



NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN



July 2015, Volume 47 No. 7, ¥400

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. . . actually, only 15% of your savings.
But still. A look at the new tax that binds.

Shig Fujita
five decades
of writing

Romancing history
a transcontinental
story told over tea

Tokyo Shimbun
carrying the torch for
press freedom?



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From the President

AFTER THE RECENT ELECTION, we appear to have a strong consensus that the Club needs to move forward in our 70th anniversary year. Getting great speakers, increasing the number of younger professional members, improving the workroom and library, advancing our disclosure policy and finally resolving disputes that have dragged on for years – I don't think there is any question on these priorities among the membership.

First, I am pushing to make our speaking schedule the envy of Japan and the region by bringing in the best, most timely and biggest speakers. To accomplish that, however, we must become more proactive and at a higher level.

We have made a good start, for example, in meetings with the head of Mazda Motor PR, to get the ball rolling on securing auto company chief executives ahead of December's Tokyo Motor Show – and with the Foreign Ministry's Press Secretary. I will be meeting the ambassador from France, which is holding critical, global climate talks in December. We are working hard on getting ruling party executives and ministers back into our speaking rotation after a noticeable and prolonged absence, as well as more business and finance speakers. And with Japan hosting the Group of Seven leaders' summit next year, there will be plenty of opportunities to secure top officials to speak at the Club, but we must start laying that groundwork now.

Another critical issue is the future of our Club's membership. Our marketing efforts are helping, but more is necessary. That includes actions at the Board level to ensure that younger journalists and associates join the Club – something all the more important as our membership rapidly ages, like the

rest of Japan. We also need to polish our image and offerings to members.

One way to do that is for the Board to publicize our activities, including our scholarship program, to the world outside of Yurakucho through the Japanese and foreign media, and to civic and business groups. We need to study having professional development seminars and workshops, such as programs on simple, video camera usage and editing, deep web searching and journalism fellowships and grants.

Finally, the Board will be hammering out a new information disclosure policy soon and spare no effort to put the legal wrangling behind us. I have reached out to our erstwhile Club president, Myron Belkind, who is now the head of the National Press Club in Washington, DC, and the Overseas Press Club in New York to get a better idea on the best practices on disclosure.

On a housekeeping note, as of July 1, the Club upgraded the WiFi system on the 20th floor to make it faster – and quickly expanding the upgrade to the 19th floor is an urgent issue. We also are transitioning to a new paperless billing system, which will save on costs and be more convenient for our members.

By focusing on our core mission of supporting journalists, whether that is in our speakers' program, planning for cutting-edge facilities when we move, improving our image, getting more, younger professionals to join and promoting "friendship, harmony, and mutual welfare" among our members, we can ensure that the Club is the place "where news is made."

– James Simms



From now until our 70th anniversary in November 2015, we will turn these pages over to the history of the Club, both of the many esteemed and important guests who faced us – and the world – from the FCCJ dais and of the many Members who have made the Club such a fascinating place to be.

Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir (left) spoke at the FCCJ on Jan. 19, 1962. Seated to her right is Club President John Randolph (AP), noted for his Korean War reporting and bravery, and to her left is Igor Oganessoff (Wall Street Journal). Indira Gandhi (right), India's Prime Minister, spoke at the FCCJ on June 27, 1969, some seven years after the appearance of Golda Meir. Seated next to her is Club President Henry Hartzenbusch (AP Bureau Chief) who was an innovative and tireless contributor to improving the Club. No. 1 Shimbun came into existence during his administration, as described in our history book.

in our history book, she no doubt explained the reason for her goodwill visit to Japan, and no doubt was bombarded by questions concerning a split in her political party and her recent success in putting down a Communist uprising in her country. Indian media and diplomats were impressed with the way she spoke and responded to questions with "supreme confidence," said one Indian diplomat, Prem Budhwar in his book, *A Diplomat Reveals*. Gandhi served her first term as Prime Minister until 1977, and a second term from 1980 until she was assassinated by her Sikh guards in 1984 following destruction of a Sikh temple by the Indian military.

The historical contributions of these two leaders are well known, but one commentator pointed out that one thing they shared was a lack of brothers. Golda Meir had five of her eight siblings die during her early childhood in Russia. And Indira Gandhi was the only child of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister. The absence of brothers during childhood, he suggests, meant that they lacked contrasting gender experiences at home and grew up assuming equality with boys. Thatcher also shared this lack of male siblings, but never spoke at the Club.

– Charles Pomeroy

FROM THE ARCHIVES



IRON LADIES

BOTH GOLDA MEIR AND Indira Gandhi were exceptional speakers, and both were exceptional leaders who guided their respective countries through exceedingly difficult times. They proved themselves as equally competent and ruthless as men in winning political office, in achieving their goals – and even in going to war when they deemed it necessary. The rise at the national level of such effective female leaders, joined in 1979 by Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom, established a

standard to which later female leaders would aspire.

In her remarks at the Club in 1962 concerning Israel and the Arab states, Golda Meir emphasized that more needed to be done in education and in developing agriculture and industry, not the "nonsensical" waste of manpower and money spent on armaments and planning destruction. Meir went on to become Israel's fourth prime minister (1969-1974). She was the fourth woman in the world to achieve such a high office and was known as the "Iron Lady" well before Margaret Thatcher was given the same epithet. Meir died of lymphoma in 1978.

During an official visit to Japan as India's first woman prime minister, Indira Gandhi spoke at the FCCJ three years after assuming her high position. Although her remarks are not recorded

TALES FROM THE ROUND TABLES



CRASHING THE GLASS CEILING

NOTWITHSTANDING OUR CHERISHED past cluttered with Stag Bars and topless dancers, some formidable reputations were forged by women correspondents at the FCCJ from the very early days.

Long before she found her second life as the face that graces the jacket of the Club's history, *Foreign Correspondents In Japan*, Marguerite Higgins was an ace correspondent

covering WWII and Korea. Not satisfied with being the first, or only, woman at anything, she was focused on being the best, and her heated rivalry with Homer Bigart became a gold mine of headlines for the *Herald Tribune*, for which they both worked.

Mary Ann Maskery of ABC News effortlessly broke through the glass ceiling to become the very first of our three women presidents to date in

1984. Another sign of the changing times was the transition of the name of the "Stag Bar" to "Shimbun Alley Bar" in 1990, after a naming contest won by the talented Daniella Kaneva of the Bulgarian News Agency.

Sandra Mori, the only member today who can claim to having been in every club house the FCCJ has ever had, modestly says she covered mostly "soft topics," but still can recall countless narrow escapes from riots in Kashmir, or dodging bombs going off at a bazaar in Zamboanga, and once had to be smuggled across the Cambodian border to Thailand rolled up in a carpet to hide her famous red hair, à la Lara Croft.

Granddaughter of Meiji-era PM

Prince Masayoshi Matsukata, and graduate of the American School in Japan, few were as well versed and highly educated in both cultures as Haru Matsukata. By the time James Michener introduced her to eventual husband Edwin Reischauer, she was writing for the *Saturday Evening Post* and already the first Japanese full correspondent member of the FCCJ, not to mention a rare female director on the Board. Those must certainly have been some heady days in the Club bar, especially after Edwin was appointed ambassador to Japan by JFK.

Amongst the many women who made the leap from correspondents' assistants to ace journalists, no FCCJ member became more famous in the

Japanese media than Atsuko Chiba. Upon her breast cancer diagnosis, Chiba chronicled her intensely personal journey in the weekly *Bungei Shunju*, and then in a book which triggered a much-needed public debate in 1981.

Supported throughout by Norman Pearlstine, her mentor at the *Wall Street Journal*, and friends such as Mike Tharpe and Charles Pomeroy, she helped break open the secrecy in Japan's patient-doctor relations.

Following close behind her in making the transition from foreign newsroom to Japanese media star, was Yoshiko Sakurai, who went on to anchor news at NTV for many years and remains a member today.

And finally, there is Claire Hollingworth, never a full FCCJ member, but a high-profile Asia hand who was a treasured "Visitor Member" on her regular visits, and who turned 100 a couple of years ago. Young Claire followed a hunch and ventured to the Polish border to witness the Nazi invasion, giving the *Daily Telegraph* the first headline heralding the start of WWII. The best part is, we hear she is still holding court at the Hong Kong FCC, dispensing war stories and wisdom to her admirers.

Incredible role models, all . . . and certainly not just for women.

– The Shimbun Alley Whisperers

Countries all over the world are looking to close tax loopholes as a way to boost revenues, and Japan is no exception. A new law targets locals and foreigners alike.

Taxing issues

by GAVIN BLAIR

A new law that came into effect on July 1 means that those with financial assets exceeding ¥100 million could be subject to an “exit tax” of a little over 15 percent if they leave Japan. The rules were designed to prevent wealthy Japanese moving to low-tax territories in order to realize capital gains and avoid high rates of inheritance tax. However, they also apply to foreigners on spousal visas or permanent residency holders who have been living in Japan for five of the last 10 years. Combined with new international initiatives on sharing of financial information and the prospect of Japanese accountants having to report the tax planning advice they give their clients, the savings situation for foreign residents of Japan looks set to undergo some major changes.

Given the dire straits of Japan’s public finances, with slim prospects of improvement being delivered by a shrinking tax base, it is little surprise the government is making efforts to close loopholes and steer more of the country’s still considerable wealth into its coffers. But the Abe administration is also making a lot of noise about attracting overseas investment and businesses to Japan, and that could be hampered by the prospect of an exit tax payable by foreigners when leaving the country.

The plan for the exit tax went from idea to legislation in an unusually short time, given the glacial pace at which initiatives often move in Japan. Some observers believe that in the rush to slam the door on yen escaping to lower-tax pastures, all the implications were not fully considered – one of those being the considerable number of non-Japanese potentially affected.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Finance noted that according to its own estimates the new law would affect a total of only approximately 100 people, Japanese and foreigners combined.

“The Japanese government says that the exit tax should only apply to a very limited number of people, but I think that is unrealistic. I’ve already found a number of my clients who will be affected,” said a partner at a Tokyo accounting firm, who asked not to be named in order to protect the identity of the company’s customers.

The government failed to get the message out that similar rules are already in effect in a number of other major economies, or to get sufficient information out in a timely fashion about the new Japanese rules, according to the partner. “And although the tax now only applies to financial assets like stocks and bonds, people are worried it may be widened in the future to include things like property,” he added.

Following lobbying by groups representing overseas business interests in Japan, foreign residents have now been given a five-year “grace period” before they will become liable for the tax in July 2020, points out Marcus Wong, partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Tokyo office. “The clock on that five years resi-

dency in Japan starts ticking on July 1, 2015,” he notes, and suggests “there is plenty of time to plan.”

Those who leave Japan and intend to return are required to put up collateral that would cover the exit tax. If those assets are then sold, however, they become liable to pay the exit tax plus a small amount of interest. For assets that are held on to, a report must be filed on them every year to the Japanese tax authorities.

“One thing that is sometimes missed is that the exit tax of 15.315 percent [the odd percentage is accounted for by the supplementary portion for Tohoku reconstruction] also applies to gifting or the bequest of financial assets to non-residents of Japan,” adds Wong.

This means that a foreign resident of Japan who wants to give shares or other financial instruments to offspring, or anyone else, in their home country as part of their inheritance planning, will find those assets are potentially liable for the exit tax.

With the Japanese tax authorities set to begin looking at foreign residents in July 2020, and assessing whether they have been a holder of a spousal or permanent-resident visa for a total of five of years during the last 10, changing visa status is one option, according to Hans-Peter Musahl, partner at Ernst & Young Tax Co. in Japan. “If they give up their permanent residency in 2015, then they would not have been resident for five years in 2020,” points out Musahl.

One misconception that has arisen around this issue is that if a foreign resident is married to a Japanese national then they would be deemed to be on a spouse visa; that is not the case. Nevertheless, giving up a spousal visa or permanent residency will not solve every tax problem.

“Even if you give up your permanent residency, you are still liable to pay tax on income from assets overseas if you have been resident in Japan for more than five years,” says Musahl.

The issue of overseas assets is one that is set to loom larger for many people in the coming years, particularly for those living and working in countries other than the one they were born in. As people, capital and assets have become far more mobile in recent decades, it is no secret that many companies and individuals have gone to considerable lengths to take advantage of this.

“As of 2014, foreigners who have stayed in Japan five years and own foreign-located assets worth more than ¥50 million must file foreign asset statements,” says Musahl, who notes that this year it became a criminal offence to either not file these statements or file them inaccurately.

While similar forms do exist in other countries, the Japanese versions require reporting a wider range of assets as well as details such as the names of stock brokerages and the original costs of shareholdings, according to PwC’s Wong.

Japan has been updating tax treaties, including or strengthening the parts around cooperation on collection



Departures



Leave Savings Here

of taxes, as well as implementing self-reporting of overseas and worldwide assets for domestic filings, notes Wong. “These two forces are working together: the international agreements that Japan could utilize if they want to find out more information and also the domestic self-reporting requirements now for taxpayers,” says Wong. “I’m sure that with the advances in technology, the sharing of information will become easier.”

The authorities of many OECD member countries have already started sharing data on financial income and assets, points out E&Y’s Musahl. “The Japanese fiscal authorities will join this automatic information-exchange process in

Those who leave Japan and intend to return are required to put up collateral that would cover the exit tax.

2018 and be able to reassess income tax going back up to five years,” he says.

The U.S. Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FACTA) set the ball rolling for international cooperation on financial information disclosure in 2010, with Japan agreeing to comply in June 2013. Since then, more than 60 countries have joined an OECD-led initiative based on its Standard for Automatic Exchange of Financial Information in Tax Matters, with more than 90 expected to be signatories by the time it is implemented.

At June’s G7 summit, the participating countries’ leaders issued the following statement: “We commit to strongly promoting automatic exchange of information on cross-border tax rulings. Moreover, we look forward to the rapid implementation of the new single global standard for automatic exchange of information by the end of 2017 or 2018, including by all financial centers subject to completing necessary legislative procedures.”

Japan is set to introduce its “My Number” system, the local version of a social security or national insurance number, by the end of this year. This will be used to facilitate the automatic international sharing of information linked to bank accounts, holdings of stocks and bonds, as well as any property registered in people’s names.

The first port of call for people affected by any of these changes is usually their accountant. However, the way that accounting firms in Japan operate may be about to undergo a major change. “New measures are being discussed by the government that would force accounting firms to explain to the Japanese tax office what kind of advice they have given clients to help them reduce their tax exposure,” explains the partner at the Tokyo accountants who does not wish to be identified.

The discussions about the new rules were covered on the front page of the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* at the end of May, and have accountants concerned about how it will affect their ability to do business, according to the partner, who is worried a new law could be on its way sooner rather than later.

“The exit tax was passed in six months, so if they are eager to pass these new rules, they could come in just as quickly.” ●

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



The FCCJ Freedom of the Press Award-winning paper says its role is to be a watchdog on behalf of its readers.

by DAVID MCNEILL

The shopworn truism – “truth is the first casualty of war” – is often dusted off by reporters covering conflict zones, but rarely in peaceful, orderly Japan. Yet this was the phrase that Kengo Suganuma, chief editor of *Tokyo Shimbun*, reached for when he accepted an award last May for “publication of the year” from the FCCJ’s Freedom of the Press Committee.

Japan is “in a situation that is essentially a war on the truth” under the Liberal-Democratic (LDP)-led government, Suganuma told his audience. Though he didn’t cite examples, he was probably thinking about the attempt to neuter NHK, the nation’s most powerful broadcaster, by stuffing its board with conservative allies led by President Katsuto Momii, a friend of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Then there was the LDP’s demand for “fair and neutral” reporting by the media during campaigning for last December’s general election; the bullying of critical shows such as NHK’s “Close-Up Gendai,” the assiduous wining and dining of media bosses, the apparent strong-arming of Asahi TV’s “Hodo Station” to dump political critic Shigeaki Koga; and the passage of the new state secrets law, which critics say is a blunt instrument for pummeling bureaucrats and journalists into toeing the official line.

To radical conservatives in the Abe camp, these are all simply attempts to recalibrate the “left-leaning” media. At a junior LDP lawmakers’ study session at LDP headquarters on June 25, some of the attendees urged a further step. Blaming the media for the public’s “lack of understanding” about the government’s security legislation, they proposed leaning on advertisers to smother negative media coverage and “smash” Okinawa’s two leading newspapers.

In this struggle for ideological turf, *Tokyo Shimbun* is hardly

as embattled as its much larger national rival, *Asahi Shimbun*, which has lost hundreds of thousands of readers since admitting reporting errors last year, but it too has taken flak from nationalists angry at its anti-government, “left-leaning” coverage. That’s a description Suganuma emphatically rejects.

“We don’t think of ourselves as ‘left’ or ‘right,’” he says during an interview at the company’s offices overlooking Hibiya Park. “We think of what we do as monitoring power, looking at the powerful from the position of the bottom, or from the perspective of people with no power.” Newspapers should be watchdogs on behalf of readers, he adds. “We’re not ‘anti-Abe’ – we’re just doing our job.”

A shift in priorities

Suganuma dates the shift in his newspaper’s priorities to the Fukushima nuclear crisis, when it earned a reputation for independent reporting and scrutinizing official claims. He compares 2011 to Japan’s wartime era, when military dispatches (*daihonei happyo*) lying about the doomed war effort were carried word-for-word in the national media. “Throughout the war, newspapers reported exactly what they were told and that’s why the war went the way it did,” he says.

The newspaper’s approach since then has been straightforward, says its editor. “We try to tell things as they are,” even if it upsets people in power. The same strategy animates its reporting of the government’s security bills, the American base issue on Okinawa and the secrecy law, which it firmly opposed (Japan’s most-read newspaper, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, backed it).

On nuclear issues, it has consistently taken a more critical line than its rivals. In April it scooped them with a story – obtained via the information disclosure law – about how the foreign ministry had secretly simulated an attack on a nuclear power plant that would likely kill 18,000 people from radiation poisoning. The report predicted that the attack would cut power to the plant, triggering a meltdown and hydrogen explosions – roughly what occurred in Fukushima.

The newspaper covers the bitter dispute over replacing Futenma Air Station on Okinawa more extensively than its much wealthier national rivals. “Tokyo-based newspapers don’t give a voice to people in Okinawa,” he explains. “It’s the same with Fukushima, Article 9 of the Constitution and other issues. If you look at it from that perspective, we are for the

position of ordinary people, not the powerful. We want people to not give in to intimidation and keep challenging power.”

Tokyo Shimbun’s relative independence is partly thanks to its regional roots. As part of the Chunichi group, headquartered in Nagoya, it has traditionally had less access to the halls of power in Nagatacho and Kasumigaseki, says Tatsuro Hanada, a media specialist at Waseda University. That gives it a different viewpoint than the obsessive Diet-watchers in its national rivals – and the press clubs on which they so heavily rely.

“The national media tend to spend a lot of time in the corridors of government and report on what they’re doing,” agrees Koichi Nakano, a political scientist at Sophia University. “*Tokyo Shimbun* does less of that so it’s less good at covering what the government is up to, but better at

Just doing its job: *Tokyo Shimbun* points to the truth

reporting society and social issues.” Thus, much of its coverage since the return of the LDP government in late 2012 has been on the sometimes ugly impact of Abenomics, the economic creed named after the prime minister, rather than its political and economic nuts and bolts.

Tokyo Shimbun is also one of the very few Japanese publications to tackle the influence of Nippon Kaigi, perhaps Japan’s most powerful right-wing political lobby. The group has over 230 local chapters, 38,000 fee-paying members and a network that reaches deep into Nagatacho. About a third of the Diet and over half the 19-member Cabinet are members of the group’s parliamentary league. Prime Minister Abe is the group’s “special advisor.”

Given this hefty firepower, it is “absolutely normal” to write about Nippon Kaigi, says Suganuma. But he is reluctant to speculate on why it is considered journalistically off limits by his newspaper’s rivals. He says political reporters, paradoxically, don’t have a lot of interest in covering the group because they’re too busy reporting the daily machinations of the Diet. *Tokyo Shimbun*’s report on Nippon Kaigi was researched and written by a team of roving reporters.

Division in the newspaper market

Tokyo Shimbun cannot hope to match the clout of the liberal *Asahi Shimbun*. Its morning circulation of roughly 500,000 is a fraction of the *Asahi*’s 7.2 million, and about a third of the *Sankei Shimbun*, the national newspaper on the other end of Japan’s political spectrum. Still, its post-Fukushima penchant for poking a stick in the eye of the powerful has earned it new fans. Indeed, activists have formed a support group to increase its subscriptions.

Suganuma says circulation is slowly declining but claims his newspaper has picked up 10,000 – 20,000 new readers every year since the 2011 disaster. Many are in their 40s or 50s and some had given up reading newspapers for years, or had never read one at all, he says. “Of course we’ve lost people too, as old-

er readers pass away, but we’re encouraged by this growth.” In these straitened times, it helps that the newspaper is slightly cheaper too – about ¥3,350 per month as opposed to ¥3,950 for the *Asahi*.

All this is happening against a difficult background for newspapers. General daily circulation in Japan fell by over 4 million over the decade to 2013, according to the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association. *Tokyo Shimbun* is doing better than most, says Hanada. “I think the newspaper’s change was not only an editorial policy but a market-led policy,” he says. “Since the decline of the *Asahi* began, I have heard many people say they would like to change to the *Tokyo Shimbun*.”

This relative success is part of the post-Fukushima polarization of the Japanese newspaper market, explains Kaori Hayashi, another media specialist at the University of Tokyo. “This phenomenon was triggered first by debates over the use of nuclear energy. But since then, we see the market being divided: *Yomiuri*, *Sankei*, the *Nikkei* and NHK on

the right, and the *Asahi*, the *Mainichi* and *Tokyo Shimbun* on the left.”

“This division can be seen over the entire national agenda – Okinawa, the Constitution and politics in East Asia,” she continues. Hayashi says Suganuma’s newspaper appeals to liberal intellectuals in Tokyo, particularly because its opinionated approach is very different from the “conventional, rather arid style of Japanese journalism.” The *Asahi* used to enjoy this position, she says, before it began pulling its punches.

The backlash against *Tokyo Shimbun*’s editorial policy has been fairly light. The radical right seems to have concentrated, instead, on bringing down the hated *Asahi*. One of Japan’s largest-ever lawsuits has been launched against the liberal flagship and conservative politicians have discussed plans to haul *Asahi* editors and journalists before the Diet.

By contrast, *Tokyo Shimbun* has escaped relatively unscathed, says Suganuma, though he laments how official sources have dwindled under the Abe

regime. “Someone in the government has told sources not to talk to us,” he says. “Information goes instead to the *Yomiuri* and the *Sankei*.”

Unlike television, he says, newspapers are lightly regulated. In effect, print holds the line on press freedom. “The media is definitely going in the wrong direction,” he says. “Over the last four years, we seem to be going back to the wartime era, when the media was not reporting what was really happening. We want to revive its role of really telling the truth.”

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



Monitoring power Chief Editor Kengo Suganuma in the *Tokyo Shimbun* offices.

Shig Fujita

by CHARLES POMEROY

Former readers of the *Asahi Evening News* (AEN) will immediately recognize the name of Shig Fujita as its longtime entertainment columnist. But Shig was far more prolific during his 52 years with AEN, writing on a variety of other subjects and translating editorials. He was also the correspondent for *Billboard* from 1980 to 1990, and wrote for the Chicago-based *Bowlers Journal* from 1967 to 2000. Not to speak of the half-dozen books he translated or his work for graphic design and PR companies that also valued his talents.

So how did Shig – short for Shigeo – come by his bilingual abilities? Born in Kagoshima in January, 1922, he was taken at age two by his immigrant parents to Seattle, where he spent his childhood and received his early education. Unfortunately, U.S. immigration laws of the time made it almost impossible for Asians to become citizens, which led to his return to Japan after high school in 1939. “I still remember that 13-day trip; I was seasick for seven,” he says. Shig was welcomed back to Japan by his uncle, who lived in the Meguro district of Tokyo.

Shig began attending Waseda University in 1940. To cover expenses during those student years, he worked in the “radio room” at Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). There, he and his colleagues monitored Allied broadcasts, mostly the BBC, and he eventually concluded that Japan was losing the war despite the government’s “telling the people that Japan was winning.” So when he was drafted into the Japanese Army in December, 1943, he was expecting certain death. But following an initial assignment to the Kagoshima 45th Regiment, he was transferred in March, 1944, to Fukuoka, where his knowledge of English was put to use at a POW camp. He served there until the end of the war.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Pacific, his family had been moved to an internment camp. The forced relocation even included Shig’s two younger brothers – who had been born in Seattle and were U.S. citizens. Ironically, one later served in the U.S. Army and was in the Philippines when the war ended.

After release from military service in December, 1945, Shig returned to Tokyo, where a chance meeting with former colleagues from the MOFA radio room led to work with their newly formed “Radio Press.” This independent agency supplied news gathered from shortwave broadcasts to government offices. He worked with them until he was hired in May, 1948 by a graphic design company, Philip Beaufoy Associates, where he worked for several years prior to joining the *Asahi Evening News*, “two months after its founding in 1952.”

Shig’s name came to be associated

with entertainment news throughout the foreign community thanks to his column, “Hi Notes – Brite Lites,” which ran from 1956 until 1993. From 1957 to 1998 he also translated *Asahi*’s well-known commentary, *Tensei Jingo* (the Japanese version of *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*). And his views on the local entertainment scene were quoted in such major publications as *Time* magazine and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

As if that were not enough, from 1962 until 1994, Tele-Press Associates, a PR company with major clients such as Nippon Steel and Taisei Corporation, also brought Shig’s talents into play. There, his job was mostly writing monthly newsletters in English for clients. At one point in this phase of his life he had four jobs plus book translation and other assignments, “resulting in 17 tax statements,” says Shig. That led to a tax office query, “Which is your main job?”

At one point he had four jobs plus book translation and other assignments, resulting in 17 tax statements

Shig joined the FCCJ as an Associate Member in 1962 after signing up with Tele-Press. In 1980, after being named Tokyo correspondent for *Billboard*, he applied for a change to Regular status, but was turned down because he worked for a Japanese newspaper and lacked the required three years of service as an overseas correspondent. They had failed to take into account that he was not a regular employee of AEN, but a part-time contributor. But Shig has no regrets and to this day continues to pay his dues, although now at the reduced rate for a senior member.

During Shig’s long career he missed few, if any, of the many entertainment celebrities who visited Japan from overseas from the 1950s until his retirement in 2005. Among the more memorable was Nat King Cole in May, 1961. “His visit lasted for a week, and I was with him every day . . . taking a total of 246 photos,” says Shig. “He was a heavy smoker,” Shig elaborates, “smoking continually even during rehearsals . . . and he died at a young age.” Sammy Davis, Jr. was another that Shig remembers well. Since Sammy had made his 1950s debut in New York City’s Copacabana, Shig recalls accompanying him on a visit to the upscale Akasaka version of the same name.

Shig has been married for 68 years to Toshiko . . . “known to everyone as ‘Tosh’ just as I am called ‘Shig’ instead of Shigeo,” he says. They have one son and one daughter, both of whom have made him a grandfather. (This year he also became a great-grandfather.) Unfortunately, Tosh’s ill health in recent years has required institutional care, but Shig visits her frequently, usually every third day.

Shig also manages to frequently attend our movie nights . . . look for a craggy 93-year-old with a cane. ●



Charles Pomeroy retired from journalism 10 years ago and now devotes his time to writing books.

ANDREW POTHECARY

An extraordinary life



That Ichiro Urushibara's journey through life would take a tumultuous route was perhaps first ordained when his father, Mokuchu, joined the delegation to the Great Japan Exhibition in London. The year was 1910, less than a half-century after the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate and only five years after Japan marked its dramatic debut into the inner corridors of world power through its victory in the Russo-Japanese War.

The elaborate exhibition offered the British public a chance to catch a glimpse of Japan's arts and crafts, swords, temple gates, gardens – and the woodblock art of Mokuchu Urushibara, who demonstrated his technique each day to rapturous audiences. And while the sight of 36 half-naked sumo wrestlers may have raised Edwardian brows, it did nothing to inhibit the exhibition's popularity, with one Sunday near the end of its run seeing an estimated 500,000 visitors. All told, between May and October, some eight million people swarmed to the site at Shepherd's Bush. (In an intriguing small-world aside, it was Count Hirokichi Mutsu, then a diplomat at the Court of Saint James, and father of FCCJ legend Ian Mutsu, who is widely acknowledged as the impresario behind the sensational success of the exhibition.)

The welcome was enough to convince the woodblock artist Mokuchu to settle in London, where he went on to make quite a name for himself in the art world. Credited with introducing Japanese color print-making techniques to Europe, many Mokuchu Urushibara works remain today in the collections of famous museums.

It was in London that he and his Japanese wife welcomed their son Ichiro into the world in 1930. The Great Depression wasn't the easiest of times to be growing up but – thanks to his father's growing fame – Ichiro could count luminaries like the artist Sir Frank Brangwyn, a frequent collaborator with his father, and art scholar Laurence Binyon among those close to the family from his earliest days.

But it was unlikely that he or anyone else suspected the twists and turns his life would take. The first clouds began to gather over the clan's comfortable existence in England as the Nazis

Ichiro Urushibara's story reads like a gallop through the rise and fall of Imperial Japan right through its postwar economic miracle.

by MARY CORBETT

extended their reach across Europe. The Japanese exodus from England started in 1939, but the Urushibara family stayed on, even as they witnessed the German Blitz on the city of London. But the signing of the Berlin Pact between Japan, Italy and Germany was to seal their fate, and by the end of October, 1940, the family was boarding a Japanese ship in

Galway Bay to "return" to a country the children had never seen.

As Ichiro Urushibara tells the story one recent afternoon over a cup of tea at the FCCJ, it is but one of many pages from his childhood memories. The uprooting from the Englishman's life Ichiro had once assumed was his by right, however, must have been particularly jarring. The family could take little with them. But at least, he says, "the large, brightly illuminated Japanese painted flags on the ship guaranteed us free passage through an Atlantic swarming with trigger-happy U-boats."

Urushibara saw a lot of the world as the ship made its way to his ancestral homeland. After a brief stop in Bermuda, the ship travelled to New York, which Ichiro remembers as a dazzling city of lights – "with no rationing!" – and more ice cream than he and his sister could have ever imagined in wartime Britain.

Soon he was "home," living in Setagaya and trying to assimilate. Urushibara makes little issue today of the prejudice toward the returning Japanese his family encountered. "We rarely mentioned we had dual nationalities, though, or that we spoke English," he says. "That would have been asking for trouble."

On Monday, Dec. 8, 1941, Urushibara remembers cheering along with classmates when it was announced on the radio that Pearl Harbor had been attacked, and that Japan was at war with the U.S. But as the war escalated and the population suffered from increasing shortages of almost everything, Mokuchu's hybrid woodblock art, which had found such favor in Europe, became but memories of a vanished world.

In the last desperate days of Japan's disastrous Pacific campaign, even Ichiro's then 56-year-old father was drafted. The elder Urushibara escaped the clutches of combat when a friend secured him a job in a factory, and Ichiro is convinced that even at 14, he would have been next had the war continued.

But the U.S. incendiary bombing campaign of March 1945, in which 100,000 people reportedly were killed in a single day, took care of what little Tokyo had left to fight for. "We were at our house in Setagaya when the first of the bombs fell on March 10," says Urushibara, "and we could see the downtown skies turn bright red. But that wasn't the end of it. On May 25, the raids came much closer, but when we started to evacuate, we saw that skies around us were ablaze in all directions. We thought, 'First, the Blitz, then repatriation to the opposite end of the world. Now this. We said, 'What the hell,' and just stayed at home."

And a good thing they did. While they were kept busy putting out fires while the bombs dropped all around them, their house miraculously survived, though nothing else beyond three doors down made it through the conflagration. In the process, Urushibara became a bit of a local hero, as his hand-built battery-operated radio was the only source of updates on raids through numerous power outages. "I was shouting, 'The Americans are coming, the Americans are coming!' around the neighborhood."

And come they did, in the form of the Occupation, an initially much-dreaded event that was to launch Ichiro's life on a new trajectory. Unable to afford finishing high school, Urushibara's bilingual skills even at 14 were good enough to immediately land him a job during his middle school summer holiday as an interpreter at the Ernie Pyle Theater, on the site of the Takarazuka Gekijo in Hibiya, which was a theater for the Occupation forces. The pay was okay, and the food "incredible."

The new Japan rising from the ashes was short of English-language expertise, and offers came pouring in from all corners. He did one stint in the Civil Censorship Detachment, poring over documents in order to enforce MacArthur's "Thou Shalt Not Speak Ill of the Allied Powers" rule. He began working for commercial radio broadcasters under the name "Ken Tajima," to separate it from his business and political endeavors, which included work for multinational firms such as Toyota, Time-Life and Hill & Knowlton, as well as the private office of a secretary to a prime minister.

Somehow, he also managed to become the nation's most trusted interpreter as well, lending his impressive talents to high-profile conferences and events. His diverse careers saw him travel to 51 countries.

Still fresh in his memory is the series of broadcasts he did for TBS, simultaneously interpreting the conversations between the astronauts and control on the Apollo missions. He remains very proud of having been the only simultaneous interpreter doing the Apollo 11 to 17 moon landings who converted the astronauts' measurements to metric in the live simultaneous interpreting.

But it was through his work at the U.S. Embassy that Ichiro met Yuko, a radio program producer in his department. Elegant, and a rare female uni-



Valuable works on paper A woodblock print by Mokuchu Urushibara and a letter of thanks for a folio of prints from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill

versity graduate in that era who spoke refined English, thanks to her English literature studies. Yuko's father and grandfather were viscounts and prominent ministers under the Meiji and Taisho Emperors, and Yuko chuckles as Ichiro recounts the early days of their courtship under the guarded eye of the distinguished family. Though somewhat dubious about the prospect of their daughter marrying a repatriated "nobody" from a former enemy country, the family's prewar lifestyle and affinity for western culture probably made it easier to reconcile their daughter marrying a "commoner."

By the time the Olympics rolled around in 1964, "Ken Tajima" and Ichiro Urushibara were both bona fide stars. Ichiro even appeared stateside in a Schlitz beer commercial, with Yuko making a guest appearance in kimono.

An afternoon with the Urushibaras is a unique and deeply penetrating glance into the clash, demise and eventual synthesis of samurai, Empire and afternoon tea. Raised by parents determined to produce good British citizens, Ichiro knew little Japanese into his teens, while Yuko, through her aristocratic connections, went through Gakushuin, where she was *sempai*, by one and two years, respectively, to Yoko Ono and the Emperor.

"I still have the birthday book autographed by Yoko," she says of those privileged pre-war days. Also to be found in the pages is the signature, "Akihito," from none other than the current emperor.

The Urushibaras' memories from their multiple careers still astounds. Ichiro met Fidel Castro in Havana, and can recall an impressive list of the world's greatest celebrities like Sammy Davis Jr., Connie Francis and Pat Boone who sought a spot on his popular radio shows. Yuko also had her fair share of exposure to celebrity through her father being a great fan and benefactor of baseball. His friendship with baseball legends Lefty O'Doul and Lou Gehrig, in particular, gave Yuko the chance to meet the biggest stars of the day – players like Joe DiMaggio and Shigeo Nagashima.

Ichiro wishes his father, who died in 1953, could have lived long enough to have enjoyed those heady days of his successes. He still holds dear a letter from none other than Winston Churchill, thanking Mokuchu for sending him a set of woodblock prints based on Brangwyn's sketches. "The letter was dated Aug. 12, 1940, in the midst of the worst days of the war," he says. "You would have thought Churchill was rather preoccupied. We were all moved. It still makes me so happy to remember that my father received a letter from 10 Downing Street in recognition of what he had achieved in England."

The letter arrived just weeks before the Urushibaras left for Japan. Today, after 75 years, and celebrating 50 years at the FCCJ last year, Urushibara is still admitting to not feeling entirely Japanese nor British. "Neither fish nor fowl," he says.

Others might call him a global citizen before his time. ●

Mary Corbett is a writer and documentary producer based in Tokyo. She is a board member of the FCCJ.

The president of Japan's Communist Party took a (sometimes humorous) scalpel to the administration's proposed security bills.

Kazuo Shii and the logic of the "War Bills"

by MICHAEL PENN



Kazuo Shii at the Club

ONE OF THE GREAT anomalies of the Japanese political world is the continued existence in 2015 of a remarkably vibrant communist party. In the rest of the democratic world, communist parties either changed their names or else they disappeared altogether. But not in this country.

The Japan Communist Party remains proud of its name and its tradition. It is by far the oldest of the still-functioning Japanese political parties, having been founded in 1922. That makes it more than three decades older than the Liberal Democratic Party. Moreover, the JCP is showing renewed electoral strength in the Abe era. In some public opinion polls it has been registering support levels that put it third, behind only the LDP and the DPJ. It is also the only opposition party that has been gaining seats since Shinzo Abe came to power. For example, in the unified local elections this April, the JCP saw advances that gave them representation in all 47 Japanese prefectural assemblies for the first time in their long history.

The gravity-defying success of this opposition party and the Abe administration's strong desire to reshape Japan's postwar security policies made this a particularly opportune time for Party Chair Kazuo Shii to come to the Club to discuss his party's views.

At the top of the agenda are the eleven bills that the Abe government

Michael Penn is president of the Shingetsu News Agency.

calls the "Legislation for Peace and Security" and which the critics, including Shii, call the "War Bills." Collectively, these bills, if passed, would drastically expand the Japanese government's ability to deploy the Self-Defense Forces to overseas missions, even in cooperation with foreign military actions.

With its long and tenacious commitment

of support for the Japanese Constitution of 1947 and the pacifist ideals that it represents, the JCP is arguably the staunchest opponent of Abe's security legislation. But since the ruling coalition of the LDP and Komeito holds firm majorities in both houses of the Diet, the main weapons that Shii and his colleagues can employ to defend their positions are the facts and logic that can devastate the Abe administration in parliamentary debate, and thus hopefully swing public opinion behind them.

"If an overwhelming majority of the public raises its voices against this legislation," Shii told the gathered journalists, "then the ruling coalition will not be able to force through its passage in spite of their parliamentary majority."

Shii spent much of his opening statement making a series of incisive and often humorous observations about the arguments being employed by the Abe administration in support of their "War Bills." He suggested that the government was forced to employ tortured logic and to create entirely new legal concepts that no one had ever heard of. He asserted that they couldn't even be translated into English very effectively.

One example Shii gave was the administration's concept of "rear area support," which is apparently supposed to reassure the Japanese public that any operations that the Self-Defense Forces would conduct together with foreign militaries would only take place at a safe distance from the hostilities.

"In English there is only the word 'logistics' – roughly equivalent to the Japanese word *heitan*, which they don't use. In the concept of logistics, however, there is no distinction between 'rear' and 'forward' support, but simply overall logistical support," Shii observed.

The most amusing example that Shii posited was the Abe government's concept of "the use of weapons." The prime minister argued in Diet debate that should the Self-Defense Forces come under attack while providing "rear area support" for a foreign military force, that it would be perfectly allowable that they have recourse to "the use of weapons" to defend themselves. At the same time, however, Prime Minister Abe staunchly refuses to acknowledge that "the use of weapons" can be regarded as a practical synonym for "the use of force" – which is, of course, explicitly banned by Japan's Constitution.

Shii noted playfully that he went to the Foreign Ministry and asked them if there was any place in international law or in the understanding of foreign nations that a distinction is drawn between "the use of weapons" and "the use of force" in military conflicts. Naturally, the Foreign Ministry confirmed that there was no such international understanding.

"We are debating concepts here that are used nowhere else in the world," Shii commented.

In later parts of his presentation, Shii also highlighted problems he perceives in the subservience of Japanese foreign policy to the U.S., and in Abe's unwillingness or inability to publicly acknowledge that Japan had ever committed a war of aggression or even "made a mistake" in launching the Pacific War. These factors, too, undermine trust in the government's policy direction, he said.

Shii concluded, "The biggest problem with the Abe administration is that they only discuss military issues and they have absolutely no diplomatic vision. This sets up one national military against the other and leads to a cycle of negative developments." ●

Running a saké brewery in the 21st century requires a firm grasp on the traditions of the past and a positive view of the future.

Born to be a saké maker

by SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI

ONE OF THE FCCJ'S closest friends and biggest admirers is Atsuhide Kato, the 11th-generation president of Katokichibei Shoten, makers of the exclusive "Born" brand of saké produced in the small town of Sabae, nestled in the mountains of Fukui Prefecture. Club Members will easily recognize Kato, who proudly attends the annual FCCJ New Year greeting party in January – "Hacks & Flacks" – that draws close to 600 guests representing the communications departments of top corporations, diplomats and other important figures of the Japanese establishment to rub shoulders with the members of the press.

Not only does Kato kindly donate the large traditional straw-wrapped barrel of Born saké to the FCCJ for the occasion, but he and his wife, dressed in their lineage *happi*, personally attend to the guests, ensuring they are treated to a never-ending supply of the high-grade beverage. Guests line up not only to drink some of the varieties of the magical brew he brings to the party, but also to listen to Kato explaining the long history and the devotion that goes into the brewing process.

The secret to the success of Kato's line of saké is first and foremost the ingredients: basically the exclusive use of premium-grade *junmai* rice that is the most highly polished in the world, pure natural underground water native to the region and original yeast. But he proudly hails the staff and the rice farmers from Hyogo who supply the brewery – the people who belong to the Katokichibei family, and share a deep, unshaken faith in the final product.

Born saké is known throughout the industry for the strict and meticulous quality control standards that go into its production. It is aged at ice-cold temperatures until optimum maturation is reached – something that takes from one up to 10 years – then shipped chilled to preserve the

Suwendrini Kakuchi is a correspondent for the UK-based University World News, with a focus on higher education issues.

integrity of the saké. The process has developed over a long history – in fact, Kato's forefathers started brewing saké in 1860 under the "Koshinoi" label. In 1926, the saké was selected to serve the Showa Emperor for special ceremonies.

The name "Born," the brainchild of the present master, means "purity" and is also linked, says the owner, to the concept of "creation" and a "futuristic vision." The brand has received numerous prestigious awards – among them a triple gold medal for 2012 Born saké that was awarded by the International Wine Challenge and the Internationals Sake Challenge associations in a competition with 170 other brands. Kato also represents the face of the Japanese national drink culture to the whole world as he now regularly accompanies the Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, on his overseas trips to pour Born saké at official parties.

One of the reasons Kato continues to collaborate with the FCCJ is that he believes strongly in the Club – and the role, he says, that the institution symbolizes. Its birth in 1945 as a landmark in Japan's postwar democracy is well known. But Kato believes the FCCJ must maintain its respected reputation as the place for dynamic international journalism in Japan, therefore playing a key role in ushering in necessary changes to sustain the economy and culture. "I am not against promoting change for the better despite the long tradition I represent," says Kato. "In fact, a lot of my energy is in producing new products and ways of drinking it." Recently, Born is regularly served in large wine glasses, according to Kato. "In contrast to small saké cups, I believe raising a wine glass to our mouth and nose is a better way to savour the fragrance of saké."

Bringing Born saké to the FCCJ therefore represents a deeply embedded hope for the future for Atsuhide Kato. Remember that earnest wish when he hands you the next glass of one of the world's finest sakés at the next FCCJ event. ●



For goodness sake Born saké and the company president, Atsuhide Kato, pictured at this year's "Hacks & Flacks" in the Club



TAKASHI AOYAMA

THE FCCJ 2015-2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President

JAMES SIMMS, a *Forbes* contributor, freelance reporter and television and radio commentator in Tokyo, has covered the Japanese economy and politics for two decades. In 2013-2014, he was a Scripps Journalism Fellow at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he researched energy policy, seismology, seismic engineering, and disaster and risk management. Previously, he spent 15 years at Dow Jones, including as the *Wall Street Journal's* "Heard on the Street" columnist in Tokyo, analyzing corporations, policy issues and the economies in Japan and South Korea. In 2011, he won the highest writing award at Dow Jones for a series on Japan's budget and bureaucracy. He has conducted hundreds of interviews for print and television, including for CNBC, and covered Asia's financial crisis and the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster.



1st Vice President

PETER LANGAN has been in the news

business in Asia for almost 30 years, with postings in Japan and Singapore, covering stories from Sydney to Ulaanbaatar, Mumbai to Jakarta and many points in between. He was the Tokyo Bureau Chief of Bloomberg News from 2005 to 2009, and later led the bureau's news team that won two SOPA awards for coverage of Fukushima. He is now an Editor-at-Large at Bloomberg. He is from the U.K., more precisely the City of Liverpool – well known for producing lousy music and useless football teams, with the latter exception of Everton FC.



2nd Vice President

SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI writes for the UK-based global edition of

University World News, focusing on higher education issues. She is from Sri Lanka and has a long experience covering Japan-Asia relations that highlight diverse perspectives in the rapidly changing region. She has travelled extensively to report from the ground in the ASEAN and South Asia and is closely connected with the local media. Her stories aim at in-depth coverage of the news behind the news, bringing voices of the people into crucial international debates. She is a 1996/97 Nieman Fellow and author – currently completing her second Japanese book, on natural disasters, community resilience and ethnic identity in Asia.



Secretary

MARY CORBETT is a writer and producer who was born in Japan to an

American father and Japanese mother. She began her career in television work as a location coordinator and director intern for Japanese networks during her university days in California. She has since been working as producer and content contributor to broadcasters in Japan and around the world, starting with a series of ocean documentaries with renowned cinematographer Bob Talbot. She counts NHK, Asahi, TBS, Discovery, ITV, PBS and BBC among her network partners. She also writes for publications in Japan, such as *Nikkei Health*, *Playboy* (Japan), *Shinchosha*, the *Japan Times*, *Medical Globe* and others.



Treasurer

YUICHI OTSUKA is a 2nd term Treasurer and long-time Associate Member of the Club. He is a vice president of business development at United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC), the world's 2nd-largest semiconductor foundry. Before taking his current position, he ran a Japanese subsidiary of a European high-tech company for six years. His experience also covers M&A and large-scale structured finance in the semiconductor field.

Directors-at-large



IMAD AJAMI is the CEO of Irismedia, and the

owner and corporate associate of four Pan Arabic magazines. He collaborates with many media organizations in the Middle East. He has long and extensive experience in media, in both the public and private sectors – as director general of information and spokesman for the Lebanese Parliament. He has also been an advisor to many Arab countries at the highest levels of government. In addition to lecturing, he has also been a professor at the Lebanese University for Media & PR, published four books on media and politics and produced two TV documentaries.



MASA AKI FUKUNAGA is serving his fourth consecutive year as FCCJ Board Member. A member of the Club since 2003, Fukunaga has been a correspondent for the *Sanmarg*, a daily Indian newspaper, since 2002. He fluency in Hindi is due to three years at India's Banaras University, studying for his Ph.D. in Sociology in the early 1980s. He writes on socio-political developments in South Asia and the relationship between Japan and the South Asian region.



MILTON ISA is a consultant and serves in an advisory capacity

with several organizations, including NPOs. He has lived in Tokyo since 1972 and has been a member of the FCCJ since the eighties. He worked in the financial field for over 40 years: he spent 20 years with Merrill Lynch, set up the representative office in Tokyo for Permal Asset Management and was the president and CEO of State Street Japan. He has an MA in Diplomacy from Norwich University and a BA in Business Administration from Seattle University. Isa has lectured at Keio and Hitotsubashi universities and the National Defense Medical College. He retired as a Colonel from the U.S. Army Reserves after 30 years.



ROBERT WHITING 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 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. *Tokyo Underworld* is under option to Amazon Studios.



WILLIAM SPOSATO continues as Kanji in the second

year of his two-year term. Sposato is a freelance writer, focusing on macroeconomic issues and monetary policy. His stories can be found on the QBeats online publishing site and he has also recently completed an assignment for *Finance Asia* magazine. Prior to his current work Sposato was deputy bureau chief for the *Wall Street Journal/Dow Jones* and has previously worked for Reuters in a number of roles including Japan bureau chief, New York bureau chief and editor for South Asia. In addition to his writing, Sposato provides media training programs for corporate executives.

FCCJ EXHIBITION

Oyako (parents and children) by Bruce Osborn



I BEGAN TAKING PHOTOS of Japanese parents and children as a way of looking at both Japanese culture and changes from one generation to the next. In the 33 years since starting, I have shot thousands of *oyako* and the project has grown in ways I never expected. In 2003, my wife and I started Oyako Day, which is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of July. On Oyako Day, I take photos of a hundred families in an all-day, super photo session. July 26 will be our 13th Oyako Day event. Photos in this FCCJ exhibition feature well-known parents and children from an ongoing series for the *Mainichi Shimbun*. ●

Parent: Yuichiro Miura/professional skier

Child: Gota Miura/professional skier

Three years after this photo was taken, they climbed Mount Everest. Yuichiro was then 80 years old and holds the record as the oldest person to successfully reach its summit.

Bruce Osborn's work has appeared in numerous publications and adverts, and he has received a number of awards. He has published several books, and also shoots commercials and music videos. In 2014, a documentary was made about the Oyako project. See more at www.oyako.org.

JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...



... on Tuesday, July 14 for Shinya Tsukamoto's grisly, gripping masterpiece, *Fires on the Plain*, followed by a Q&A with the filmmaker-star. In this 70th anniversary year of WWII's end, fiercely independent, iconoclastic filmmaker Tsukamoto has refused to buckle to the white-washers of history. His provocative new adaptation of Shohei Ooka's 1951 novel *Nobi* only slightly exceeds Kon Ichikawa's 1959 film in its brutality and hell-on-earth savagery. Both draw directly from the horrific source material — but Tsukamoto's is a perfect reinterpretation for our time; an intensely visceral reminder of the utter obscenity of war: Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten. This is absolutely essential viewing, not only for those too young to remember Ichikawa's film, but for everyone who believes that Japan can best honor its Pacific War veterans by refusing to turn away from the truth of their experiences. (Japan, 2014; 87 minutes; Japanese/Filipino with English subtitles) — **Karen Severns**



REGULAR MEMBERS

KANA INAGAKI writes for the *Financial Times* about Japanese companies and technology from Tokyo. She is a native of Vancouver, Canada, and earned her Master of Arts degree from the University of Chicago. She began her career at the Tokyo bureau of Associated Press, covering Japanese politics, before moving to Kyodo News where she reported market and corporate news. She then spent four years as a Tokyo correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal* and Dow Jones Newswires covering the technology sector, M&A and markets before joining the *FT* in 2014.

NOBURU OKABE has been the *Sankei Shimbun's* senior reporter for diplomatic issues since 2012. He joined the *Sankei* after graduating from Rikkyo University in 1981. After years of experience as a reporter for the city news desk covering the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and the National Tax Agency, he studied at Duke University and Columbia University, both in the U.S. He was assigned to the foreign news desk before becoming Moscow Branch chief reporting on the status of the northern islands and the changes taking place in the Russian government from 1997 through 2000.

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Fragrant Orchid: The Story of My Early Life
Yamaguchi Yoshiko, Fujiwara Sakuya ; translated by Chia-ning Chang
University of Hawaii Press

HEARD AT THE CLUB

“I believe that it is likely that a good proportion of the nuclear power fleet can be turned on without risk. But it’s a big question that needs to be debated. . . . And an informed public debate is, in my view, absolutely critical in taking this forward.”

David King, UK Foreign Secretary's Special Representative on Climate Change on his view of restarting Japan's nuclear reactors. at the FCCJ, June 24, 2015



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