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Revealing Kim

Anna Fifield on the research behind
The Great Successor, her biography of
Kim Jong Un



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FROM THE PRESIDENT



FIRST OF ALL, ALLOW me to express my deepest gratitude to all Members for making the election a success. In recent times, achieving a quorum for the General Membership Meetings has often turned out to be a big headache. But as the newly elected First Vice President (acting as President due to the absence of the president), it is indeed a great pleasure for me to see our Members show once again that on matters of extreme urgency they do not falter in responding. This compels us to work hard for the greater benefit of the Club and its membership.

Our new board has started functioning with a renewed hope that the difficulties we face after our move to the new location will not be insurmountable. The new board is a fine blend of old and new, which should pave the way for an infusion of new ideas while keeping on the track of our journey. It's true that not everything is in order at the new premises. We've yet to work out, for example, how to arrange the format of media luncheon events that were a past favorite, both of the journalists attending the events and the speakers coming to share their ideas and opinions.

Our revenues are still a problem, mostly due to the expected shortfalls resulting from the huge expenditure related to the move. However, as for our professional activities, the Club has little to complain about. The workroom atmosphere and facilities have marked significant improvement and our regular press events are gradually showing signs of returning to the high standard for which the Club has always been acclaimed. The library, despite the departure of a staff member, is providing valuable services to Members. In addition, all our staff, from the general manager to the front desk personnel, are working very hard to ensure that past standards are not compromised in any way. They all deserve our deep appreciation for their dedication.

As for other services, there have been some setbacks that are mostly related to the move and to the new outsourcing company taking over most of our food and beverage related functions. However, here too, are obvious signs of improvement. The Pen and Quill dining operation has been re-launched and the Sunday brunch is already functional. The new board is also determined to keep a close eye over the issues of food quality and prices, things close to Members' hearts.

Next year, our Club will celebrate its 75th founding anniversary. I'm sure that over the next quarter century, we'll move forward as always, despite all the ups and downs that at times might compel us to face questions about the rationality of our survival or the validity of our existence. I'm confident that as long as we all think about the well-being of the Club as a whole, our path towards the centenary will never be derailed.

– **Monzurul Huq, First Vice President**

RESOURCES

Global resources for women journalists

■ NETWORKS

Launched in 2017, the *Coalition for Women in Journalism* aims to foster “camaraderie between women journalists around the globe,” offering resources, events, advocacy and mentoring from experienced female journalists. The Coalition has contacts in countries across Latin America and Asia.

Women in Media Network Japan was formed in 2018 by 86 women journalists, growing out of the #WithYou movement against sexual harassment.

The Washington-based *International Women's Media Foundation* was founded in 1990 and today provides grants and training, offers several awards and organizes reporting trips for women journalists from all over the world, with a focus on under-reported stories.

The *International Association of Women in Radio & Television* is a global network for women working in broadcast and electronic media. The IAWRT supports global projects focused on women and media, organizes conferences and offers professional skills training opportunities.

■ SAFETY RESOURCES

The International Association of Women in Radio & Television has published a *Safety Handbook for Women Journalists*, a 95-page guide aimed at female reporters in conflict zones that includes sections on risk assessment, online harassment and travel safety.

The International Women's Media Foundation has set up an *Emergency Fund* to assist women journalists with legal and medical bills, as well as relocation costs.

■ RESOURCES ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The *International Federation of Journalists* is working with the International Labor Organization on a campaign to stop violence against women journalists. Resources include toolkits, publications and links to relevant policies, including on the gender pay gap. The IFJ also provides support and resources to directly address problems—including harassment—and to pressure local governments for meaningful change.

■ FINDING MENTORS

Digital Women Leaders offers women journalists free one-on-one coaching for 30 minutes. While most of the coaches listed work in US media, there are a few based around the world. Still, some issues—like workplace discrimination and the pay gap—are universal.

The *Coalition for Women in Journalism* offers mentoring from experienced female journalists in Mexico, Latin America and Asia.

■ GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

For a general list of grant and fellowships available to both men and women, visit the *GIJN resource page*.

The *International Women's Media Foundation* has a number of grants for women journalists around the world, with varying deadlines throughout the year. These include *Women's Health Reporting* on reproductive health, rights and justice in the Americas, in partnership with the Women's Equality Center; *Reporting Grants for Women's Stories* for gender-sensitive coverage of under-reported topics, in partnership with the Secular Society; and the *Kim Wall Memorial Fund* for reporting on subcultures, in partnership with the Wall family. The IWMF also runs the *Howard G. Buffett Fund for Women Journalists*, which supports projects including educational opportunities, investigative reporting and media development initiatives.

■ AWARDS FOR WOMEN

The International Women's Media Foundation sponsors the *Courage in Journalism Awards*, which honor female journalists who face danger to uncover the truth and raise the bar for reporting under threat or duress. The prizes are open to women journalists worldwide and consider nominations.

The IWMF's *Lifetime Achievement Award* honors trailblazing women leaders who have demonstrated extraordinary strength and a commitment to press freedom and to advancing women's voices around the world. These candidates can also be retired journalists.

The International Association of Women in Radio & Television's *IAWRT Documentary Awards* give out a \$1,000 prize every two years in three different categories, including Social Impact, Innovation and Emerging Talent. Entry is open to women producers, directors and journalists working with radio, television and digital media anywhere in the world.

■ FINDING FEMALE EXPERTS

The *Request a Woman Scientist* platform sponsored by 500 Women Scientists helps journalists connect with an extensive multidisciplinary network of vetted women in science for subject matter expertise, project collaboration, conferences and panels.

Women's Media Center's SheSource is a database of over 1,100 vetted female experts on diverse topics around the world, searchable by name, keyword and area of expertise. Source bios and photos are provided, and experts can be contacted through a form on the website.

Women Also Know Stuff has a directory of scholars, organized by research area and locations around the world.

Excerpted from resources assembled by GIJN contributing editor *Kira Zalan*. Reprinted with permission.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

In the service of JFK



Prior to his speech, US Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy conversed with Igor Oganessoff (Wall Street Journal) and his wife at the FCCJ on Feb. 9, 1962, in front of the club's calligraphy screen by Toko Shinoda*. Kennedy spoke at one of the few professional events held at the Club in its earlier days—he was preceded in January by Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir and followed in May by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. He noted that “Japan is importing far more from our country than she is exporting to us.” Within a few years, the number of professional events at the Club increased significantly, and the US–Japan trade balance had reversed strongly in favor of Japan.

Robert Kennedy—better known as “Bobby”—was born on Nov. 20, 1925, into a politically prominent family. It included, among his siblings, John F. “Jack” Kennedy, who became US president in 1960 and was assassinated in 1962, and Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy, who became an influential US senator in 1962 and served until his death in 2009.

Robert, following service in the US Navy (1944–1946), graduated from Harvard in 1948 with a degree in political science and briefly worked as an accredited correspondent in the Middle East for the *Boston Post*. But politics became his ambition, perhaps as a result of participating in his brother John's 1946 campaign for Congress, and he entered law school in 1948. Following graduation in 1951, he again briefly served as a correspondent for the *Boston Post*, covering the San Francisco Peace Treaty that would bring an end to the occupation of Japan by the Allied Powers.

Later that year, Robert traveled with his brother John, then a congressman, to Israel, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and Japan, deepening a relationship that later resulted in his playing a key role in John's successful 1960 campaign for the presidency. Appointed US Attorney General, Robert became an influential advisor to the president and expanded the power of that office to a historic high. He made a name for himself fighting organized crime, exposing corruption in the Teamsters union, supporting the civil rights movement and opposing the death penalty as well as playing a key role in the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

Following the assassination of President Kennedy in November of 1962, Robert expanded his own political base and was elected to the US Senate in 1964. As a Senator, he advocated for gun control, supported labor and minorities, pushed for human rights in foreign policy and sought to end the Vietnam war with an honorable peace agreement. He decided to run for president in 1968. While on the campaign trail in California, he was assassinated by a Palestinian, Sirhan Sirhan on June 5, 1968.

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

*(See page 298 of our history book for background on the Shinoda screen, and the May, 2019 issue of Number 1 Shimbun re Shinoda screen update.)

The new FCCJ Board



PRESIDENT **PETER LANGAN**, freelance, has been in the news business in Asia for 30 years, with postings in Japan and Singapore, covering stories on the ground from Jakarta and Beijing to Mumbai, Ulaanbaatar and many points in-between. He was the Tokyo Bureau Chief of Bloomberg News from 2005 to 2009, and later as an Editor-at-Large led the bureau's news team that won two SOPA awards for coverage of the Fukushima disaster. He is from the UK, more precisely the City of Liverpool—well known for producing lousy music and useless football teams, with the exception of Everton FC.



1st VICE PRESIDENT
MONZURUL HUQ, *Daily Prothom Alo*, has been in journalism from his days as a freelancer while still a student in the late seventies. Huq later joined the United Nations as an Information Officer, but left in the late 1980s and moved to BBC London where he worked as a radio producer. He landed in Japan in mid-nineties to work at NHK radio and began working for a Bangladesh daily as their correspondent. When the editor of that newspaper launched a new daily, *Prothom Alo*, in 1998, Huq joined as their Japan correspondent, and is now East Asia Bureau Chief. He has authored a number of books on Japan and other issues, including a memoir reflecting on his journalism activities. He has been actively involved in Club activities throughout his tenure as a member of the FCCJ and served as President in 2009.



2nd VICE PRESIDENT
ROBERT WHITING, freelance, is the author of several successful books on contemporary Japanese culture, including *Tokyo Underworld*, *The Meaning of Ichiro*, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat* and the best-selling *You Gotta Have Wa*. He has published 20 other books in Japanese. He has written for *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Japan Times* as well as for Japanese-language publications, including *Shukan Asahi* and *Bungei Shunju*. He authored a manga series for Kodansha that sold 750,000 copies in graphic-novel form. At present, he writes a weekly column for *Yukan Fuji*. He has lived in Japan on and off for the past 50 years, and is a graduate of Sophia University.



TREASURER
WILLEM KORTEKAAS has been an Associate Member since 1983. Following a 25-year career in banking with ABN Bank and postings to Africa, Canada, the US and Japan, he set up a Japan-based consulting firm that focused on Japanese M&A in Europe. He is a director of several foreign-owned companies in Japan. Past and present honorary functions include Chairman of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Vice-chairman of the Japan-Netherlands Society, Vice-chairman of the European Business Community (EBC) and Member of the Expert Committee of the Japan Investment Council. He lives in Joetsu and is trying to become an expert in Niigata-ken saké.



SECRETARY
TAKASHI KAWACHI joined the *Mainichi Shimbun* in 1970, after graduation from the Keio University faculty of Law and Politics. He began his career as a local reporter at the newspaper's Chiba branch. He was transferred to the political department in 1975, where he covered the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Defense and the LDP. In 1988, he was assigned to Washington D.C as correspondent, where he covered the White House, the Department of Defense, two presidential elections and the Gulf War. He was named foreign-news editor in 1996 and editorial writer in 1998. In 2002, he became a *Mainichi* board director, manager of the Nagoya office, and later, head of the Tokyo digital media department. He is working as a freelance journalist since his resignation from the *Mainichi* in 2006.

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE



KHALIDON AZHARI is president of PanOrient News, an American media company producing TV News Packages and articles for wires and print publications, mainly in Arabic, with a focus on Japan and East Asia. Azhari has been the bureau chief of WAM (UAE-based news agency) and a correspondent for PETRA (Jordan News) since the mid-nineties. Additionally, as a former correspondent for various Arabic media such as MBC, CNBC Arabia, Dubai TV, he has been a regular contributor to BBC Arabic Radio and TV since the mid-nineties. Azhari has been the voice of Japan and East Asia to West Asia and the Arabic world for more than a quarter of a century and is a recipient of an award from the Japan-Arab Association for his contributions to media relations and for strengthening ties between Japan and the Arab countries.



MEHDI BASSIRI, an Associate Member, was a career diplomat with the Iranian foreign affairs ministry. He served at the Iranian Embassy in London England before his posting as first secretary to the Iranian Embassy in Tokyo in charge of consulate affairs and press relations. In 1980 he resigned his diplomatic career because of disagreements with the new Iranian revolutionary regime and established his own trading company. Immediately after becoming an FCCJ member, he became involved in the Club's social activities, first joining the Associate Liaison Committee, and organizing an annual Persian New Year Night that drew capacity bookings to enjoy Iranian food and music. He has served as co-chair of the Membership Marketing committee, and chairman of the Wine Committee. He has also been a long-time member of the Food and Beverage Committee, including serving as secretary, co-chair and chairman.



WARREN DEVALIER, Associate Member, has 50 years of career experience in finance, general management and entrepreneurship, with Citibank, Exxon Corporation, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Interface Inc., a consulting firm he founded in Japan to serve Asian clients in development of business and global leadership skills. He is an alumnus of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and a professional coach certified under a joint program of the Executive Education Division of Columbia Business School and the Department of Organization and Leadership, Teachers College, Columbia University. A native of New Orleans, he displayed a passion for food and wine well before the word 'foodie' entered the English language. Rumor has it that he dabbles in a miscellany of hobbies, including long-distance running, poetry, Argentine tango, and flamenco guitar.



ABIGAIL LEONARD is a Tokyo-based journalist who covers Japanese politics and culture for print and broadcast news outlets in the US and Europe. She has written stories for the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek* and *Vox*; produced video pieces for the *New York Times* and radio stories for NPR, BBC and Deutsche Welle. Before she moved to Japan, she wrote and produced long-form news documentary stories as a staff producer for PBS, ABC and Al Jazeera America and was also a lead writer for two news analysis programs: "Countdown with Keith Olbermann" and "The War Room with Jennifer Granholm." Stories she's reported from Japan have earned a National Headliner Award and a James Beard Foundation Media Award Nomination. She was a 2011 East-West Center Japan Fellow and a 2010 UN Foundation Journalism Fellow.

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On the twisted trail of Comrade Kim

In this excerpt from a fascinating new book, the *Washington Post* correspondent describes her obsession to discover the secrets of the young tyrant who now stars on the global stage

By Anna Fifield

I was sitting on Air Koryo flight 152 to Pyongyang, ready to make my sixth trip to the North Korean capital but my first since the third-generation leader, Kim Jong Un, had taken over. It was August 28, 2014.

Going to North Korea as a journalist is always a bizarre and fascinating and frustrating experience, but this trip would reach a new level of surrealness.

For one, I was sitting next to Jon Andersen, a three-hundred-pound professional wrestler from San Francisco who goes by the ring name of Strong Man and is known for moves including the diving neckbreaker and gorilla press drop. We settled into the red seats of the aging Ilyushin jetliner, which, with their white-doily-covered headrests and gold brocade cushions, looked like armchairs from Grandma's front room.

Andersen was one of three American wrestlers who, their best days behind them, had washed up in Japan, where their size had helped make them the top attractions they no longer were at home. They enjoyed modest levels of fame and income there. But they were still in the market for new opportunities, so the three were on their way to a gig like no other: the first-ever Pyongyang

Feature: *The Great Successor*

International Pro Wrestling Games, a weekend of martial arts-related events organized by Antonio Inoki, a lantern-jawed Japanese wrestler who was promoting peace through sports.

As we took off, Andersen told me he was curious to see what North Korea was really like, to get past the clichés of the American media. I didn't have the heart to tell him that he was flying into a charade crafted over decades specifically to make sure no visitor could see what North Korea was really like, that he would not have one unplanned encounter or one ordinary meal.

The next time I saw Andersen, he was wearing tiny black Lycra shorts with STRONGMAN emblazoned across his butt. He came romping into the Ryugyong Chung Ju-yung Gymnasium in Pyongyang in front of thirteen thousand carefully selected North Koreans as the sound system blared: "He's a macho man."

He seemed so much bigger without his clothes on. I gasped at his bicep and thigh muscles, which seemed to be straining to escape his skin like sausage meat from its casing. I could only imagine the shock that went through the North Koreans, many of whom had experienced a famine that killed hundreds of thousands of their compatriots.

It was as foreign and as mind-bending as anything I'd ever seen in North Korea: American farce in the home of the world's most malevolent propagandists. It soon dawned on the North Koreans in the audience, no strangers to deception, that it was all highly choreographed, more entertainment than sport. With that realization, they laughed at the theatrics.

I, however, had trouble discerning what was real and what was not.

IT WAS SIX YEARS since I'd last been to North Korea. My previous visit was with the New York Philharmonic in the winter of 2008. It was a trip that had, at the time, felt to me like a turning point in history.

The United States' most prestigious orchestra was performing in a country founded on hatred of America. The American and North Korean flags stood like bookends at either side of the stage, while the orchestra played George Gershwin's "An American in Paris."

"Someday a composer might write a work entitled *Americans in Pyongyang*," conductor Lorin Maazel told the North Koreans in the theater. They later played "Arirang," the heart-rending Korean folk song about separation, which visibly affected even these carefully selected Pyongyang residents.

But the turning point never came.

That same year, North Korea's "Dear Leader," Kim Jong Il, suffered a debilitating stroke that almost claimed his life. From that point on, the regime was focused on one thing and one thing only: ensuring that the Kim dynasty remained intact.

Behind the scenes, plans were taking shape to install Kim Jong Il's youngest son, a man who was at that time still only twenty-four, as the next leader of North Korea. It would be two more years until his coronation was announced to the outside world. When it was, a few analysts hoped that Kim Jong Un would prove to be a reformer. After all, the young man had been educated in Switzerland, traveled in the West, and been exposed to capitalism. Surely he would try to bring some of that to North Korea?

Similar hopes had greeted the ascension of London-educated eye doctor Bashar al-Assad in Syria in 2000 and would later await Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who toured

Silicon Valley and let women drive after taking power in Saudi Arabia in 2017.

But mostly, there was a different kind of optimism—an optimism that the end was nigh.

From nearby Seoul to faraway Washington, DC, many government officials and analysts boldly predicted—sometimes in whispers, sometimes in shouts—widespread instability, a mass exodus into China, a military coup, imminent collapse. Behind all the doom mongering was one shared thought: surely this regime couldn't survive the transition to a third totalitarian leader called Kim, much less to a twentysomething who'd been educated at fancy European schools and had an obsession about the Chicago Bulls—a young man with no known military or government background.

I, too, was doubtful. I couldn't imagine North Korea under a third generation of Kim family leadership. I had been following the country, up close and from afar, since the *Financial Times* posted me to Seoul to cover both Koreas in 2004. This system could not continue existing into a third generation. Could it?

THE EXPERTS WHO PREDICTED widespread reforms were wrong. Those who predicted imminent collapse were wrong. I was wrong.

In 2014, after six years away from the Korean Peninsula, I returned to the region as a correspondent for the *Washington Post*.

A few months into my posting, and almost three years into Kim Jong Un's tenure, I went to cover the pro-wrestling tournament in Pyongyang. The things journalists do to get a visa for North Korea.

I was stunned.

I knew there had been a construction boom in the capital, but I had no idea how widespread it was. It seemed like a new high-rise apartment block or theater was going up on every second block in the center of the city. Previously, it had been unusual to see even a tractor, but suddenly there were trucks and cranes helping the men in olive-green military uniforms put up buildings.

When I'd walked on the streets before, no one as much as glanced at me, even though the sight of a foreigner was a rare thing. Now, there was an easier air in the city. People were better dressed, kids rollerbladed in new rinks, and the atmosphere was altogether more relaxed.

There was no doubt that life was still grim in the showcase capital: the lines for the broken-down trolley buses were still long, there were still plenty of hunched-over old ladies carrying huge sacks on their backs, and there was still not a fat person in sight. Not even a remotely chubby one. Apart from the One. But it was clear that Pyongyang, home to the elite who kept Kim Jong Un in power, was not a city on the ropes. Seven decades after the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I saw no signs of cracks in the communist façade.

Over those seven decades, the world had seen plenty of other brutal dictators rise and reign, tormenting their people while advancing their own interests. But what sets the three Kims apart is the durability of their family's hold on the country. During Kim Il Sung's reign, the United States went through nine presidents, starting with Harry S. Truman and ending with Bill Clinton. Japan cycled through twenty-one prime ministers. Kim Il Sung outlived Mao Zedong by almost two decades and Joseph Stalin by four. North Korea has now

ANDREW POTHECARY

existed for longer than the Soviet Union.

I wanted to figure out how this young man and the regime he inherited had defied the odds. I wanted to find out everything there was to know about Kim Jong Un.

SO I SET OUT to talk to everyone who'd ever met him, searching for clues about this most enigmatic of leaders. It was tough: so few people had met him, and even among that select group, the number of people who've spent any meaningful time with him was tiny. But I went in search of any insight I could get.

I found Kim Jong Un's aunt and uncle, who had been his guardians while he was at school in Switzerland. I went to the Swiss capital of Bern to look for clues about his formative teenage years, sitting outside his old apartment and walking around his former school.

I twice had lunch in a grimy restaurant in the Japanese Alps with Kenji Fujimoto, a down-and-out cook who made sushi for Kim's father and who became something of a playmate to the future leader. I talked to people who had gone to North Korea as part of basketballer Dennis Rodman's entourage and heard tales of drunkenness and questionable behavior.

As soon as I heard Kim Jong Un's older half brother, Kim Jong Nam, had been killed in Kuala Lumpur, I immediately got

SO EVERY TIME WE met—always over lunch at a steakhouse in mid-town Manhattan, where they always ordered the forty-eight-dollar filet mignon rather than the daily special—I would ask. Each time, I was met with guffaws.

On the most recent occasion, a month after Kim Jong Un's summit with Donald Trump in the middle of 2018, the suave diplomat responsible for American media, Ambassador Ri Yong Phil, laughed at me and said, "You can dream."

Rather than dreaming, I set out to hear about the reality outside the fake capital, in the places that the regime wouldn't let me visit. I found North Koreans who knew Kim Jong Un, not personally but through his policies: people who'd lived through his reign and had managed to escape it.

Over my years covering North Korea, I've met scores, perhaps even hundreds, who've escaped from the Kimist state. They're often called "defectors," but I don't like that word. It implies that they've done something wrong by fleeing the regime. I prefer to call them "escapees" or "refugees."

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find people willing to talk. This is partly because the flow of escapees has slowed to a trickle during the Kim Jong Un years, the result of stronger border security and rising living standards inside the country. It is also because of a growing expecta-

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on a plane and went to the spot where he had been assassinated just a few hours before. I waited outside the morgue where his body was held, watching angry North Korean officials coming and going. I went to the North Korean embassy and discovered they were so annoyed with reporters that they'd actually removed the button on the doorbell at the gate.

I found Kim Jong Nam's cousin, the woman who essentially became his sister and stayed in touch with him long after her defection and his exile. She had been living an entirely new life under an entirely new identity for the previous quarter century.

Then, amid the frenzy of diplomacy in 2018, it suddenly became a lot easier to find people who'd met the North Korean leader.

South Koreans and Americans had arranged and attended Kim Jong Un's summits with presidents Moon Jae-in and Donald Trump. I talked to people who'd talked with him in Pyongyang, from a South Korean singer to a German sports official. I watched his motorcade zoom past me in Singapore. I searched for any understanding to be gleaned from any encounter with this puzzling potentate.

I also repeatedly asked the North Korean diplomats assigned to the mission at the United Nations—a collection of urbane officials who lived together on Roosevelt Island in the East River, sometimes jokingly referred to as a socialist republic in New York City—if I could have an interview with Kim Jong Un. It was a long shot but not a completely crazy idea. After all, Kim Il Sung had lunch with a group of foreign journalists shortly before his death in 1994.



Excerpted with permission from *The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un*, published by Public Affairs, 2019 © by **Anna Fifield**. She is the Beijing bureau chief for the *Washington Post*.

Making sense of the *senseless*

By *Gavin Blair*

On the morning of Thurs., July 18, two things happened in Japan.

A man reported to have been receiving treatment for mental health issues walked into the main studio of Kyoto Animation, ignited 40 liters of gasoline and perpetrated the worst confirmed mass killing in Japan in the postwar era. And the National Police Agency (NPA) released a crime statistics report for the first six months of 2019, showing the overall number of offences had fallen 8.7 percent and were on course to hit another postwar low for the full year.

Making sense of this juxtaposition is no easy task for those reading about or reporting on cases of multiple murders. The contradiction of an increasingly more peaceful world and outbursts of senseless acts of horrific violence can feel like a circle that is too round to square.

Conversations and online comments about such crimes are frequently peppered with phrases along the lines of "The world is becoming an increasingly dangerous place," "What is wrong with people these days?" or "When I was young..."

All of this is in defiance of the reality of crime and violence. But human beings are emotional and intuitive creatures, even though our intuitions are often hideously wrong. Despite the falling crime rate in Japan, many of its citizens are convinced of the opposite and more fearful than ever of becoming a victim, something the NPA has acknowledged and is trying to address.

Japan's murder rate was 0.2 per 100,000 people in 2018, joint lowest with Singapore, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In recent years there have been between 600 and 700 murders annually, though there was a slight spike in the first half of this year. This means the Kyoto arson attack, from which 34 have died at the time of writing, will likely raise this year's rate by around 5 percent. Those figures compare to around 1,500 annually in the 1980s and 3,500 in the 1960s, the latter in the golden days of the Showa era that many look back nostalgically on as a time when front doors could be left unlocked.

Keeping the big picture in mind can become more difficult with proximity to events. In late May, I was covering for a UK newspaper for another Club member when I received a call early in the morning about a stabbing attack in Kawasaki. I turned on the TV to see it had occurred near Noborito Station, two stops from where I live and the place I change trains on the way into Tokyo. A 12-year-old girl and the father of another student were killed—along with the assailant, who



stabbed himself in the neck before police arrived—and 18 young girls were injured.

The next day, it emerged that the killer lived near my station, where he had boarded the train the previous morning carrying a rucksack full of knives. It could happen anywhere, it is just a coincidence. Crime is very rare in Japan and getting rarer; logically I know this. My thoughts went back to the mass stabbing at a care home in July 2016 in Sagami-hara, the city I lived and worked in when I first arrived in Japan. 19 people were killed and 26 injured, but it had less of a personal impact due to the simple but illogical reason that I was on holiday in the UK at the time. The evening of the Kawasaki incident I did a radio report and was asked about the shock of this happening in "safe" Japan. I refer-

enced the Sagami-hara stabbings and said violence isn't completely unknown.

When news of the horrors in Kyoto breaks I am covering for a different UK paper. It is also a huge story for my regular string at the *Hollywood Reporter*. In a radio hit for another network that evening I'm asked the same "safe Japan" question and talk about the Sagami-hara and Kawasaki stabbings.

Meanwhile, there are baseless rumors spreading on domestic social media that the arsonist is Korean-Japanese, because he just must be. Bigotry and emotions have gone haywire.

In Kyoto the next day, the local deputy police chief tells me they had no murders in his district last year, but a woman fatally stabbed a man in March in what seemed to be a domestic dispute.

Near the scene of the arson, I talk to a high school student who says he was walking past the studio seven or eight minutes after the fire started and he shares a photo he took at the time (*above*). He saw three badly burned people outside and says he couldn't bear to look for long. I wonder if he feels his neighborhood is safe.

In a taxi to Kyoto Station on Saturday, conversation with the driver inevitably turns to the arson. The driver talks of the sense of community and unlocked front doors of his youth and the problems of today's young. I point out that the young Japanese I know are very gentle, most have never had a fight, and crime is falling. He grudgingly agrees, but insists youngsters do things he would never have dreamed of. I think of pointing out the contradiction and quoting some statistics. But we're pulling up at the station and I understand how he feels. ●

Gavin Blair writes for publications in Asia, Europe and the US.

Milton Isa Associate Member

By David McNeill

Though he hardly looks old enough, Milton Isa remembers the departure of General MacArthur from Japan in 1951. Then just a toddler, Isa was among maybe half a million people who lined the streets to Haneda Airport to see off MacArthur, who had effectively run the nation since 1945 before being relieved of his command by President Harry Truman.

Isa's peripatetic childhood included stints in Hawaii (where he was born), Europe and California but a family thread always pulled him back to Japan. His dad was *nissei* (second generation) Japanese and ran early computers for the Department of Defense during the US occupation. He met Milton's Japanese mother in Tokyo.

It could all have been so different. Isa's father was a third year college student in California when war broke out in 1941. He was shipped in cattle-cars along with thousands of other ethnic Japanese to a camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming. "If he had stayed in Hawaii he would have been fine," says Isa. "They weren't interning people there."

As it was, there was only way out of the camp, so his father volunteered to help the war effort against Japan. When it ended, he was assigned to an office with US military intelligence just up the street from the FCCJ. His job included assessing the damage from the American bombing campaign that had leveled most Japanese cities.

"He went all over Japan interviewing people, asking 'where did the aircraft come over your city?' and 'how did you feel?'" recalls Isa. "One of reasons he was in military intelligence was that he spoke Japanese." Among the places he took his son was to Niigata, "where the bombing had been quite heavy."

THE FAMILY RETURNED TO Hawaii and Isa eventually went to Seattle University, where he graduated with a BA in business administration. Then it was off to Japan again: all men at the college had to take basic ROTC training. When he graduated in 1970 he was sent as second lieutenant on temporary duty to Okinawa.

Luckily for Isa, the Vietnam War was winding down, but that didn't mean he was out of danger. Assigned to a medical company, he was ordered to help move highly toxic chemical munitions, including FX Gas and Agent Orange, from Tengan Pier in Okinawa to the Johnston Islands. The military kept cages of rabbits on flat bed trucks in case the chemicals leaked.

Luck struck again when he returned to the US after active duty: Merrill Lynch was recruiting staff to come to Japan. "I came here with a typewriter, suitcase and golf bag," he recalls, laughing. He spent 20 years with the investment bank before joining the Boston-based State Street Corporation,

HE HAS SINCE SPENT MUCH OF HIS TIME TRYING TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE CLUB'S FINANCES.

"YOU LEARN A LOT OF PATIENCE," HE LAUGHS.

the largest custodian bank in America. Isa helped set up the bank's securities operation in Tokyo.

SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, HE got married and set up home in the Shitamachi area of Tokyo, not far from where his mother grew up. "I love it there," he says.

His involvement with the FCCJ began in 1992, as an associate member initially attracted to PAC events. At some point, he recalls, he became grimly fascinated by the FCCJ's tangled politics.

"I was chairman of the finance committee of the American Club. I couldn't believe how poorly the finances of [the FCCJ] were run. There was too much infighting. People were not looking ahead or looking out for the best interests of the Club. They didn't see that the demographics of the Club were going to change; that the membership was getting older. They didn't prepare for that."

He was among those who began pushing for more say in Club activities by the 1,600 associate members and professional associates who pay the bulk of its dues. Associates, he says, bring expertise from banking and other industries. That campaign culminated with his first election as associate to the FCCJ board in 2014–2015. He has since spent much of his time trying to straighten out the Club's finances. "You learn a lot of patience," he laughs.

Isa supported the move to the Club's new premises and rejects criticism that it is too expensive. "If we'd stayed at the Denki Building in Yurakucho, what was our future? We were going to go bankrupt there; one broken pipe and we couldn't get insurance."

He says the Club must be pragmatic about its future in a world where journalism may no longer pay the bills. Among his proposals is charging "administrative fees" of ¥500 to attend press conferences. "People come here and break our walls but we pay for that. We're famous; we should use our FCCJ brand. A lot of people who have banquets here think it is prestigious. We need more effort to market the Club."

He sees no reason for pessimism. "We have no debt—that's where our strength is. And we have a special banker behind us—the Mitsubishi Group. They're not going to throw us out because we're not paying our rent for a few months. They're pragmatic people too. We should get serious but it's not as bad as some think it is. I've helped a lot of companies that were in far worse shape, and much more optimistic."

"If every one member can bring in one member, our problems will be solved." ●

David McNeill writes for the *Irish Times* and the *Economist*, and teaches media literacy at Hosei and Sophia Universities.



YOSHIKAZU TSUNO

Cosmetic enhancement at the G20 Summit

The events at summits are calculated to draw press and public attention to important global issues. But after the hoopla of the staged activities, does anything really change?



By Sonja Blaschke

It was the morning of June 29, the second day of the G20 Summit in Osaka. The kick-off event was to be a “special panel” on women’s empowerment, and by the scheduled starting time, a group of journalists had gathered in front of one of the TV screens in the exhibition-hall-like international media area at the G20 Summit in Osaka. We put our recording devices and phones on a shelf below the TV . . . and then we waited.

Two or three days before the summit, the event had been changed from a “side event” to a “special event.” One can only wonder what prompted this cosmetic, but revealing name change. Only a quarter of an hour had been allocated for three speeches about women’s empowerment—by G20 host Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, senior White House adviser (and more importantly, the US president’s daughter) Ivanka Trump, and special guest Queen Máxima of the Netherlands. If that weren’t enough, those same 15 minutes were to include recommendations to Abe from representatives of female empowerment organizations.

And we waited some more, while the participants in the event—leaders from G20 nations and several guests—happily chatted away before getting down to business. Surprisingly, in Japan, where punctuality is valued like few other traits, the kick-off event of the day started about 30 minutes late.

The attention the participants garnered could not gloss over the fact that the whole affair felt cosmetic anyway. Its purpose was to make Japan look like a modern nation, when in fact, when it comes to women’s rights, the country trails far behind other industrialized nations and the majority of Asian nations. While Prime Minister Abe’s Womenomics initiative continues to be lauded and has, to some degree, drawn awareness to the topic in Japan, its effect has been limited. In the Global Gender Gap Index of the Swiss-based World Economic Forum (WEF) think tank, Japan was only ranked 110th

among 149 nations in 2018—worse than some years prior to the Womenomics program. The dismal ranking is, to a large degree, due to the dire lack of women in politics, including in Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party.

The optics weren’t helped by the fact that only two of the Group of 20 leaders on stage were women: outgoing British Prime Minister Theresa May and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The discrepancy between being supposedly serious about empowering women and the reality of women being discriminated against—overtly and covertly—was compounded by Ivanka Trump’s speech.

After a few introductory remarks, Trump quickly went on to praise the policies of her father, who was sitting close by. She neglected to mention the numerous accusations of sexual misconduct against him and his repeated misogynist acts. In the end, at an event that was supposed to be about women’s empowerment, she made it all about a man.

The only participant who used the event to discuss specific suggestions for women’s empowerment was Queen Máxima. “If women had an identical role in labour markets as men,” she said, “up to \$28 trillion dollars could be added to the global GDP by 2025.” She spoke of three steps needed to achieve that: bridging the digital divide, removing legal and regulatory barriers that obstruct women’s financial inclusion and economic empowerment, and ensuring that women also enjoy access to public goods, including connectivity, cybersecurity, digital ID, financial literacy, digital literacy and data privacy. She also commended German Chancellor Merkel, whose initiative it was to put women on the G20 agenda in the first place.

Unlike the other speakers, she even took time to attend a briefing with journalists in the media center.

MIND YOUR OWN PLASTIC BUSINESS

The women’s empowerment event was not the only cosmetic item of the summit agenda. Another “side”—sorry, “special”—event concerned the pollution of the oceans with

JAPAN SEEMED INTERESTED IN GIVING ITSELF A FACELIFT AND IMAGE BOOST VIA THE SUMMIT. WHETHER THAT REALLY WORKED IS A DIFFERENT QUESTION.

plastic. In order to demonstrate Japan’s commitment to recycling, trash cans had been set up in the venue, with English explanations of how the recycled materials would be used. A nice idea, although it didn’t seem to leave much of a lasting impression on the attendees. A much better idea was to provide attending journalists with a goodie bag which contained a thermos bottle—very useful, in particular, because in the preparation materials we were asked to bring our own bottles and plates.

Sadly, there was little incentive to use your own. Glasses and plates were provided in the buffet, paper cups and plates were provided in the snack area, and cans of tea, juice and coffee were everywhere. The absence of plastic cutlery and cups was surely cosmetic and hard to ignore, given how plastic is so ubiquitous in daily life in Japan.

As G20 host, Japan had announced it would be spearheading international efforts to reduce plastic waste. In theory, a laudable action, especially since Japan is the second-biggest producer of single-use plastic in the world with 5.87 million tons in 2018 (the US is the first). According to the Ministry of the Environment, 60 percent of the plastic thrown away in Japan is incinerated for energy, only 25 percent is recycled.

In the press conference at the summit’s close, one female journalist from Asia asked Abe quite poignantly whether, instead of exporting recycling technologies and measures to curb the use of plastics in other countries, it would not be better to start in Japan first, considering the pervasive use of plastic and the high plastic production volume. Clearly embar-

Peak summitry

Left to right, the world’s press at work; Queen Máxima on empowering women; host PM Abe who announced that Japan is spearheading international effort to reduce plastic waste; for the exhausted press corps, between the long rows of journalist work tables the organizers created a kind of “relaxation island”, which consisted of artificial grass areas with very enticing big cushions—and even a handful of hammocks!



assed, he circled around to again tout Japan’s efforts abroad.

The only participant with a “personal” take on anti-waste initiative was Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was spotted using his own thermos cup at the formal dinner banquet. While officials claimed it was due to his fondness for tea, the internet was abuzz with wilder theories, like his fear of being poisoned.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Cosmetic solutions were also present in the press area. One of the first things I heard from my Japanese journalist colleagues was how great the food was. But eating out in Japan is always a challenge for me, since I suffer from several allergies and intolerances. The situation has been improving in the last two or three years. More and more places, including the catering company at the summit, now indicate allergens in food containing wheat, milk and so on.

Unfortunately, they don’t always offer options if you cannot eat, for example, wheat. While there were several options for dinner (yeah!), the only dishes at lunch that did not contain wheat were green salad and white rice, not a good base for sustenance during a stressful summit schedule. For vegetarians and vegans—increasingly popular food trends—it must have also been a bit of a challenge.

All in all, G20 host Japan seemed very interested in giving itself a facelift and image boost via the summit. Whether that really worked is a different question. It reminds me of the several large Japanese convenience store chains who decided to ban porn magazines from their shelves in the lead-up to the Olympics, so as not to shock the sensibilities of foreign visitors. But no amount of make-up can conceal the reality—that Japan has one of the biggest sex markets in Asia. ●

Sonja Blaschke is East Asia & Australasia correspondent for print media in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and a producer for German and Swiss television.



Signs of the times

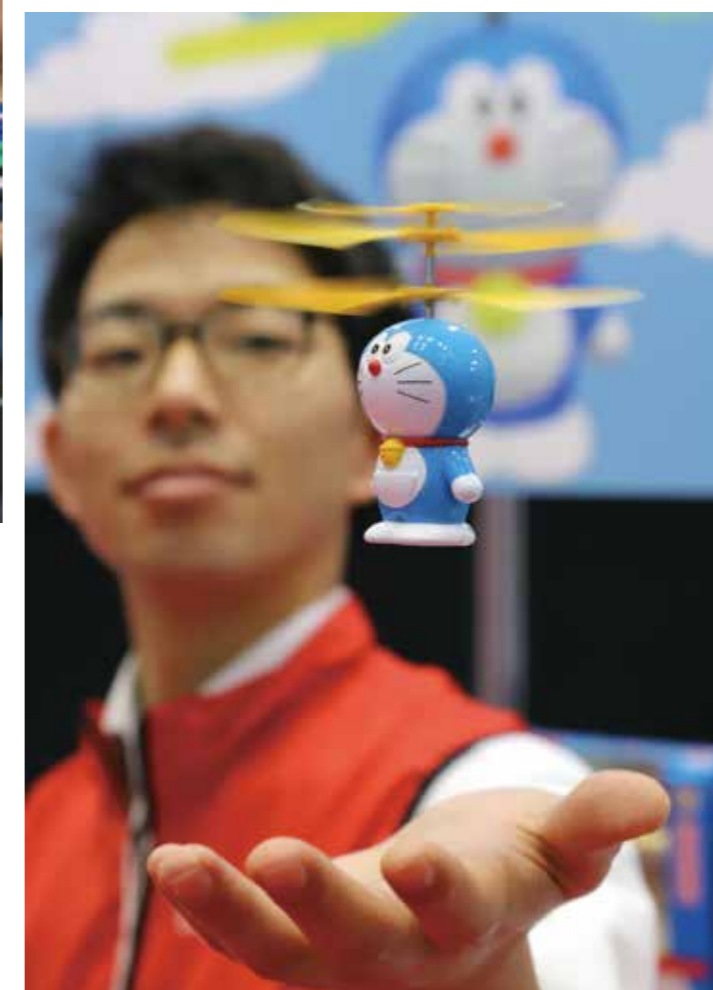
Protesters calling for the complete withdrawal of a controversial extradition bill gather to demonstrate in Hong Kong, July 7. (The slogan on the black cards on the left says, "Let's get together and not withdraw.") Demonstrations continued even after Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam suspended the bill.
by Richard Atrero de Guzman

Lens craft



Making America eat again

Kim Jong Un impersonator Howard X helps Donald Trump impersonator Dennis Alan to tie a paper apron in a tempura restaurant in Osaka, June 24.
by Tomohiro Ohsumi



Fly time

A Doraemon-shaped helicopter toy displayed at the annual International Tokyo Toy Show, June 16.
by Yoshikazu Tsuno

FCCJ EXHIBITION



Lafcadio Hearn vs. Mokuji Shonin:
The stories of two nomads
 Kamikiri (paper cutting artwork)
 by Katsuyuki Yagi

Lafcadio Hearn, also known by his Japanese name Yakumo Koizumi, was a writer known for his books about Japan, particularly his yokai stories about supernatural monsters, spirits and demons in Japanese folklore. Originally born in Greece, he was raised in Dublin, educated in England and France and worked in the United States before moving to Japan in 1890. In addition to his writings, Hearn taught literature at Tokyo and Waseda universities, influencing many well-known Japanese writers at that time.

The other subject of this exhibition is Mokuji Shonin, a wandering monk and artist who traveled throughout Japan depositing his smiling Buddha sculptures at the sacred sites he visited. During his pilgrimage—which took him from the northern part Hokkaido to the southern island of Kyushu—Mokuji Shonin made over a thousand of “Min-gei” sculptures, the name that has been given to describe freedom and harshness of nature and innocence of this artwork.

Katsuyuki Yagi was born in Yaizu, Shizuoka in 1947 and began to specialize in paper-cutting art while working as a history and literature museum curator. Katsuyuki’s unique artworks are created by cutting authentic Chinese papers with traditional hand-made scissors and using a high-speed technique. His artworks are highly acclaimed in Lafcadio Hearn’s alma mater in England and Mokuji Shonin’s birthplace in Yamanashi prefecture.



“WE WERE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE USING VARIOUS MINISTRIES OWN NUMBERS WAS THAT WHALING HAS FOR YEARS BEEN AN ECONOMIC LOSER, THAT ALL MANNER OF SUBSIDY SUPPORTS HAD BEEN DIVERTED TO PROP UP THIS FAILING INDUSTRY, INCLUDING AID MEANT FOR THE 3/11 EARTHQUAKE. YET THE JAPANESE PEOPLE HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY HAVE NO YEN FOR WHALE MEAT”



Patrick Ramage, Director, Marine Conservation, International Fund for Animal Welfare, June 26

“IN MY OPINION, JAPAN WILL BE PREPARED [for the opening of casinos]. LAWS WILL BE ENACTED, THEY’LL BE COMMENSURATE AND APPROPRIATE TO THE SITUATION AND THEY’LL HAVE VIGOROUS OVERSIGHT BECAUSE THAT’S THE JAPANESE WAY.”



James Stern, Former VP, Wynn Resorts and former FBI agent, June 21



“NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMACY IS BASED ON THREE PRINCIPLES. THE FIRST IS THAT AMERICA CANNOT ATTACK NORTH KOREA. THE SECOND IS THAT CHINA CANNOT GIVE UP ITS SUPPORT, NO MATTER WHAT NORTH KOREA DOES. THE THIRD IS THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS, WHATEVER INCENTIVES ARE OFFERED, NORTH KOREA SHOULD NOT GIVE UP ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS.”

Thae Yong Ho, Former North Korean Deputy Ambassador to the UK, June 20

NEW MEMBERS

REGULAR MEMBERS



John Frederick Ashburne is a freelance writer, editor and photographer, based in Kyoto. He mainly specializes in Japanese culture (especially Japanese food culture), but also writes on news and economics. He is Kansai Correspondent for the *Japan Times*, and has written for the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *Kyoto Journal*, *Business Traveller Asia* and other publications. He is the author of several books, including *The Best of Kansai* and editor-in-Chief of the website *www.foodiesgolocal.com*. He is also a photographer and

winner of several photography awards.



Benjamin N. Dooley has been named Japan Business Correspondent for the *New York Times* after three years reporting for Agence France-Press in Beijing, focusing on politics, human rights and the economy. Before A.F.P., Dooley spent five years working for Japan’s Kyodo News in Beijing and Washington, where he covered the State Department, the Pentagon and the White House, with a focus on United States policy in Asia. Ben has a master’s degree in East Asian studies from Stanford and a bachelor’s in Asian studies from the University of Virginia. He speaks fluent Japanese and Mandarin.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Angus Mckinnon, *The L.T. Funds*
 Gloria Sadler-Mooser, *No affiliation*
 Yuki Kawanaka, *Soka Gakkai*
 Mitsunobu Kojima, *Ryobi Holdings Co., Ltd.*
 Yoshiko Yamaki, *Ryobi Holdings Co., Ltd.*
 Toshio Kurino, *Meikyo Trading Co., Ltd.*

Eriko Katayama, *LLC Eriko F Company Japan*
 Yayoi Oguma, *Bridge International*
 Tetsuya Sawano, *Tekken Co., Ltd.*
 Junko Saito, *Keio Plaza Hotel*
 Jun Sasaki, *Canpotex (Japan) Limited*
 Kaori Shindo, *Envision Co., Ltd.*
 Eisuke Yoshihashi, *Dentsu-Adgear*



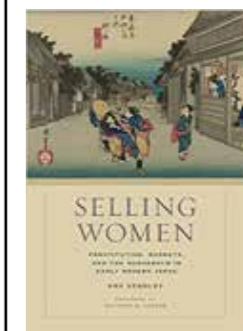
“HARASSMENT MUST NEVER BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM. COMPANIES MUST REALIZE THAT MANAGING BY HARASSMENT IS GOING TO LEAD TO SOCIAL ISSUES, AND TO A DROP IN THE SHARE PRICE. INVESTORS ARE STANDING UP GLOBALLY AND SAYING, WE’RE NOT GOING TO INVEST IN COMPANIES THAT HAVE SOCIAL ISSUES WITHIN THE FIRM.”

NEW IN THE LIBRARY



Much Ado about Nothingness: Essays on Nishida and Tanabe
 James W. Heisig
 Chisokudo

Cutting Back: My Apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto
 Leslie Buck
 Timber Press



Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets, and the Household in Early Modern Japan
 Amy Stanley;
 Matthew H. Sommer (fwd.)
 University of California Press

Kibo wo Furu Shikisha : Gergiev to Haran no Russia
 希望を振る指揮者：ゲルギエフと波乱のロシア
 Kazuo Kobayashi
 Kamakura Shunjusha
 Gift from Kazuo Kobayashi

Peak Japan : the End of Great Ambitions
 Brad Glosserman
 Georgetown University Press
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Suiunshi kara sekai no mizu e: Speeches on Water Issues
 水運史から世界の水へ：Speeches on Water Issues
 Crown Prince Naruhito
 NHK Publishing

A Social History of the Ise Shrines: Divine Capital
 Mark Teeuwen; John Breen
 Bloomsbury Academic



Glen Wood, former head of Global Sales at MUFJ Morgan Stanley Securities Co., Ltd. on his paternity harassment lawsuit, July 4



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