



NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

June 2016, Volume 48 No. 6, ¥400

**SERIOUSLY,
ARE
JOURNALISTS
IN ASIA
BEING
SILENCED?**

**The UN verdict
on Japan**

**The global fight
for press freedom**

**South Korea's
internet crackdown**

**Fearless Japanese
publications**

**+ Said Karlsson
profiled**

**Foreign con men
in Taisho Japan**





> THEME.01
> HISTORY

100 years ago...

Global trade was disrupted by WWI, leaving Japan without a stable supply of bearings, the essential component in everything mechanical that moves – trains, planes, ships, tractors, industrial machinery and more. As worried industrialists explained at the time, without bearings – the “rice” of industry, the indispensable staple – Japanese industry would grind to a halt.
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From the President

I PEN THIS LAST column as president with a few important lessons for the new Board. The bottom line is that the FCCJ is an exceptional organization, my honest opinion is that the challenges can be handled with the talent we have onboard.

The Club's year has been full of exceptional achievements. Function facilities remain fully booked, usage is high in the dining room and bar and big-name newsmakers continue to fill the Professional Activities calendar. We have successfully settled both the Union and ex-Presidents' cases, which ended an enormous bleed on our resources and has helped make the Club feel more like one family again.

Financially, however, we continue to face huge challenges and the multiple hefty decisions the Club is tasked to make will define its future.

The Club is in financial trouble, a picture that contradicts the last BOD financial report that declared a ¥30 million plus "profit" for 2014. This "profit" was actually due to a one-time ¥20 million paper adjustment regarding long-term depreciation required by *koeki* rules combined with the inclusion of a ¥10 million capital gain on employee retirement fund investments as Club income. In practical terms, however, we were up to ¥7 million in the red, according to an analysis by the finance committee.

Our budget for FY2016 projects a loss of ¥8 million. This year's finance committee reports that with the Special Levy of ¥23 million reserved for our move to the Club's new location in October 2018, we are already over ¥30 million in the hole. Certain steps have been taken to cope: Currently we are in the process of negotiating a new contract with IRS and are considering other ideas that will help to put the Club back in the black for the next two-and-a-half years.

This year's Board has reserved the Special Levy solely for paying the costs of moving to the new building, which may be as high as ¥100 million. We calculate there will be ¥83 million in this fund by the end of FY2018. This board has also spent a considerable amount of time debating the huge increase in rent the FCCJ will be required to pay for the new larger premises. Another major target for this year has been to increase membership, which is now at 1,920. New members are important to cope with the increase in spending when we move into the new Club.

The possibility of raising tax-free donations – one of the benefits of FCCJ becoming a *koeki* – has also become a reality. This is a formidable task that is currently been discussed by some of our dedicated members – and a foremost concern is protecting the journalistic character of the FCCJ. Donations are tax deductible in part.

Summing up, these problems I've outlined require extreme vigilance now and over the coming years to restore and bolster our financial stability. Any Member who has helpful suggestions or wishes to help, should not hesitate to contact Club management. We welcome all as proactive stakeholders in our future.

I end now with a big thank you extended to all the Members and officers who have worked so hard this year. And I wish the new Board the best of luck in their endeavors to move forward.

– Suvendrini Kakuchi

COLLECTIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE AND JAPAN

403.28

Parts per million of global CO₂, highest in 650,000 years

14/16

warmest years on the planet have occurred since 2000

287.0

Gigatonnes of land ice lost per year

10

Number of meters glaciers have thinned since 1980

861

Square kilometers of Japan's coastal lowlands below the mean high-water level

4.1 million

Number of people at risk if sea levels rise by 1 meter

¥17,000,000,000

Cost of climate change to Japan in yen per year by 2100 if nothing changes

2.1-4.0°C

Projected temperature increase over next 100 years in Japan (global projection 1.8-3.4)

2-3°C

Temperature rise in large Japanese cities over the 20th century

1.4°C

Increase in global temperature since 1880

1°C

Temperature rise in Japan over the 20th century

5.5

Number of days earlier that cherry blossoms bloom over last 25 years

12-13%

Projected decrease in Japan's total production of paddy rice by 2050

-17.6%

Deviation from the national average in top quality rice in 2010's record heat year

70%

Projected decline in catches of coastal fish off Japan by 2100

Nature Publishing Group, NASA, United Nations University, Meteorological Agency, Ministry of the Environment

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE DIGITAL DUO



Noted conductor Herbert von Karajan (left) and Sony Chairman Akio Morita (right) appeared at the FCCJ on Nov. 9, 1981, to extol the virtues of a new digital format for music, the compact disc (CD). Seated between them, and no doubt raising a question, is Club Treasurer Karel van Wolferen (NRC Handelsblad), standing in as moderator for FCCJ President Edwin Reingold (Time) who was on a trip to China. Karel was selected to wield the gavel due to his knowledge of classical music.

Herbert von Karajan made a huge number of recordings, estimated at some 200,000. An Austrian, he led the Berlin Philharmonic for 35 years from the mid-1950s and became the pre-eminent figure in European classical music until his death in 1989. He was recruited by Philips as an "ambassador" for CD records in 1979 and the first test pressing of the new format was made from his music.

Akio Morita, who co-founded Sony with Masaru Ibuka, a former Imperial Navy colleague, had overseen the development of tape recorders, transistor radios, transistor TVs and the Walkman as well as collaborating in the development of the compact disc. His follow-up to that was the Discman. Akio Morita gave up his position in Sony in 1994 following a cerebral hemorrhage while playing tennis. He died in 1999.

Coincidentally, Karel's fellow Dutchmen at Philips in Amsterdam had supplied the basic technology, developed from their earlier LaserDisc, as part of a collaborative team formed in 1979 to develop this new digital audio technology. The other members of the team came from Sony, known for its innovative audio products, who contributed error correction and stability technology. Both had independently worked on CD technology in the last half of the 1970s, but wisely decided to combine their efforts.

Sales of audio compact discs overtook those of vinyl records in 1988 and cassettes in 1991. CD sales dominated until 2015, when they lost out to an even more compact digital music format in the form of the MP3 that had begun to spread on the internet in the late 1990s. File-sharing, followed by the launch of the portable iPod in 2001, began the slow death CDs. By 2012, CDs and DVDs comprised only one-third of music sales in the U.S., although strong sales in Japan continued until 2015.

– Charles Pomeroy

A look at the state of journalism at a time when independent media are caught up in skirmishes with authorities across Asia – and the world.

IMPORTANT LINKS

International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists
www.freemedia.at/international-declaration-on-the-protection-of-journalists/

UNESCO website:

www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/press-freedom/

UNESCO background documents including UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

<http://en.unesco.org/world-press-freedom-day-2016>



Speaking out

Turkish journalists cover their mouths with gags to protest the trial of Can Dunder and Erdem Gul outside the courthouse in Istanbul on April 1, 2016.

AP PHOTO

Fighting back

Journalists need new skills to be effective watchdogs for the public and ward off shackles on press freedom

by WILLIAM HORSLEY

Journalists everywhere need to wake up to the new normal: states all around the world are using anti-terrorism, state security and other laws to constrain, harass or lock up questioning journalists. They need to up their game in response.

That message has been voiced by, among others, Peter Greste, the Al Jazeera journalist imprisoned for a year in Egypt on spurious terrorism charges. Greste and his two jailed colleagues were freed thanks to international pressures and a massive social media campaign under the hashtag #FreeAJStaff. But he argues that U.S. President George W. Bush's Manichean doctrine – that “you are with us or with the terrorists” – removed at a stroke the neutral ground which journalists need to do their work.

The extent and violence of the intrusion into the media's freedom to report varies from state to state, but the same pattern can be seen almost everywhere. The chilling effect on open debate and civil society has been dramatic.

Egypt's harsh repression of inquiring journalism makes it impossible, for example, to get to the truth behind the abduction and murder in Cairo this year of the Italian civil rights researcher Giulio Regeni, who the authorities claim was killed by a criminal gang but whose torture and death seem to bear the brutal hallmarks of the work of Egypt's security forces.

In Turkey, President Erdogan has openly trashed his country's commitments to press freedom by exerting personal pressure on media owners to sack critical journalists, while presiding over the widespread misuse of anti-terrorism laws to criminalize their work and prosecute them. The recent jail sentences given to two top editors of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, Can Dunder and Erdem Gul, over their exposure of a suspected arms shipment to Islamists in Syria, is one example of Turkey's open defiance of its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

IN COMPARISON, RECENT COMPLAINTS in Japan about threats to press freedom, including the abrupt sacking of three inquisitorial TV presenters, may appear trivial. But the sweeping language and arbitrary powers contained in the recent special secrets law, and the public acknowledgement

the worsening environment for their own profession. But this year the World Association of Newspapers (WAN-IFRA) declared that in the face of the rise in violent attacks and states' efforts to demean or demonize journalists' work, the time has come to “get out and engage with others” and actively defend journalists who face danger because they expose repression, corruption and crime.

UN agencies, led by UNESCO and backed by enlightened governments and non-governmental organizations, have elevated the protection of free expression and journalists' safety to matters of high priority, acknowledging the wider damage done to societies from judicial harassment, targeted surveillance, jailings, physical attacks and killings of journalists. Media houses and journalists are being encouraged to enact sustained strategies of their own to help turn the tide. But often the media are seen as behind the curve, slow to accept that they are no longer above the fray but a key part – and often a target – in a global battle for free speech and accountable government.

UNESCO's monitoring shows that in the past 10 years more than 800 journalists have been killed, and in nine out of 10 cases the perpetrators have escaped justice. After years of tough diplomacy, the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity, launched in 2012, has spawned a host of helpful projects in regions where journalists' safety is most at threat, like Latin America, the Arab world and Paki-

stan. Landmark rulings in the human rights courts of Europe, the Americas and Africa have also held up the repressive actions of states to international censure.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF Investigative Journalists' exposé of the Panama Papers and the StopFake website's exposure of fake information about events in Ukraine are examples of smart journalistic cooperation.

Editors, media owners and journalists should pay attention to all this. They are in the frontline of challenging all forms of censorship and the attempt by states to control the information space.

To work effectively in the new hostile environment journalists need to develop new skills – to protect their online and physical security, expose disinformation, and secure real benefits from the enhanced protections that are now enshrined in international law but often ignored. Last December's International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists by representatives

of international media – convened by the International Press Institute and others – also pointed to the need for journalists to understand international human rights standards and mechanisms, to equip them to investigate and report effectively on injustices in the name of the public's right to know.

This is no time for journalists to look the other way or be cynical about what they do. Media silence only helps those who would perpetuate systematic abuses. Solidarity and the re-tooling of journalistic skills are needed for the press to report the stories the public most needs to know about. And that means saying "No" to the patronage of governments that would prefer a house-trained, docile media. ●

William Horsley is a former BBC Tokyo bureau chief and now international director of CFOM, the Centre for Freedom of the Media at the University of Sheffield (www.cfom.org.uk). CFOM is a partner of UNESCO, the lead UN agency for the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.



All that remains
The blocking message when the North Korea Tech site is accessed from South Korea

South Korea's internet crackdown

A journalist's website focused on North Korean technology is dubbed a security risk – and blocked – by South Korean internet censors

by JULIAN RYALL

UK journalist Martyn Williams is planning to take on South Korea's notorious National Security Law in court after the government dismissed an appeal against the blocking of his website, "North Korea Tech."

The blocked site has earned a dedicated following for its wide-ranging news from the country, ranging from internet activity through Pyongyang's use of technology, the state-controlled media, the military and economic issues. Williams, senior correspondent with IDG News Service based in California and a former president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, learned on May 3 that his appeal to have the block lifted had been turned down by the Korea Communications Standards Commission.

Williams says he was stunned when, in April, he began to get tweets from regular visitors to the site in South Korea saying they were unable to access it. "South Korea is pretty authoritarian when it comes to internet censorship, but I was surprised that they had suddenly decided my site offended them," he said. "It's been up for six years, is solely in English and clearly isn't glorifying North Korea. I had always assumed the censors were a little more discerning and could tell the difference between propaganda and analysis. But maybe not."

Williams started the site after a reporting trip to North Korea that sparked his fascination with the country and "the way the regime manages to keep 23 million people under its

NORTHKOREATECH.ORG

thumb." When the regime got its first internet connection in 2010, he had a chance to combine his tech knowledge with coverage of events there.

The site attracts around 30,000 visits a month, but it's a high-quality readership. The majority are researchers, academics, reporters and government officials who also follow Williams on Twitter. There are even a couple of followers in Pyongyang, although he suspects they may be foreign residents.

Marcus Noland, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Peterson Institute for International Economics and a close follower of developments in North Korea, said South Korea's decision to block the site is a "disconcerting nadir."

"In a world in which many pass off blather for analysis, Martyn's blog is fact-based and highly informative," he wrote on his own blog. "The Commission which implemented the ban didn't even bother to inform Williams of the block and has provided no specific reason for the action. The implications for other information sources, including this one, are chilling."

AFTER LEARNING THAT THE website was being blocked in South Korea, Williams contacted Jiwon Sohn, a lawyer based in Seoul who is active in internet censorship. Sohn was able to confirm that the block had been instituted at the request of the National Intelligence Service. "It's completely ridiculous," Williams said. "Do they really feel this is a threat to the national security of South Korea?"

He adds, however, that he was not surprised when his appeal, filed by the civil organization Open Net, was turned down. His lawyer confirmed that most of the handful of appeals that the committee hears each year end in failure.

In upholding the ban, the commission singled out three articles: a story about a space-watcher's inability to locate the satellite the North Koreans claimed to have put into orbit, a skeptical piece on the North's claim that its cell-phone operator had reached 3 million subscribers, and one on the completion of a satellite command center. The commission claimed

they were "praising, inciting, or glamorizing the North Korean activities" and were in violation of article 7 of the National Security Law. It also accused the site of being a threat by introducing North Korean websites along with links.

South Korea's Media Today reported that the three out of five members of the commission who voted against lifting the ban were named to the panel by the ruling party, while the two who voted to repeal the ban were recommended by the opposition.

Cho Young-ki, one of the commissioners who voted to uphold the ban hinted after the hearing that the North Korean government might be behind the site. "Citing North Korea's propaganda activity makes the decision reasonable," he said. Cho, a professor at Korea University's Department of North Korean Studies, also said, "We should ponder why a UK citizen has a deep interest in North Korea."

Williams says he's not even going to bother replying to that one. And the next step, he says, is a legal challenge. "At this stage, the fight becomes more interesting," he said. "Unblocking North Korea Tech is of course the goal, but a lawsuit could help to define what is and isn't allowed under the National Security Law.

"Ever since the internet, things have gotten a little confused. For example, can it really be illegal to link to North Korean material rather than republish it?" he said. "I hope this lawsuit will fulfill a bigger role of pushing back against heavy-handed censorship in general."

Ironically, technology has made the South Korean government's ban effectively useless, with anyone with a VPN connection able to get around Seoul's censors. And to heap irony on that irony, North Korea Tech is freely available in North Korea, the world's least free society. In its latest Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders placed North Korea in 179th place. Only Eritrea was lower in the rankings – and Williams is pretty sure that North Korea Tech is freely available there as well. ●

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

Standing tall

Three representatives from Tokyo's most fearless publications pointed to self-censorship and lack of interest as reasons for the sad state of hard-hitting journalism in Japan

by GAVIN BLAIR

The Japanese media has been accused of pusillanimity in the face of recent pressure from the Abe government, and for traditionally having less inclination to tell truth to power than its counterparts elsewhere. On May 18, a trio of journalists for whom such timidity is not an issue came to the Club for a roundtable talk about their own experiences and the current Japanese media landscape.

Shigeo Abe is the founder and publisher of *FACTA*, the subscription-only investigative business monthly that came to the notice of many by breaking the story that would lead to the Olympus scandal. Abe continues to do the kind of in-depth reporting sorely lacking these days – not only in the Japanese media, but also in much of the world. Before the session, a translation of an April *FACTA* article on the *Nikkei* newspaper group's recent takeover of the *Financial Times* was handed

out. The article details how the deal was partly funded by the government-owned Japan Bank for International Cooperation, suggests the Abe regime was a force behind the acquisition and claims the *Nikkei* has no realistic prospect of making a return on the investment or paying off the debt it has accrued.

Shukan Bunshun has become the Japanese weekly to watch this year, scooping the competition and breaking big stories on betting by baseball players and pop institution SMAP's near break-up, as well as bringing about the resignation of economic minister and Abe ally Akira Amari over a bribery scandal. Much of the credit for the series of circulation-boosting scoops has gone to Editor-in-Chief Manabu Shintani, who pointed out that the more mainstream media deliberately avoided such stories.

"The newspapers and TV stations aren't in good shape

financially, so it's a business decision not to have reporters chase risky stories, which are expensive and can lead to legal action," said Shintani. The biggest celebrities managed by the major *jimusho* (talent agencies) are usually "untouchable" for the TV stations in terms of negative coverage due to fear of reprisals, he said, including having stars from the roster of the same agency pulled from the offending network.

The three journalists stated they had never caved to pressure by the government, and two of them recounted instances when they were targeted.

Shintani said a member of the prime minister's office telephoned him over the Amari articles. "I got a call from someone saying that the person who gave Amari the money was also a bad guy, so we should take it easy in what we write about the minister. I replied that taking money from a bad guy is worse and they kind of acknowledged that was true," said Shintani. "We went ahead and ran the articles as planned."

FACTA's Abe said he was approached directly by a well-known former minister and pressured to stop writing articles about the alleged organized crime links of a public figure, though he refused to do so. (Abe named the individual involved, but requested it be kept off record.)

The three journalists expressed varying degrees of skepticism about reports from international organizations, such as Reporters Without Borders, that have downgraded Japan's press freedom rankings, and all cited self-censorship as the major issue.

Maki Tahara, who writes for the Tokuhobu section of *Tokyo Shimbun*, which is known for its outspokenly critical features on government and big business, pointed to shifts in the character of both reporters and readers as other factors. "The mentality of young journalists is less aggressive and rebellious than ours used to be. It's part of a societal trend . . . reporters are not a special breed apart from everyone else. It's a headache for me," said Tahara, who suggested their

"The mentality of young journalists is less aggressive and rebellious than ours used to be"

readership was also less interested in scoops and articles bashing the government than in the past.

Abe also expressed dismay at the lack of temerity among much of the domestic media. "I was at the Mitsubishi Motors press conference at the transport ministry and none

of the reporters asked the questions they should have been asking," he said. "The most important question was about whether or not the head of R&D actually knew about the falsification of the fuel efficiency tests, whether he was lying. None of the 200 journalists there asked that question." Abe was not allowed to ask questions, as he is not a member of the ministry's *kisha* club and was attending as an "observer."

Moderator Tetsuo Jimbo pointed out that the *kisha* club system has become more restrictive again under the Abe regime, after being relaxed under the previous Democratic Party of Japan government, when non-club members were allowed to ask questions.

Regarding the comments in February by communications minister Sanae Takaichi that TV networks could have their licenses revoked for broadcasting "biased political reports," Shintani chided the media for its tame response. Shintani said he told colleagues in the TV industry that they should look into Takaichi's background and run reports on her, or start programs titled "Testing the Broadcast Suspension Limits." *Shukan Bunshun*'s own response was to run an article titled "Why we Hate Takaichi."

Asked about whether there were any taboo subjects even for the seemingly fearless *Shukan Bunshun*, Shintani conceded that negative articles about the imperial family were pretty much off-limits. "It's because it would provoke a loss of trust from our readers and the wider population rather than the threat from nationalists . . . we are a Japanese magazine and we love Japan." ●

Gavin Blair covers Japanese business, society and culture for publications in America, Asia, and Europe.



Increasing concern
David Kaye, the UN's special rapporteur on freedom of expression, speaking at the Club

so is the suggestion that it could be used, like a sword of Damocles hanging over broadcasters, to suspend their licenses."

KAYE SAID THE PRINT media felt similarly embattled, with management "encouraging" journalists not to cover sensitive stories or those that could stoke anger among government officials.

He said the *kisha* club system fostered an unhealthy relationship between journalists and the government and corporate bodies they cover, adding that it could be used as a conduit for applying pressure on journalists "that is difficult to resist." "It is normal for there to be tension between the media and the government, but the way the Japanese media is structured doesn't give journalists the opportunity to push back," said Kaye, who will present a full report to the UN's Human Rights Council next year.

"I think the *kisha* clubs should be abolished. They foster a kind of access journalism and undermine investigative journalism. I think they're a hindrance to media freedom in Japan."

Kisha clubs, however, are only part of the problem, Kaye added, pointing to reports of semi-clandestine meetings between Abe and senior media executives, and the lack of solidarity among journalists working for rival organizations. "The media bears some responsibility for the situation and has a role in putting it right," he said. "The law and the media together can protect freedom of the press."

Kaye's appearance at the FCCJ came a day before publication of this year's Reporters Without Borders' world press freedom index, in which Japan came 72nd out of 180 countries, 11 places down from last year.

RWB said that the "latest disturbing sign of government pressure on the media" was NHK's dismissal of presenter Hiroko Kuniya, "which has caused widespread dismay among journalists." Her unscripted questioning of chief cabinet secretary, Yoshihide Suga, in July 2014 was cited as one of the reasons for the termination of her contract in March, RWB noted.

KUNIYA'S DEPARTURE CAME AROUND the same time as those of Shigetada Kishii, anchor of the "News 23" program on TBS, who had criticized the proposed security legislation, and Ichiro Furutachi, presenter of TV Asahi's "Hodo Station," known for giving government officials a rough ride.

"I think the *kisha* clubs should be abolished . . . they're a hindrance to media freedom in Japan"

RWB said Japanese media had become overly cautious since the state secrets act went into force in December 2014. The "rather vague" category of state secrets "is protected by a very harsh law that deters journalists from embarking on investigations," it said. "The

Fukushima nuclear disaster, the imperial family's personal lives and the defense of Japan are all 'state secrets.'"

The entry into force of the state secrets act, under which whistleblowers and journalists who cooperate with them face prison terms, was another example of the pressure Japanese journalists have faced since Abe took office in late 2012, Kaye said.

While no one has been prosecuted under the law, the suggestion that divulging any part of a large, eclectic – and so far ill-defined – body of information deemed secret would automatically discourage journalists from digging around. "Government officials assured me that journalists would not be prosecuted," Kaye said. "But they need legal protection, not political promises."

Weaker protection for whistleblowers meant journalists would lose access to sources for important stories, he added. "In the long term, it is the people of Japan who suffer from lack of access to information."

Kaye had been due to visit Japan last December, but officials in Tokyo abruptly canceled his trip, citing scheduling problems. He had requested a meeting with Takaichi during his visit in April, but was told that she was busy with her duties in the Diet.

Despite allegations on social media that Kaye had come with preconceptions fed to him by disgruntled foreign reporters, he said his encounters with Japanese journalists had given him genuine cause for concern. "I came here with an open mind . . . not a blank slate, but a willingness to be open to all perspectives," he said. "Having spoken to journalists who feel under more pressure by the day, my concerns have grown stronger.

"Now is the moment for Japan to take steps to secure its independent media." ●

Justin McCurry is Tokyo correspondent for the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers in London and principal Japan and Korea correspondent for *Global Post*.

The state vs. the Japanese press

Monitors from the UN and Reporters Without Borders find Japan's press facing increasing threats to independence

by JUSTIN McCURRY

Media independence in Japan is under "serious threat" from the government, according to a senior UN official, who called for legislative changes and the abolition of the press club system to enable journalists to fulfill their watchdog role.

Speaking at the FCCJ on April 19, David Kaye, the UN's special rapporteur on freedom of expression, said senior staff at media organizations were steering clear of certain issues that could cause discomfort to the prime minister, Shinzo Abe, and other senior politicians. "The independence of the press is facing serious threats: a weak system of legal protection, persistent government exploitation of a media lacking in professional solidarity," Kaye said.

Newspapers and broadcast journalists told Kaye – on con-

dition of anonymity – that they sometimes felt they had no choice but to exercise self-restraint in reporting sensitive issues such as the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Kaye, who spent a week in Japan meeting journalists, government officials and pressure groups, cited the recent controversy surrounding the internal affairs minister, Sanae Takaichi, who warned that broadcasters that repeatedly failed to show "fairness" in their political coverage, despite official warnings, could be taken off the air. A clause in the broadcast law allows the internal affairs minister to suspend broadcasting that does not maintain political neutrality.

"This is a big problem . . . that the broadcasting act allows the government to regulate the media," Kaye said. "And



Said Karlsson

by TYLER ROTHMAR

To call Said Karlsson a photographer and writer is not inaccurate, but it is entirely insufficient. Karlsson is curious in both senses, a juggler of disparate hobbies and skills with strong artistic leanings for whom independence is paramount.

He was born in Malmö, Sweden, in 1982 and raised in Norrköping, southwest of Stockholm, by a hard-working single mother. “When I wanted my first computer, my mother said, ‘I can’t afford a computer. If you want one, you have to work.’ So I managed to get a job in a video game store in my hometown. That’s how I learned how to hustle,” he says. Finding ways to monetize personal interests has been a hallmark of his *modus operandi* ever since.

Karlsson got into photography during his last year of high school and was shooting for the youth section of the local newspaper by the time he was 18. He moved to Stockholm the day after high school graduation and began working for *Metro*, the first free newspaper in Europe. Sensing how competitive the media business was becoming, he armed himself with a one-year course in reportage writing at Tollare, a vocational school outside the capital known for journalism.

Like Norrköping, Stockholm proved “too small” for Said, prompting a move to Berlin in 2007, where he exhausted his savings looking for work amid the city’s many artists. He returned to Sweden to photograph musicians before landing his first “real job” writing about tech and video games for a now-defunct agency called PM. “It was pretty free, and I could do it from anywhere as long as I delivered what they expected every day, so I came to Japan, because I’ve always felt drawn to it,” he says, citing early Japanese video games as a particular draw.

KARLSSON BOUNCED BETWEEN KOREA, China and Japan on tourist visas, eventually finding himself back in Sweden searching for ways to move to Japan long-term. He settled on Japanese language school in Tokyo in 2010, while also stringing for Sweden’s *Sydsvenskan* newspaper.

The day after the 3/11 disaster, he quit school and began freelancing for various Swedish news outlets and doing internet video interviews. He later stayed with a family in temporary housing in Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture, on the first anniversary of the disaster. “It’s always been my thing to talk with people after other press has left,” he says, leaving the hard news to the large agencies and focusing instead on people and their experiences.

Karlsson helped the FCCJ build and run its new website in 2013, and in the winter of 2014 moved back to Sweden to finish a degree in informatics he had been chipping away at through cor-

respondence at Mid Sweden University. “Basically computer science,” he says. “I spent a year in Sweden learning how to code. Actually, I have been running a small software company besides doing all this journalism. I’ve made a couple of games.” The plot thickens.

As it turns out, from his teenage years Karlsson has been an adept at, perhaps even a devotee of, the Japanese video game “Dance Dance Revolution,” a large arcade game where players advance by stepping on colored floor sensors to the timing of increasingly complex tunes. “I got really obsessed with this game, and I even imported a big arcade machine from Japan to Sweden” at no small cost, he says.

“I don’t like writing. I see it as a way to be able to do everything else that I love about being a journalist”

HE MET AMERICAN PROGRAMMER Matt Scott in Tokyo, and the two decided to make a similar game for the iPhone where the fingers take the place of the feet. In January of 2011,

with the gift of free music from friends and no budget whatsoever, they produced *Rhythm Control*, which shot to the No. 1 slot for music games on Apple’s App Store in Japan. They used the profits to start a small Sweden-based firm called Daikonsoft, which Karlsson now owns entirely, and eventually produced a sequel. *Rhythm Control 2* can still be enjoyed for free and passed half a million downloads last year.

Now back in Japan once again, Karlsson shoots and writes reportage pieces for TT, Scandinavia’s largest news agency, covering a variety of human-interest topics, most recently the progress of LGBT rights in Japan. “I really don’t like writing,” he says. “I see it as a way to be able to do everything else that I love about being a journalist,” such as meeting people, traveling, taking photographs and doing research. “The writing is a necessary evil.”

He draws photography inspiration from “the old classic street photographers,” Henri Cartier-Bresson, Brassai, and the Swedish photographer Christer Strömholm. He has an eye for natural, spontaneous moments, and often uses a smaller, more discreet camera: “I shoot from the hip sometimes.” His street fashion blog *tokyofaces.com*, although semi-dormant, still gets regular traffic and remains a

source of new clients, he says.

Karlsson’s photos have appeared in a variety of places, from Bloomberg to Pecha Kucha to the cover of a recent Swedish edition of the Haruki Murakami novel *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, a shot taken in Shinjuku. He’s now moving toward video production out of personal interest as well as increasing demand from clients.

Speaking with Karlsson for a while, one gets the sense he may have still more hobbies, facets we’ve yet to touch on. “Actually,” he says, as our time is winding down, “I have been DJing quite a lot . . .”



Tyler Rothmar is a Tokyo-based writer and editor.

Flotsam, jetsam and Uncle Sam

Tales of con men in Taisho Japan resonate because they betrayed the insecurity that sometimes appears at the heart of expatriate life

by PETER O'CONNOR

“Personally I can see no points whatever in tropical life,” wrote Britain’s first press magnate, Lord Northcliffe, in his account of the round-the-world cruise that took him to Japan and China in 1921:

The only people I find who like it are (1) Scotsmen, who will go anywhere in the world, make money, and settle down. . . . (2) People who at home would occupy humble positions, but are able to figure here as Under-Secretaries, Members of the Council, and the rest of it. (The social status in these little communities is steam-rollered down to exact accuracy). (3) People, including missionaries, who come with a sense of duty. . . . (4) Suburban folks, who, instead of having one little household drudge, bloom into petty magnificence begotten of the obsequiousness of four or five Orientals.

When Northcliffe died in August 1923, he was convinced that German spies were poisoning his ice cream, so he may not have been right on the money, but his further reflection, “Now and then I get a peep into a bungalow and see a white lady within . . . clothed in her bedraggled dressing gown” could have come straight from Somerset Maugham’s vinegary pen.

Despite the enormous success of their trading houses, the lasting achievements of their engineers, builders and many writers and the enquiring spirit of their newspapers, the association of the foreign communities of East Asia with boredom, jumped-up mediocrity and, above all, with failure, has gathered the force of truism.

Few interwar writers stayed long enough in Asia to write in any depth about the foreign communities there. Compared to Kipling and Conrad before him, or in his day, Maurice Collis and (with gritted teeth) George Orwell and Forster, Maugham was only an occasional visitor East of Suez. But both the drifters and the pillars of the foreign communities of East Asia come out worse in his writings than in any of his contemporaries’.

Either the degeneracy of the unsettled rebukes the prosperity of the settled community, or the pillars of the community are shown as heartless frauds. In *The Taipan*, after a slap-up lunch at his bank, Maugham’s prosperous executive of Shanghai, once a callow “griffin” fresh from the London suburbs, experiences a hallucinatory reckoning with the ghosts of old Shanghailanders in the English cemetery. In *A Friend in Need*, Maugham’s cheerfully ruth-



Lord Northcliffe looks on

less merchant of Kobe, Edward Hyde Burton, offers a job to an old bridge partner fallen on hard times, on condition he completes a “rather difficult” three-mile swim from the Shioya Club to the creek at Tarumi. When his old associate drowns, Burton explains, “Well, I hadn’t got a vacancy in my office at the moment.”

Both stories, first published in 1925, reflect an ambivalence about the true value of expatriate status. Who really wants to be a big fish in a small pond? Maugham’s phenomenal sales figures among the Anglophone settlers in East Asia indicate that, however viciously he twisted the knife, his readers bought into this ambivalence, and may

have even enjoyed reading about their inner guppy.

THE TREATY PORT PECKING ORDER

By the turn of the century, the settled communities of Yokohama and Kobe had established a tight pecking order headed by merchants, minor Treaty Port consuls, clergy and schoolteachers, with a flotsam of resting actors, abortionists, counterfeiterers, beachcombers, and elopers. Journalists and whores seem to have occupied a more ambiguous space, swanning around the higher reaches but feeding at the bottom according to necessity.

Between the two groups – the one established, the other transient – esprit de corps required that a deep insularity be maintained towards all new arrivals, especially those with a positive impression of their new home, who would be treated with the utmost suspicion until they saw the light.

MOST MINOR FOREIGN CROOKS preferred to put the bite on the Japanese, but some, like Leonard Hartman, “Manager of British Lion Films of Elstree,” over in Kobe to “investigate conditions,” mixed up a blend of hard-luck and prejudice bound to touch the heart of even the flintiest expatriate.

Hartman’s line was that he had just arrived in Kobe (or Yokohama or Nagasaki or Hakodate) when he met a “well-dressed” Japanese who drugged him and made off with \$600 Canadian and a diamond ring. On the strength of this tale of “Oriental duplicity,” Hartman managed to renew his fortunes several times over before he was seen onto the next ship to Shanghai.

In the summer of 1918, the Count de Toulouse Lautrec de Savine, a Russian General once in the suite of H.R.H. Arthur the Duke of Connaught dropped into

Peter O’Connor writes and lectures on the international media history of East Asia.

Kobe to offer his services as a lecturer on Russian affairs. The Count flourished letters of credit practicable in America and Madrid, backed by a friendly note from the Equerry to the Duke of Connaught but, perhaps because they lacked the imprimatur of, say, British Lion Films, the Count’s bona fides failed to impress, and he and his lecture series left suddenly, also for Shanghai.

But Hartman and the Count were small time. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of their adventures was the amount of space the English-language newspapers gave them.

HARDY PERENNIAL

For a more significant impostor, and one whose motives were far more opaque and whose imposture aroused what now reads like a surplus hostility in the foreign community, let us turn to the sometime Captain William Howard Hardy (1836-1918).

Between July 1853 and March 1854, Commodore Matthew Perry led two naval expeditions to Japan, ending her isolation and securing the Kanagawa Treaty. Perry died within a few years of his final expedition and so was not in a position to appreciate the return to Japan of a “former crewmember, one William Hardy, now a regular Captain.”

When Hardy visited Japan in 1917, it was as the last surviving link with the Perry Expeditions, and he was wined and speeched and honored by everyone from the Emperor down, as if to make up for any shortcomings in the greeting given him and his commanding officer 64 years earlier. Described by the *Japan Chronicle* as “a tall, patriarchal figure with a long white beard, clad incongruously as a sailor with bell-bottomed trousers and looking for all the world like Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner,” Captain Hardy impressed all who met him with his *USS Mississippi* sailor’s cap, his tales of derring-do and the eight pieces of surgeon’s silver replacing the ribs he had lost in the Civil War and the Spanish-

Hardy put a gun to his head, but the bullet only punctured his starboard ear.

American War. When Hardy was taken to the beach at Kurigahama where the Expedition had landed back on July 14, 1853, the clarity of his recollections was a marvel and a blessing to witness.

Not long after he had returned to his native Seattle, Captain Hardy applied for membership of the Veterans Association there. The club secretary duly sent off to the Naval Department in Washington for a copy of his service record. After a reply came stating that the Department had no service record for a William Hardy, he was arrested and charged with misrepresentation.

In Japan, there were red faces among Hardy’s sponsors at the American consulate. Back in Seattle, Hardy put a gun to his head, but the bullet only punctured his starboard ear.

After his botched suicide attempt, little more was heard of Hardy.

Captain Hardy’s failed deception belongs somewhere between grandiose delusion and second-rate fiction. In a novel his character would have hampered the suspension of disbelief. In life, the community that granted him credibility felt badly let down by his failure to bring authenticity and value to their lives.

Michael Heyward once wrote, in the context of the Ern Malley affair, “A good hoax is like a snapshot of the Zeitgeist.” For a few months in 1917, a crowd of people who should have known better bought into William Hardy’s fantasy about his part in the expedition that changed Japan forever. When his story fell apart, they were left to contemplate their own gullibility, and many were deeply unhappy.

Their reaction demonstrated a fundamental lack of assurance, which is odd, because, although they were ultimately powerless, the position of the foreign communities in pre-war Japan and China was ultimately stronger than that of Britain’s far more domineering minorities in Malaya and India, for it rested more on individual achievement than on imperial *diktat*.

Whatever Maugham wrote or Northcliffe thought, the foreign settler communities of their day were no worse and no less successful than people anywhere. But in letting Captain Hardy get under their skin, the foreign communities of Japan betrayed the insecurity that sometimes appears at the heart of expatriate life in Japan. Perhaps the mediocrity driving the Captain’s claim to a walk-on part in their own early history irritated the foreign community so violently because it sounded such a strong echo of their own. ●



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A young mayor attempts to lead a struggling
Hokkaido city out of bankruptcy

A tale of too many cities

by DAN SLOAN

“Yubari is financially stricken, but we’re repaying ¥67 of debt every second. Japan, at the same time, is incurring ¥825,000 in new debt every second. I support the government policy that regions need to come up with their own solutions to their problems. The point is that the central government hasn’t come up with its own solutions.”
– Yubari Mayor Naomichi Suzuki, April 26, 2016

IN 2007, THE CITY of Yubari went bankrupt, strapped with some ¥35.3 billion in debt and municipal obligations, a long-dormant coal-based economy better left in the ground and a rapidly declining and aging population less than 10 percent its peak size. The road to its perdition had been paved over decades by dying industry, easy credit, poor governance, fiscal desperation, grim demographics and even bad luck – a narrative in Japan not limited to Yubari.

The Hokkaido locale, known for coal and melons, was not the first in Japan to go bankrupt and won’t be the last, but its humbling earned a place in national infamy with a law aimed at preventing future Yubari-like collapses through greater fiscal transparency. A subsequent stringent long-term recovery plan that could have made the International Monetary Fund blush, later became the responsibility in 2011 of its newly elected mayor, Naomichi Suzuki, then the nation’s youngest.

Around the time of its failure, Suzuki had worked in Yubari on consignment from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and like the plot of a Yoji Yamada melodrama, was later encouraged to run for mayor after building up strong ties within the community.

He won handily, and now is its ambassador and visionary.

BANKRUPTCY FORCED CONSOLIDATION of social services, salary cuts and steep retrenchments, closure of public facilities, onerous higher taxes, and raised the prospect of merger with more prosperous Hokkaido locales. However, for Suzuki and Yubari’s less-than-enthusiastic neighbors, becoming larger was not the answer.

“There were a number of bankrupt municipalities including Yubari around 2007,” Suzuki said at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan in April. “There were some cases when



Naomichi
Suzuki at
the Club

cities merged and then split again, as the tie-ups didn’t work very well. If you neglect making the smallest unit efficient, it won’t work.”

The first great merger push that began nearly 150 years ago reduced the number of towns, hamlets and villages from over 70,000 to about 15,000. A postwar drive later trimmed that total to four digits, with the current number about 1,800, still shy of a central government target of 1,000.

Since their origin, local administrative authorities were tasked with regional public services, such as primary education and local tax collection, then took on duties such as running junior high schools and fire departments. As their liberty to redirect funds into other projects grew and bank lending supported development, mistakes were made and horrific losses mounted.

For Yubari, the hole deeper than its mines was tourism, or the lack of it. Its Coal History Village was among the Hokkaido non-sequiturs to travel parks that included the Gluck Kingdom in Obihiro and the Chinese wonderland Tenkaen in Noboribetsu. All are now closed, but the hardship continued for Yubari and other urban centers as population and economic flight added to the blight.

Dan Sloan is editor-in-chief of the Nissan Global Media Center, former president of the FCCJ, and resident of Yokohama.

In the wake of the recovery plan, Hokkaido issued low-interest loans to Yubari. According to Suzuki, the central government set aside some ¥100 billion for regional revitalization, of which Yubari received ¥77.7 million. “There’s a limit to the comprehensive finances of the government,” he said.

THE MAN CHARGED WITH overseeing Japan’s regional recovery, Minister Shigeru Ishiba, told Bloomberg in January there would be winners and losers in the effort: “Each village, town and city needs to work out how to revive their own community,” Ishiba said. “Does that mean wider gaps among the regions? You bet.”

Those gaps, Suzuki said, are exacerbated by central government policies that force cities to compete against each other, such as universal child healthcare. It is paid for by the government through age three but then left to municipalities to subsidize further coverage, depending on their capabilities.

Yubari is now clearly focused on efficiency over size. Once home to 120,000 in 1960, the city has experienced the greatest population exodus of any Japanese municipality. Yubari was envisioned over the course of its recovery plan to shrink to 7,300 residents, but may become even smaller. “When the population declines to 4,000, we should have a compact city, and consolidate the people in a compact area to create a more compact and functional city,” Suzuki said. “It’s just depressing if you talk only about declining population, but I’m not thinking that way.”

In March, Suzuki met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and related ministers, telling them that the next stage is to focus both on financial reconstruction and revitalization, with a comprehensive plan coming in August. “The Abe Cabinet places the biggest priority on economic recovery, but at the same time we know Japan has a long-term debt burden.”

With its own population set to decline by 20 percent, a rapidly graying demographic, and debt mounting despite attempts at fiscal consolidation, is Yubari’s history a peek at Japan’s future? Hopefully not, says Suzuki.

“‘Mission Impossible’ for Yubari was actually possible. We’ve been able to repay ¥9.5 billion as of March this year, and financial revitalization has been done to a certain degree,” he said. “Yubari epitomizes Japan, but the future of Japan should not be like Yubari.”



森 (Forest): photographs by Hisashi Mochizuki

FCCJ EXHIBITION

MY MEMORIES OF taking pictures 40 years ago, holed up in a shelter atop Mount Hachimantai in the middle of winter waiting for the weather to clear up, are as clear to me as if it all happened yesterday.

Blizzards so strong they seemed to lift the shelter off the ground continued for days on end. Just as I was getting fed up with the blizzard that had lasted for two weeks, the eastern sky colored deep red with the morning sun. It was the most moving thing I have ever experienced. Also, the memory of my elation at seeing the yellow color of the stripe in the

middle of the road after descending from the nearly pure white world is still vividly in my mind. The shapes of the rime-covered trees extending far off into the distance and the morning moon sparkling above the trees gave a romantic, dream-like impression – as though I were on another planet.

Perhaps due to climate changes, it is now difficult to view large, photogenic examples of rime-covered trees, but even now, I head off toward the mountain top through the deep snow with a heavy pack on my back, and my only desire is to feel those emotions from 40 years ago in the middle of a blizzard. ●

Hisashi Mochizuki is a freelance photographer who works regularly for ANA’s *Wingspan* magazine. He also traveled to 60 countries in six years for the series, “The Roots of Vegetables,” which appeared in *Shukan Bunshun*. He was one of 10 photographers chosen to shoot the Beijing Olympics, and is chairperson of the Japan-China Photography and Cultural Exchange Association. He has held several exhibitions of his work.

JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE . . .

. . . on Monday, June 13 at 7:00 pm for the magical pairing of showbiz royalty Kyoko Koizumi and spark plug Fumi Nikaido, as radical aunt and bored niece, in the thrillingly quirky *Kako: My Sullen Past*, the second film from award-winning writer-director-author Shiro Maeda. Nikaido plays 18-year-old Kako, whose summer vacation is shaken up by the arrival of long-dead Aunt Mikiko, a wisecracking eccentric who is apparently still on the run. Mikiko takes up residence in Kako’s room despite her niece’s fierce protestations, but when Kako hears about her aunt’s days as a radical bombmaker, a grudging respect is born. Stuffed full of zingy dialog, oddball characters, off-kilter comedy, outrageous twists and unexpected turns, *Kako* never wears out its welcome. It moves so quickly, in fact, that its many screwball pleasures may require a second or even third viewing. Nikaido and Maeda will be on hand for the Q&A session. (Japan, 2016; 120 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.)



IN MEMORIAM

With deep regret I wish to inform FCCJ members that David Watts, a former Tokyo Bureau Chief for the Times and a past Regular Member and officer of the FCCJ passed away in the UK on April 10. He was 72.

A Times journalist since 1974, Watts joined the FCCJ in November 1984 on his posting to Japan as the London

newspaper's Tokyo correspondent.

He was a popular member and took part in Club activities. Watts served on the Bruce MacDonell Board as secretary 1986-1987 and was 2nd Vice President on the Naoaki Usui Board of 1987-1988.

He came to the post in Tokyo after four years as Southeast Asia correspondent for the paper, stationed

in Singapore, from where he covered the ASEAN countries and made regular trips into Cambodia and Vietnam.

We offer our deepest condolences to his wife Shizuko and his two sons, Mark and Dominic.

His obituary, which appeared in the Times on May 17, appears on our website.

- Peter Langan, FCCJ Acting President



REGULAR MEMBERS

CHLOE ARENSBERG was named Asia Bureau Chief for CBS News in April 2014, where she directs the news division's coverage of the region. Based in China, she manages both the Beijing and Tokyo bureaus of CBS News. She earned a bachelor's degree from Barnard College, Columbia University and a master's degree from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Since joining CBS News in 2002, Arensberg has held a number of key positions within the New York and Washington, D.C. newsrooms. She has covered such major international and national news events as the 2015 earthquake in Nepal; the Hong Kong protests in 2014; the regional disputes in the South China Sea; the 2004 and 2008 Presidential campaigns; Hurricane Katrina; and the earthquake in Haiti.

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RICOH imagines new ways to change waste into value

Let's do well by doing good



As RICOH marks its 80th anniversary, the company took the first step on a fresh path to a sustainable future with the opening of its new Eco Business Development Center on April 15. Located in Gotemba near the foot of Mt. Fuji, the new facility combines active recycling with research into new frontiers of sustainability and outreach to raise awareness of the potential for sustainability.

RICOH's Reuse & Recycling Center at Gotemba will process 20,000 used multifunction printers each year, as lead facility among three plants across Japan. But with researchers on site closely monitoring the process, the aim is to continuously improve reuse and recycling efforts and extend efforts into a wider range of products.

The co-located Eco-Business Technology Verification Center has a wider remit to explore potential for conserving resources and harnessing energy from new sources, such plastic waste and forest biomass as well as micro-hydro and battery research. The focus will be on "open innovation" through collaborative efforts with academia, local communities and others.

Gotemba's third function will be information outreach and environmental education, raising awareness of all facets of eco-business potential among local communities, schools and RICOH customers.

The opening of this new facility marks an important new phase in RICOH's commitment from the 1990s to do well by doing good: growing its business by reducing environmental impact.

For more information, see: www.ricoh.com/release/2016/0415_1.html

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