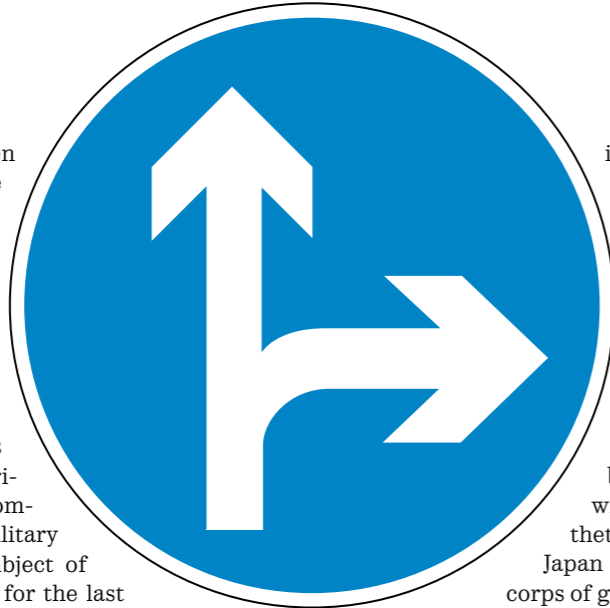
So, try to imagine a project that might redraw this distorted picture. It would give “Japanese perspectives” on diplomacy, culture and history. It might come from the media stable most closely associated in Japan with unabashed nationalism – the *Sankei Shimbun*. It would have a *hinomaru* as its symbol and a moniker like “Japan First,” except that's the name of a political party, and a popular tweet handle (“Japan for the Japanese; Anti-Globalism, Anti-Communism”). Not “Japan Best,” because that sounds childish. How about “Japan Forward”?

What you might have pictured is actually the pre-launch edition of an English-language online newspaper that emerged in May of last year from the *Sankei* group. The aim says an editorial, is to provide a forum for “Japanese voices” and deliver them to the world “as we think about the future.” Articles on the website's front page include an interview with Abe in which he pledges to bring Japanese abductees home from North Korea. Defense Minister Tomomi Inada defends her controversial pilgrimage last December to Yasukuni Shrine, and a cheeky commentary urges President Donald Trump to also visit the Shinto landmark.

THAT SUGGESTS A FIXATION with rightist causes but it's not the whole picture. Sure, there are oven-ready articles from the *Sankei* cupboard and polemical broadsides against China. But *Japan Forward* also carries thoughtful essays on the rise of Yuriko Koike, Tokyo's governor, and on Abe's relationship with Trump.

The schizophrenic tone – not so much nationalist swagger-

David McNeill writes for the *Independent*, the *Economist* and other publications. He has been based in Tokyo since 2000



ing as an apologetic lurch – may reflect the presence of several foreign contributors and commissioning editors. They include Paul Nadeau, who doubles as a private secretary to Tsuyoshi Hoshino, an LDP lawmaker and former *Sankei* reporter.

When approached by *Sankei* editors to collaborate with the publication, Nadeau, a Tokyo-based American and occasional writer, says he was at least sympathetic enough to the complaint that Japan was sometimes ill served by its corps of gaijin hacks to want to help. “One of the issues with Western reporting on Japan is that

it often tends to fit Western frames to Japanese political discussions,” he says, citing an article in the *Washington Post* by Anna Fifield quoting a university professor in comparing Inada to Marie Le Pen, France's rightwing firebrand. “Okay, they're both conservative and women, but Inada has spoken positively for LGBT rights, and immigration. You'd never see Le Pen do that.”

Nadeau says he was also “frustrated” by articles citing a steady rise in Japanese defence spending as evidence of its remilitarization. “The numbers are quite small in context and there are a lot of constraints that prevent spending from growing higher.” It's not a distortion or bias, he explains: “It's an incomplete characterization.”

The *Sankei*, the smallest of Japan's major dailies, had been the only one without an English-language edition. The *Yomiuri* still churns out its print offshoot, the *Japan News*. The *Nikkei* launched a magazine, the *Nikkei Asian Review*, in 2014, while both the *Mainichi* and *Asahi* long ago pulled their English newspapers but have continued with an online presence.

BUT IF THE EDITORIAL team's “mission statement” on the *Japan Forward* website is to be believed, something is still missing. So they intend to present the “true face of Japan,” and are setting out to overcome misunderstandings “born of linguistic barriers.” They are open to a “freewheeling debate,” welcoming “well-expressed dissenting and dissimilar views,” and basing the editorial on the *Sankei*'s high-quality articles, editorials, interviews and other Japan-original content.” Typically, one of its earlier efforts was titled “‘Japan First’ Is the Only Response to ‘America First,’” in which *Sankei* executive editor Masato Inui warned that: “A dog-eat-dog world is coming, and we must hurry to prepare for it.”

Laudable aspirations, if one believes that the time is ripe for a publication that will more assertively push Japan's interests. It comes at a time when there has been a resurgence of national pride, with TV and books increasingly filled

with “Japan is great” praise. As Masakazu Shirana and Teiichi Ikeda, reporters with the *Tokyo Shimbun* noted recently, it is a phenomenon that seems less a harbinger for the future than a nod to the past, specifically the xenophobic 1930s.

Still *Japan Forward* has its work cut out: the beta version isn't particularly revolutionary. Among the recent uploads is standard rightist fare, such as an accusatory piece on the Chinese government's support of Japan-focused hatred. Much of the content in the rather clumsily designed interface was pretty bland stuff. There was an introduction to Tokyo's Nezu Shrine, coverage of the last day of the recent sumo tournament and a breathless promo of a new luxury train line. If this is anything to go by, none of the English editions of the Japanese dailies, much less the *Japan Times* – dubbed the “anti-*Japan Times*” by the right – have anything to fear from their new competition.

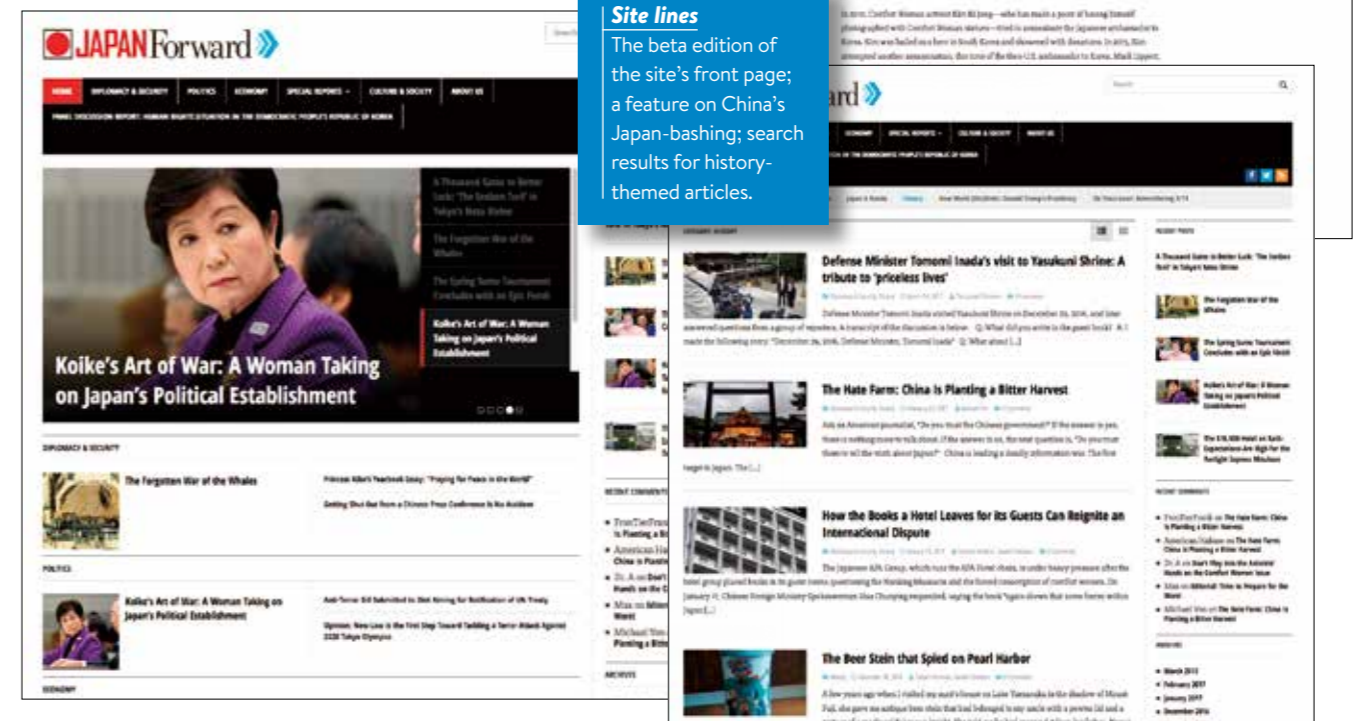
Though the beta edition is intended to end with a formal launch in May, when the business plan calls for sponsorship to make it a self-sustaining operation, they have yet to face the full-throttle complexities of an ongoing website, requiring quality writing and editing on a regular basis, and though we reached out for comment from the *Sankei*, we received no reply.

Will the *Sankei*'s promise to promote “diverse perspectives” survive? Perhaps not: Senior editors have already reportedly reined in articles that strayed too far from its unofficial remit – to make Japan appear great again. ❶

Japan Forward
intends to present the
“true face of Japan”
... to overcome
misunderstandings
“born of linguistic
barriers”



Site lines
The beta edition of the site's front page; a feature on China's Japan-bashing; search results for history-themed articles.



FCCJ EXHIBITION

Memories of Pyongyang Photography and video: Ciel Liu

OUR TRIP TO PYONGYANG consisted almost entirely of carefully scheduled activities, with guides that rarely left our side when we were outside of the hotel. Still, it was a rare opportunity to observe the people in this reclusive country and to think about their lives.

The disconnection from the outside world is palpable. In this city, time and space are defined by propaganda-driven activities like visits to monuments and performances. The enormous clockwork mechanism of mass-dance practices and labor duties never ceases to spin. It is fascinating, and not a little unsettling.

The city planning is monolithic, with apartment block after apartment block stretching out in an order so neat and structured it continues to haunt the mind. Advertising and other signs of commercial activity are extremely rare. The ever-present contrast between tightly restricted self-expression and an over-enthusiasm to defend government propaganda challenges our concepts of freedom and personal fulfillment. Here, one must at all times be of a single body and mind with the regime.

Is this loyalty sincere or a product of fear? Many of the people we encountered seemed curious about us, yet were scared to look at us for long. Did they – could they – imagine other ways of life?

Eight days was a short time to discover Pyongyang, yet it was a life-changing experience. It challenged everything I knew and took for granted.

On this journey, I learned something about the complexity of the human condition and about what everyday life can look like in places very different from those we know. I hope my photographs will inspire thought, not only about the lives of the citizens of Pyongyang but also about the feelings and preconceptions that we harbor within ourselves. ●



After the completion of her MA in Photography and Electronic Arts in London, **Ciel Liu** started her career as a reporter for the Mandarin television channels in Singapore and worked as a freelancer creating contents for clients in different countries. Currently she is working extensively with traditional craftsmen and culture in Japan, and documenting the Outsider artists in Cuba. www.cielimpression.com

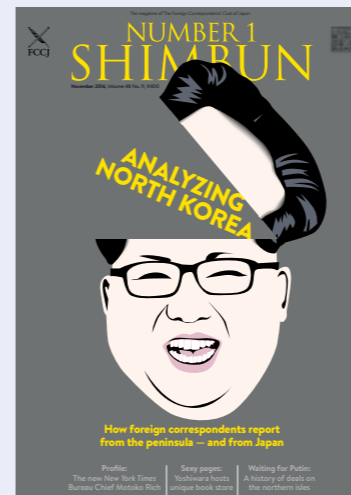
FILM COMMITTEE RECEIVES INDUSTRY AWARD

The FCCJ's Film Committee was honored at a ceremony in early March with a **Cine-Culture Club Award** for its "contributions to the development of cinema culture" and its "domestic and international promotion of Japanese cinema." Sponsored by the Japan Fashion Association, it was among a number of commendations given across a range of fields, including product and technology development, cultural activities and regional promotions. The award was accepted by Film Committee Chair Karen Severns and her partner Koichi Mori, who have together coordinated over 150 film screenings with more than 300 Q&A guests over the past 10 years.



From left: Committee board liaison David Satterwhite, Mori and Severns with Kohei Ando, who bestowed the award. PHOTO: MANCE THOMPSON

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN COLLECTS DESIGN AWARD



Cutting open Kim Jong-un's head wins *Number 1 Shimibun* an award – or at least the illustrative representation of such on our November 2016 cover about the journalists analyzing North Korea has done so. Designer Andrew Potheary submitted the cover to the Society of Publication Designers (SPD) **Annual Design Competition** and achieved a "Merit" win. The New York-based SPD has been running for 52 years and is "dedicated to promoting and encouraging excellence in editorial design." This year's jury was co-chaired by designers from *Condé Naste Traveler* and *Texas Monthly* and included 36 jury members including design, illustrator and photographic representatives from the *New Yorker* to *Popular Mechanics*.

JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...



... at 7:00 on Tues., April 25 for a sneak preview screening of writer-director Kiyoshi Sasabe's moving *Yaeko's Hum*, the fact-based story of an educator who becomes a devoted caregiver when his wife develops early-onset Alzheimer's. A poignant argument against the outsourcing of care, the film stars Takeshi Masu as the loving husband whose devotion not only enhances Yaeko's quality of life, but allows her to live long past the disease's typical survival rate. Yaeko is played by Yoko Takahashi, returning to the screen for her first role in 28 years, playing both younger and older versions of the former music teacher who can no longer remember the lyrics to her favorite songs, but loves to hum them. The director and his two stars will be there for a Q&A session following the screening. (Japan, 2016; 112 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.)

– Karen Severns

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REINSTATEMENT (REGULAR MEMBERS)

DARRYL GIBSON is a freelance journalist and consultant for international sporting events in Asia, Europe and North America. He wrote his first news story for the Gazette at the University of Western Ontario in October 1967. He has been a television reporter and cinematographer; radio reporter; newspaper reporter and bureau chief; foreign correspondent for the Canadian Press in Asia based in Tokyo from 1981 until 2004; freelancer for newspapers, magazines and wire services around the world; for radio, including a decade with NPR, and television; and sub-editor and Asia editor at Kyodo News from 1980 to 2015. After retiring from Kyodo in 2015, he spent seven months in Italy before returning to Japan.



REED STEVENSON rejoins the FCCJ after a 14-year hiatus, following his return to Tokyo as technology editor at Bloomberg. His last stint in Japan was reporting for Reuters from 1996 to 2002. In between, Reed's bureau chief assignments with the news agency took him to Seattle, Amsterdam and Dubai. He joined Bloomberg in San Francisco four years ago. A graduate of an international school in Yokohama and the University of Pennsylvania, he's enjoying the benefits of deflation in Japan and looking forward to catching up with news colleagues in Tokyo.

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Fallacies in the Allied Nations' Historical Perception as Observed by a British Journalist

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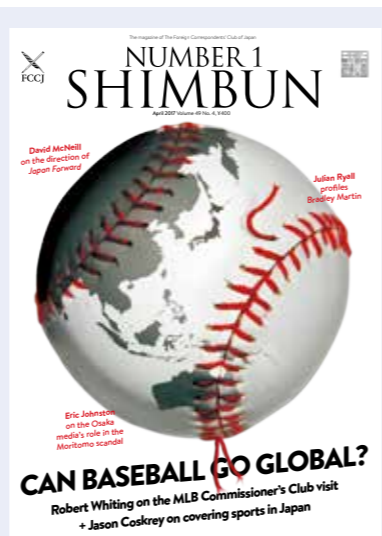
Nihon Hoso Kyokai Hoso Bunka Kenkyujo (ed.)
 NHK Shuppan
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Five Years After: Reassessing Japan's Responses to the Earthquake, Tsunami, and the Nuclear Disaster

Keiichi Tsunekawa (ed.)
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Ricoh goes local to revitalize regional economies



At Ricoh, our business is creating and providing solutions across a vast spectrum of needs – in industry, commerce, government, science, medicine, everyday life and more. And we've learned that success in finding solutions requires deep understanding of problems and the processes behind them. It requires close engagement.

One 'meta-issue' now engaging us is the matrix of challenges facing communities beyond Japan's three major metropolises: regions facing rapid population loss and economic decline as society ages and young people opt for the big city bright lights. The question is, how can we help revitalize these regions?

In search of answers, Ricoh is making comprehensive local collaboration agreements with prefectural and municipal governments across the country. The aim is to identify challenges and potential solutions by targeting key concerns, ranging from education and culture through public health, tourism and economic development to disaster response and reconstruction.

Since big advances usually start with small steps, early initiatives are geared to the local scale, for example: advice on reducing electric power consumption, photographic mapping of communities, sharing knowledge on diversity and work-life balance, and an educational program for kids we call "Science Caravan."

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