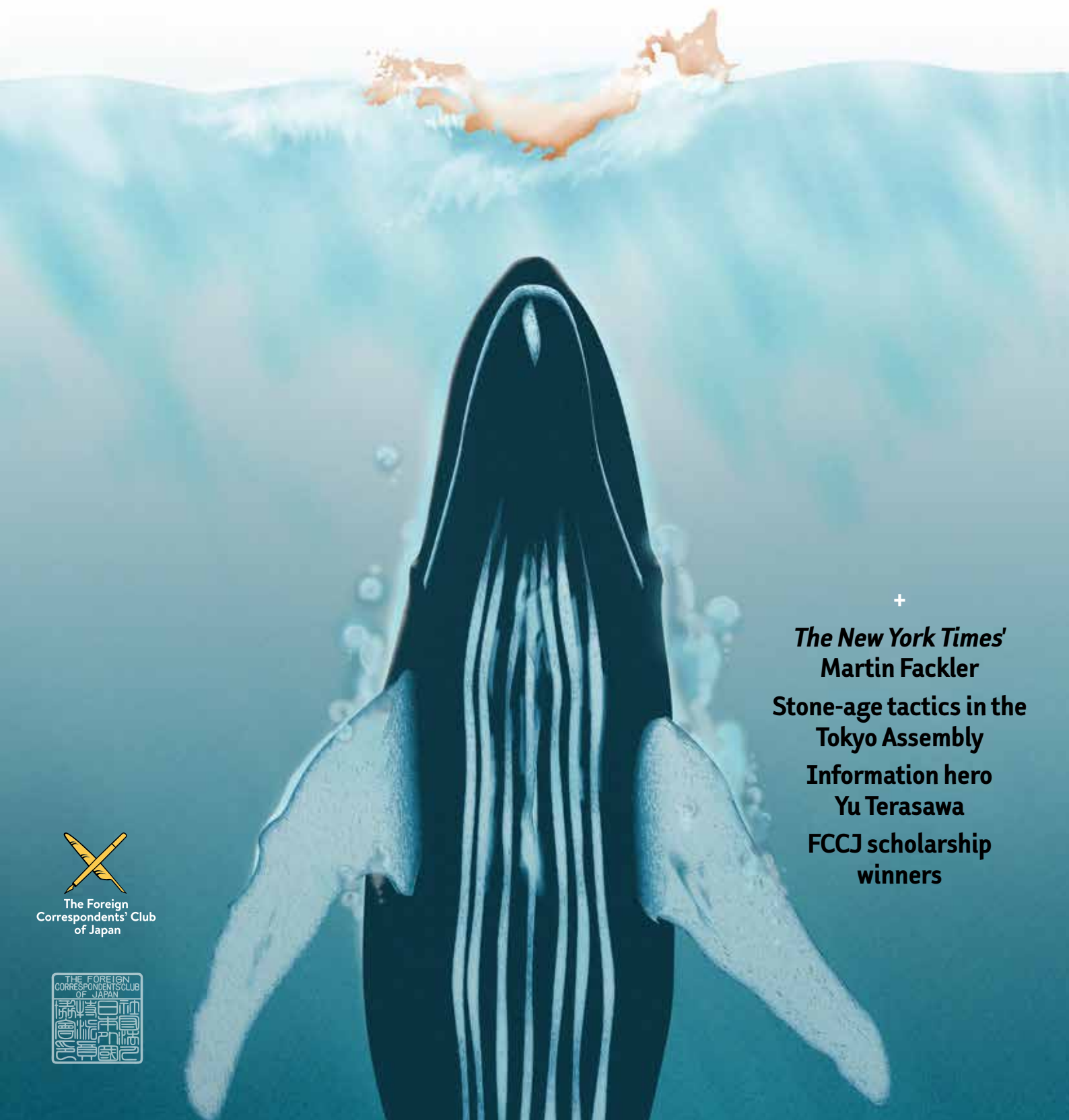


# NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

# JAPAN

Can international PR save the nation's "brand"?



+

*The New York Times'*  
Martin Fackler

Stone-age tactics in the  
Tokyo Assembly

Information hero  
Yu Terasawa

FCCJ scholarship  
winners



The Foreign  
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## NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

Volume 46, Number 7 July 2014

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**Published by the FCCJ**  
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Cover illustration: Andrew Potheary (with apologies to Roger Kastel, artist for the original Jaws poster)

## From the President



AS I BEGAN TO write this, another severe downpour made visibility across the Tokyo skyline nearly nil. This too will pass, I whispered under my breath. Sure enough, 20 minutes later beams of sunlight broke through the clouds, streaking the sky with Irresistible Pink and Mikado Yellow.

It wasn't the perfect metaphor for our recent Board of Directors' election mishaps, lessons and hard work, but it was close enough. Like Gilbert & Sullivan's wildly popular comic opera, *The Mikado*, there were moments of absurdity and laughter. Tackling 50 new Articles and 20 paragraphs of Bylaws with seemingly endless clauses, plus additional provisions, Robert's Rules, and our feisty, combative membership was... how shall I put it... a test of faith. As yet, I am still whispering my this-too-will-pass mantra.

We managed to elect the needed six Regular Members: myself, Masaaki Fukunaga, Carsten Germis, Suvendrini Kakuchi, Michael Penn and Patrick Zoll. William Sposato was elected as Kanji, and Dennis Normile as the Reserve Kanji. Unfortunately, none of the Associate candidates received the necessary majority, so we are organizing another election for the Associate candidates toward the end of July.

Once again, we will need your cooperation in this stage-two election process. Please cast your vote for three candidates who will join the board, and one reserve. Many of you left blank your ballot choices for the Associate candidates. So please read the candidates' statements, consult with friends who know them, and make your choice. It's imperative that you do this.

In the meantime, we are functioning under a 12-member "Caretaker Board of Directors" that includes the previous nine board members and three newly elected ones. Again, we kindly ask – no, actually beg – for your cooperation and patience on this vital new process. We're almost there!

Our June 24 press conference with Tokyo Assemblywoman Ayaka Shiomura drew about 100 attendees and wide media coverage. Brave indeed, she has unveiled a heckling tradition previously unchallenged at this level. There was a twittering of nervous laughter in the mostly male TV newsroom where I work when LDP lawmaker and heckler Akihiro Suzuki made his unforgettable deep bow and apology. I smiled at the justice of it. As much as I question some of Prime Minister Abe's policies, I had to thank him for that historic moment.

We also discovered a wider opportunity for promotion and sales in Japan's prefectures' plans to draw attention to their charms. Gunma Night, held on June 27, was a smash hit. Governor Masaaki Osawa came to share news of the Tomioka Silk Mill's designation as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. Participants included the *okami-san* from the region's top *ryokan*, a troupe of traditional dancers and musicians and even live silkworms munching on mulberry leaves. Culinary delights and local sake and beer were there for the taking. I met a few representatives from other prefectures quietly surveying the event. They told me, "We'll be back!" Indeed, the more, the merrier.

– Lucy Birmingham



## HONG KONG STILL HAS IT

**Zach Coleman** says to **forget the air pollution and high rents. Access, both to people of note and to air links out, means the Chinese city can still call itself the Pearl of the Orient**

ONE DAY LAST YEAR, a call from the foreign editor of a big U.S. newspaper woke me up. He wanted a freelance piece about a young American fellow who had decided Hong Kong was the best place to talk with selected reporters about U.S. surveillance programs.

Edward Snowden only stayed in the city a month and some critics cast doubt on his sincerity in saying he chose Hong Kong for its "spirited commitment to free speech," but the episode nonetheless says a lot about why it is a great place to be a journalist (and kept me busy for a couple weeks).

First, Hong Kong is well connected. Snowden was living in Hawaii and his initial interviewers were based in Brazil and Germany, so Hong Kong was a reasonable rendezvous point. Indeed, it's the sweet spot for someone covering Asia, well placed as the crossroads between north and south, with flight links to 180 cities. Plus there are four other airports, with additional links, within an hour or two's reach by road or ferry.

Second, connections work so well because the city is, in most respects, startlingly efficient. Most people wouldn't cite an unsolved crime to back up their advocacy for a city, but bear with me. A few years ago, robbers hit our apartment in the middle of the night. Included in their haul was my wife's bag and, as she was supposed to head out on a European business trip the next day, her tickets and passport. Yet she left as scheduled, with replacement tickets and a new passport in hand.

Local transport is also highly efficient; imagine a place where subway delays are rare enough to be front-page news.

Third, it's a great city for sources and news events. Investment banks and multinationals have their regional bases here for the same reasons news organizations like the *INNYT*, *WSJ* and *FT* do, and face time does a lot for building up relationships.

In some cases, it's even easier for potential sources based elsewhere. My *Nikkei* colleagues stationed in mainland China regularly troop down to Hong Kong for the results briefings and shareholder meetings of Chinese companies listed in the city (as most of the big ones are), because opportunities to hear directly from top officials in the mainland are both more scarce and more controlled.

Perhaps my favorite thing about Hong Kong is something that Snowden probably wasn't able to experience: wherever you are in this urban jungle, you can walk for less than half an hour and be in green, sub-tropical jungle. True,

the tigers are long gone, but officially three-quarters of Hong Kong's land is countryside and a good bit of it still feels that way.

It's true that pollution, in comparison with cities like Taipei and Tokyo, is bad and rents are high. But local food remains reasonable, as do drinks at the Foreign Correspondents' Club. Even wine prices have dropped since the government suddenly decided in 2008 that the fruit of the vine could be part of its free-trade policy.

Services involving manual labor – like courier delivery and home cleaning – remain astoundingly cheap. And

newspapers. While the police have made some arrests, they haven't announced the motive for the attack.

But the public reaction to the incident underscored the community's commitment to media freedom and to resisting the perceived threat the attack posed. Some 13,000 people marched in protest and many more signed petitions or wore blue ribbons to express support.

Overall, the media environment here remains vibrant and colorful. In my neighborhood, it's not uncommon to see long lines of residents waiting on the street to pick up free newspapers, of which there are many.



healthcare is an inside secret. Those permitted to stay here for work can access public hospitals where bills are pretty fixed at \$13 a day. (Ask me. I was in for several days for surgery after shattering my elbow. My bill? \$65.)

It's also a fact that while the city's standard of English isn't what it was in colonial days, the only area where communication can really be much of a problem is in a taxi – and there are apps for that. Most local people in business, government or academia that you would want to talk to for a story can generally get by in three languages: Cantonese, Mandarin and English.

But back to crime – and free speech. Among this year's most sensational crimes was the brutal knife assault in broad daylight on Kevin Lau, the former liberal editor of one of the city's biggest

While the political process itself can be tedious, there are intriguing new groups like those calling to "forgive and forget" the Tiananmen massacre and the high school kids who organized a successful public outcry against the new "patriotic" curriculum. There are artists like film director Wong Kar-wai who already have a global audience. And the city's former No. 2 official is now on trial for allegedly concealing millions of dollars in payments from the city's largest developer. These are all proof that this city of seven million still abounds in good tales. ●

**Zach Coleman** is deputy editor of the *Nikkei Asian Review*. He returned in 2012 to Hong Kong, where he arrived in 1999 as a reporter for the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, after spending two years in New York as an editor with the *Financial Times*.



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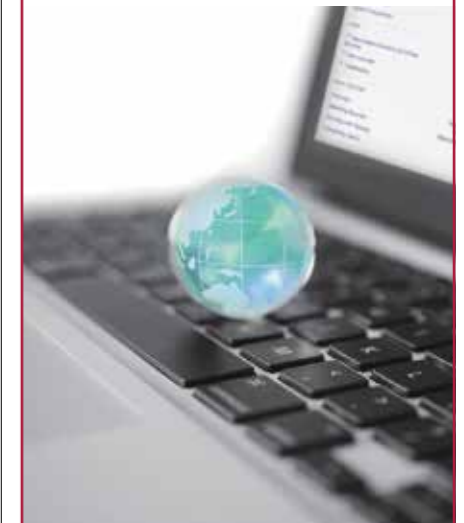
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How does Japan rate in communicating its message to the world? Some public relations experts share their views

# BRANDING "JAPAN"

## PR gurus offer advice

As most Japan-based journalists will willingly and happily attest, there is renewed global interest in the country – for a variety of reasons, positive and negative. Japan has recently been caught up in a barrage of accusations from its neighbors on its attitudes towards its past, as well as territorial issues – not to mention mostly negative worldwide attention on its whaling projects and dolphin hunts.

At the same time, there is also an enormous stockpile of goodwill thanks to the country's unique peace constitution and its general avoidance of conflict. Then there's the attraction of "soft power," consisting of the very appealing cultural aspects – both traditional and modern – to which political scientist Joseph Nye gives great credence.

We're often treated to our journalist Members' views of Japan's image in the pages of newspapers, magazines and websites. And while we appreciate their in-depth analysis and commentary, we thought we'd ask some other knowledgeable Club Members to share their thoughts about what is important in international relations in today's world – the "branding" of a country, and what it means to a nation's standing in the international community.



### Generally, how would you rate Japan's international image?

**Ross Rowbury, President and CEO, Edelman Japan** Generally positive. However, in the increasingly complex environment, certain individual geopolitical, historical and cultural issues are receiving focused negative attention.

### How important do you think a positive "brand" is to a country's well being?

**John Sunley, Chief Executive, Ashton Consulting, Ltd.** Just as for individuals where a positive self-image encourages others to see you in a positive light, a good brand gives a country an enormous advantage in business, politics and all spheres of international activity. The more the worlds of business, politics and tourism globalize, the more important the brand becomes. If a country has a good reputation for product quality, integrity, or good hospitality,

these factors can be the tipping point factor in a decision to buy a product, sign a treaty or visit Japan. Because these brand factors are not really measurable, economists often ignore them.

**Rowbury:** In a world where there is increasing competition for capital, investment and talent, a positive brand is just as important for a country as it is to any company or organization.

### What are the positive issues that Japan should stress?

**Sunley:** It would depend on the audience, but I think for most, number one would be the country's success at creating a society

of relative security, safety, peace, longevity and equality. How many people are aware that the proportion of Japan's population that is in jail is less than a tenth of that of the U.S. and a fraction of that in France or the UK? Second would be Japan's position as a liberal democracy, a key differentiator from China and, to some extent, Korea – though this is rarely mentioned in media coverage of the disputes. Number three would be the huge role played by Japan in international organizations.

**Shuri Fukunaga, Managing Director and Japan CEO, Burson-Marsteller:** There are a few aspects, such as the hardworking people, cool products, clean cities, *monozukuri*, and the healthcare system, that are being communicated relatively well. But interest in these facets are segmented. What Japan has yet to communicate well is its holistic stance – who we are, what we stand for, and where the heart of the country lies in

the context of a global society. This must be done holistically and convincingly, not only internationally but to the Japanese population as well.

**Rowbury:** The top three would be Cool Japan, meaning food and culture; innovation, since Japan has more patents than any other country yet is often seen as not being innovative; and its contributions to the world, since Japan has been perceived as being insular. It needs to build its image as a key contributor to the rest of the world.

### What are the largest negative issues that the country faces in the international arena?

**Sunley:** First, the antagonism from China and, to an extent, from South Korea. Second would be poor communication of the country's strengths by government and industry to the media and the international audience. And third is fears overseas of the consequences of Japan's demographic problems and government debt.

**Rowbury:** Questions about the strength of the economic revival; Japan's interpretation of history; the perceived lack of innovation.

### So would you agree that Japan has a largely positive image in education, science and culture; negative in business and economics?

**Rowbury:** I agree with the positives although Japan could probably improve the image of its higher education institutions. I believe the tide is turning on the image of business and economics.

**Sunley:** I think it is broadly true, but that the positives are weakly perceived and the negatives exaggerated. The main reason for the gaps between reality and perception are poor international communication by Japan and its industry.

### Has Japan's international image improved or worsened over the last five years?

**Sunley:** It takes a long time and a great deal of effort to change perceptions of a country. Nevertheless, I think the image of Japan in most regions has improved over the past 20 or 30 years.

**Rowbury:** The focus on a number of individual issues as I mentioned earlier has caused some worsening of Japan's image. But over the past year, these have been counterbalanced by positive news on

the 2020 Olympics, Abenomics and the strength of the government's leadership.

### How would you rate Japan's PR activities on the global stage?

**Fukunaga:** Japan has a weakness, and it is the country's naïveté in communications. Japan means well. It truly does. But it communicates its message to the world in undisciplined, staccato bursts. The messages are cast into the wide night sky like distant fireworks that disappear before making a strong impression on the viewers. Seen from the outside world, Japan fails to be convincing.

**Sunley:** Generally poor so far but there are signs that this failure is being recognized by Abe and various government ministries. Other countries use experienced third-party foreign advisors to a much greater extent than Japan.

### From a PR perspective, what advice would you have for Abe regarding his visits to Yasukuni Shrine?

**Sunley:** I believe that Abe should follow the example of Willi Brandt and make an impassioned and public apology for the actions committed by Japan's military during WWII. I think the apology should not be hedged in any way. If I was advising them I would suggest that before making the apology they should tell their opponents from that time that they are going to do so and ask them to consider issuing public statements accepting Japan's apology. This would put China and Korea on the spot, since I believe they are using the Yasukuni Shrine visits for political and economic purposes.

**Fukunaga:** If pockets of Asia continue to be anxious about Japan's potential to turn militaristic, Japan cannot simply assume such fears are groundless and continue ignoring them. Japan has to directly tackle the subject by taking steps to alleviate them, however misguided such perceptions could appear. What Japan needs to do is begin a direct conversation starting with a frank acknowledgement that such concerns exist. Japan needs to position itself as willing to listen. Only by paying attention to its audiences can Japan expect to gain the sufficient trust that will allow the discussions to move to the next level – how and why those concerns may or may not be misguided.

### From a PR perspective, what advice would you give the government about the

**whaling issue and the Taiji dolphin hunt?**  
**Sunley:** I am not an expert on either issue but if there are genuine scientific and cultural reasons to do these things then Japan must communicate why they are necessary – consistently and expertly. Being silent or inarticulate damages brand Japan. Have an open debate on the issues; if a committee of enquiry or parliament decides they should be stopped, then stop them.

### Japan often says that the conflict with other Asian countries is attributable to a lack of understanding about Japanese culture and policies.

**Rowbury:** I think it is more the result of a number of Asian countries being at a period of development where they want to challenge the status quo. Japan is also trying to change the role it plays on the world stage. This is causing competition and friction that is being channelled into a number of specific geopolitical and historical issues.

**Sunley:** Japan has an excellent relationship with most Asian countries, most European countries, the U.S. and South American countries as well as Australia and others. For many of these countries, Japan's culture and society and policies are the reasons for that. China and Korea are the exceptions.

### What could Japan do to improve its PR activities?

**Fukunaga:** Japan definitely needs to get to know its audience better. It needs to sensitize itself to the diversity of the international audience. In each sector, Japan must learn what is known and what is not known; what that sector thinks it knows and how it perceives Japan. All too often, Japan assumes that it has made a sufficient explanation, with the result that it innocently ignores the remaining concerns. This appears as arrogance on Japan's part, which serves only to feed the gap between Japan and the rest of the world.

### For example?

**Fukunaga:** Let me illustrate with a case that is of a different level of discussion yet tells much. Let's talk about *soba* and the way Japanese people slurp it. It's always been seen by the West as bad manners. But has anyone explained the reason behind it? Has anyone explained how sophisticated the ritual is, since it allows diners to enjoy the aroma along with the taste? Has anyone explained how similar it is to how wine connoisseurs "slurp" wine? ❶



# Martin Fackler

by Lucy Alexander

Martin Fackler, Tokyo bureau chief of the *New York Times*, decided he enjoyed journalism one night in 1998, in the ballroom of the Imperial Hotel. Then a lowly stock-market reporter for Bloomberg, he found himself at a birthday party for “the number two guy of the Inagawa-kai,” the yakuza gang then based in Roppongi.

“It was a wild ride,” he recalls. “The tables were arranged in a hierarchy: in the center were the bosses, and the next table was for the mistresses, all in tight leopard skin with long fingernails. For some reason they put me at that table. I kept my hands on the table all night.” On the next table were the police, followed by lesser ranks and far-right groups. “They played *The Godfather* theme over and over again.”

Fackler’s entrée into Japan’s demi-monde came about thanks to his coverage of the March 1997 sokaiya extortion scandal, when a corporate racketeer was exposed as having been extorting money from all the major brokerage companies. “My beat morphed from stocks to the underworld,” he said.

“Sokaiya are extortionists. The more infamous they are, the more money they make. So they were always very happy to be quoted. It’s actually a lot easier to talk to gangsters in Japan than it is to talk to people like [Toyota President Akio] Toyoda. They are far more open.” Drinking sessions with gangsters “made journalism a lot more fun,” said Fackler. “I didn’t want to go back to stock reporting after that.”

It was certainly a long way from Fackler’s early years in a trailer park in Iowa, while his father studied at medical school. After a peripatetic upbringing, one brother became a hedge-fund manager, one an itinerant musician (“a denizen of the night”), while Fackler was drawn to Asia and to academia, studying Chinese language and history at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. In 1986 he won a Japanese government scholarship to study Japanese at Keio University, and after graduating began a PhD program in modern Japanese and Chinese history.

“But after a couple of years I started getting antsy,” Fackler said. “What’s my

trajectory? Six years to get a PhD and then a job in Kansas, getting paid \$35,000 a year teaching a bunch of undergrads who don’t care.” He decided to switch to journalism, having been told “it was like permanent grad school – you ask questions and write papers. The only difference is that people read what you write.”

So he applied to the Tokyo bureaus of the major newswires and was offered the stock-reporting job at Bloomberg in 1996, aged 29. “I put aside my academic treatises on the Ching dynasty and Manchu warriors and became a financial journalist.”

In 2000 he moved on, working for AP

IT’S NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT WWIIII COULD START OVER THE SENKAKU ISLANDS. SO THERE ARE REASONS WHY JAPAN MATTERS’

in Beijing and Shanghai. “The Shanghai bureau is the best job in China. All the busy work’s in Beijing so I was doing a lot of fun social features.” A stint for the *Wall Street Journal* in Tokyo followed, before he was approached in 2005 by the *New York Times* – “the paper I grew up reading; it was where I wanted to work.”

Fackler is currently the only writer covering Japan for the world’s most famous newspaper, and he operates 14 hours ahead of his editors. “You’ve done a

whole day’s work, and at about the time you want to go to sleep, your bosses are waking up with fresh ideas they want to discuss. Then they want to talk to you again at 6am before they go to press.”

Married, with two children aged 15 and 10, he finds the work takes a heavy toll on his family life. “I was going to go camping with my son a couple of weekends ago, and I had to cancel because I just can’t go off into the wilderness with no phone reception,” he said. “It’s hard for my wife to have a full-time job because I can never commit to being around. I might be gone tomorrow for months, if something big happens.”

Having been both a wire reporter and a long-form writer, Fackler feels that newspapers need to choose which service they want their correspondents to provide. “On the one hand they want you to act like a wire service, on the other hand they want you to differentiate yourself from commodity news, which means you have to have value-added.”

This “schizophrenia” means that writers’ time is used very inefficiently. “I’m constantly putting aside bigger projects to do small stuff that ends up getting one paragraph in the paper,” he said. “And at the end of the day, your career is not based on your coverage of spot news, it’s based on the memorable stories.”

Despite his frustrations, Fackler believes “it’s still pretty hard to beat journalism in a lot of ways.” He has experienced little of the declining interest in Japan of which many Tokyo correspondents complain. “Japan has a very good reputation among educated Americans and the *Times* has a huge appetite for Japan stories,” he says. “The U.S. is a fellow Pacific power with a lot of connections to Japan. It’s not inconceivable that World War III could start over the Senkaku Islands. So there are reasons why Japan matters in the U.S. in a way perhaps the rest of the Western world wouldn’t share. I’ve never been told, ‘Who cares.’ All the feedback I get is, ‘We want more.’”

Lucy Alexander is a freelance journalist and correspondent for *The Times*.

ANDREW POTHECARY

# Swadesh DeRoy Scholarship-winning entries

► A call for rethinking education in areas of conflict

## Outwitting Al Qaeda in a changing world

by Elliot Silverberg

When the conflict in Syria began, Farah was just five years old. Today, she is eight. Were Farah living anywhere but in war-torn Syria, she would have been in her second or third year of elementary school. Instead, Farah spends her days helping her father, a rebel commander, run his makeshift bomb factory. She scavenges the charred, corpse-strewn streets for spent rockets whose fuselages can be salvaged, and pours combustible materials into canisters that serve as improvised explosive devices. The work is fraught with danger, but she is no stranger to death and destruction.

Farah's horrifying experiences, recounted in the PBS *Frontline* program "Children of Aleppo," are typical of Syrians her age who, were it not for the brutal conflict tearing their nation apart, would only have had to contend with the common fears of an ordinary schoolchild. Stranded in a harsh land amongst harsh people, children like Farah are consumed by the struggle to survive; inevitably, the urgency to take part in the violence becomes too great to shrug off. Theirs is a tale of uncertainty and upheaval that is repeated countless times elsewhere: in nearby Iraq and Lebanon; in Afghanistan and Pakistan; in Chechnya and the Balkans; in Somalia, Sudan and the Central African Republic – indeed, in any land ravaged by war.

In 2013, the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated that the previous year saw 28.8 million people, of whom at least half were women and children, displaced by war and civil unrest. The IDMC suggested that this figure, the highest ever recorded, could be explained by an increasing incidence of intrastate violence in Latin America (+3.1 percent), sub-Saharan Africa (+7.5 percent), and the Middle East and North Africa (+39.9 percent).

Wars, once conducted between sovereign nations, are increasingly orchestrated by non-state actors: small, isolated groups of ideologically charged irregular

troops whose scare tactics (assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, suicide bombings, etc.) have branded them terrorists. Accordingly, the incidence of interstate wars plummeted in the 1990s after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and again in the early 2000s. This astonishing transformation came to a head a year-and-a-half ago when the 2012 Heglil Crisis, a six-month-long border war between Sudan and South Sudan, was the only declared interstate war in the entire world.

The international community's counterterrorism efforts, which for the most part run parallel to the U.S.'s counterterrorism efforts, have been counterproductive to

### WARS, ONCE CONDUCTED BETWEEN SOVEREIGN NATIONS, ARE INCREASINGLY ORCHESTRATED BY NON-STATE ACTORS

say the least. Aggressive military intervention and fragmented nation building have been mainstays of the war on terrorism. During its occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, for instance, the U.S. placed great emphasis on security and defense, but little on education and infrastructure. The idea, as presented by President George Bush in his supercilious "Freedom Agenda," was to systematically de-radicalize and democratize Al Qaeda-influenced regions by browbeating dissenters into fitting the mold of what is regarded as proper in Western society. Bush failed to consider, however, that the people whose lives America interfered with would not take kindly to any such patronizing displays of paternalism. Prosecuted to devastating effect in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Freedom Agenda has since misfired and,

in many instances, backfired.

Consider that, according to the Global Terrorism Database, there were approximately 102,616 terrorist incidents between 1980 and 2012. Of these, 62,775 (or 61 percent) took place before the attacks of September 2001, for an average of roughly 2,900 incidents-per-year. Since 9/11, however, that average has risen to well over 3,500 incidents-per-year. There are, in effect, more terrorists now than there were 13 years ago.

If violence continues to spread across the world and the international community continues to intervene, chances are an entire generation of young children like Farah, the vivacious yet uneducated Syrian girl whose rebel father runs a bomb manufactory, will become resentful malcontents, ripe pickings for Al Qaeda and Company. Just as Somalia's uneducated, impoverished and war-weary youth were incited to band together as Al-Shabaab ("The Youth") and take up arms against the West after the Al Qaeda-affiliated group Al-Itihad Al-Islami preyed on their fears and frustrations through the 1990s, so too are today's youth falling under the spell of Al Qaeda. The extremists are winning the hearts and minds of the vulnerable, thereby once again outwitting the suited denizens of Foggy Bottom.

If the international community intends to strike back against Al Qaeda and its associates, it must prioritize education. However, it cannot neglect to acknowledge the cultural and ethnic plurality of today's globalized world and the variety of education systems. To do otherwise would repel the would-be beneficiaries of any attempt to promote education, thereby further empowering Al Qaeda and rendering the effort pointless. The authors of a UNESCO report entitled "Rethinking Education in a Changing World,"

Elliot Inoue Silverberg is an undergraduate student at Oregon State University who is interested in a career in journalism. This article was edited for publication.

prepared last February for a meeting of senior experts on education policy, are of the same opinion: "The relationship of power between knowledge systems in the North and South needs to be recognized. . . . Alternative traditional knowledge systems need to be recognized and properly

accounted for, rather than be relegated to an inferior status."

Malala Yousafzai, the world-renowned Pakistani schoolgirl and education activist who nearly died for her cause, puts it differently (and quite eloquently) in her bestselling autobiography *I am Malala*:

"Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human."

Human and humane. An admirable sentiment indeed, one that all of us should keep close in mind as we collectively strive to overcome our more base instincts in the pursuit of world peace. ❶

► A salute to creativity and innovation

## Bumpy yellow paths and platform doors

by Alexandra Juhasz

There are several common eye diseases; some are very serious, and can eventually lead to blindness if neglected. For the safety of the blind, bumpy yellow paths have been installed at major train and subway stations in Japan to guide them or show them where the platform ends. There are also platform doors functioning as safety barriers to keep people from falling onto the tracks.

One does not need to be visually impaired to get into an unpleasant situation at stations – even people with proper eyesight in Japan fall off rail platforms or bump into things while mesmerized by their own smartphones. In most cases, they walk away unharmed – though some suffer from a red face. They certainly don't have to pay with their lives. Yet, imagine such an irresponsible scene in nature, such as a zebra that is paying all its attention to the grass around its hooves. It's a story that would certainly end tragically if there were a lion around.

Our world is changing more rapidly than anything witnessed by previous generations. We have to be watchful and adaptable if we are to keep up with this extraordinary lightning-fast transformation of our everyday lives. We should also be aware that, due to the current economic situation, the dominant social psychology is considerably pessimistic, which darkens people's future and generates dreamless youngsters in large numbers.

We don't have to be helplessly lost in the dark because – luckily – there are many "bumpy yellow paths" and "platform doors" prepared for us in our society. If we don't want to be attacked by a hungry lion, we would be better off focusing

our attention on the world around us, and not just on our own toes.

### BRINGING THE OLYMPIC FIRE FROM SOCHI TO JAPAN

A 39-year-old truck driver in Tokyo named Kobayashi recently found a way to use a "yellow bumpy path" and experience the global happenings more intimately. "I usually listen to the radio when driving long distance to kill time," he says. "I first got to know about the Sochi Winter Olympics last December when a radio news program was introducing Sochi city and the Olympic mascots. I like manga and animation, so I wanted a mascot figure for myself."

Kobayashi soon found out that the mascots were not on sale in Japan; if he wanted one, he would have to purchase it from overseas. That gave him an idea! By the time the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games was aired on Feb. 3, 2014, he already had several mascot items and other Russian souvenirs listed on his Yahoo! Auction booth for sale.

On his tablet, he points at a picture of a 28cm animal toy. "I never thought that a mascot with the Sochi logo would be worth ¥25,000 to somebody," he says in an excited voice. "But that's what it actually went for."

The demand was there and he was ready to deliver. Within 10 days he sold all of his 50 items and generated as much profit as two months' worth of his salary, simply because no one else offered such items in Japan at that time. As Olympic fever increased in Japan, more people visited his auction booth, and his items were viewed by thousands of visitors a day.

"We can't control the color of our skin or tomorrow's weather," he explains. "But there

are things we can change here and now."

What Kobayashi did required neither special knowledge nor a university degree; it was simply a matter of envisioning new possibilities. Inspiration came from a conversation heard on the radio. He simply summed up the situation, then actively used tools that already existed in Japanese society – the internet, a smartphone camera, a language translator program, the shipping services at convenience stores, etc. – and let the media do the rest for him.

"The Sochi Olympics taught me how to walk with my eyes and ears wide open, and I enjoyed it," he says. "The most difficult part was convincing my elderly mother that the money which I sent home was earned through hard work done in a modern style."

Amidst all the uncertainties of the modern world, we must be agile and able to adapt quickly. However, most of us don't have the time to read the newspapers from top to bottom, or watch numerous television channels to look out for upcoming trends. Nor do we have the knowledge to simply understand and foresee the direction the economy is heading.

Taking the initiative to make things happen and to look into the near future in terms that are within our control are choices we can make. Practicing small acts of change in everyday life, like Kobayashi did, renews the self. He is proof that anyone can find their own news with which they can step out of the comfort zone and start walking on the "bumpy yellow path." ❶

Alexandra Juhasz, from Hungary, is a student at the Sanno Institute of Management in Tokyo. She is interested in a career in science journalism. The article was edited for publication.

Swadesh DeRoy Scholarship-winning entries (cont'd)



The battle with polio still rages

photographs and text by Allison Kwesell



ROTARIAN SUSUMU ASADA (at right) knows how to hold a child, with steady and firm hands, so they feel safe. When he looks into the eyes of the children he immunizes against polio, his thoughts travel to his own grandchildren in Japan, and he imagines them in the same situation. Polio is a highly contagious virus that attacks the spinal cord primarily in children under five, and can cause complete paralysis.

In 1985 there were 125 countries where polio is endemic; now there are only three – Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. However, eradicating polio from India is considered the largest step in defeating the disease globally. India is now marking its third year as a polio-free country, a huge leap in changing the world for the better.

The following pictures were taken during volunteer trips to India to photograph Rotary International's PolioPlus drive. Since 1985 The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, spearheaded by national governments, the World Health Organization, Rotary International, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the United Nations Children's Fund, has committed to eradicating the disease from the globe. ❶

**Clockwise, from left: Handprints and crutches line the walls of an integrated school for differently abled children in New Delhi, India; volunteer Naoko Kurauchi demonstrates proper administration of the oral polio virus vaccination to Kusi Wajeer, 2, in Madipur, India; Asha Natur, 21, stands outside of her home in Kusumpur Pahari, Delhi's largest slum; Asada is one of the volunteer Rotarians who have been visiting India once a year for 11 years to help the eradication effort.**

Allison Kwesell is a graduate student at International Christian University, majoring in Japanese and media studies. She is interested in a career as a documentary photojournalist.

▶ A government spokesman looks at the bright side of the recent court ruling against Japan's "scientific hunt"

## A-whaling we will go

by Julian Ryall

Joji Morishita, Japan's representative at the International Whaling Commission, caught the assembled press somewhat wrong-footed when he appeared at the FCCJ on June 10 and declared that the recent decision by the International Court of Justice forbidding Japan from carrying on its "scientific whaling" program in the Antarctic Ocean was not such a bad thing after all.

The ruling has been hailed by critics of Japan's stubborn insistence on its right to carry out both scientific and, ultimately, commercial whaling operations, but Morishita dismissed suggestions that the court had put a final nail in the coffin of the whaling industry here. "I felt that the ICJ decision actually was good for Japan," he said. "And as the days have passed, that impression has been strengthened."

Morishita went on to dissect passages in the court's ruling that Japan is interpreting as being supportive of its policies, including part of paragraph 56 that states that the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was concluded "to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry."

Japan understands this phrase, which dates from the signing of the convention in December 1946, to mean that the "object and purpose" of the agreement is to harvest whales commercially. Other fragments of the ruling confirm that lethal methods of scientific whaling are not forbidden, while the court also recognized that the sale of the by-product from the scientific slaughter is not sufficient on its own to invalidate the Japanese program. Con-

sequently, a narrow reading of the ICJ's ruling has left Japan with a loophole.

Morishita saved the Japanese government's trump card for last, highlighting paragraph 246 of the court's decision. This states: "It is to be expected that Japan will take account of the reasoning and conclusions contained in this judgment as it evaluates the possibility of granting any further permits" to conduct whaling.

Armed with this perceived backing for a resumption of its scientific whaling program, Morishita said the government has set in motion the procedures to win approval from the International Whaling Committee to restart operations in the Antarctic Ocean as soon as next year. "For fiscal 2015, we will submit a new research project for the Antarctic Ocean that will reflect the court's ruling," he said.

The new plan must be submitted to the scientific commission of the IWC six months ahead of the next scheduled meeting of the organization, which is scheduled for May of next year. "For Japanese nationals, the whaling dispute is often regarded as an attack on Japan from outside," Morishita said.

"Whaling is often criticized as evil, barbaric and inhumane and [some say] that it is wrong [that whaling] survives in the 21st century," he said. "If whaling involved over-exploitation or non-controlled activities, then Japan should expect to be blamed, but what we want to achieve is sustainable whaling, with catches within a sustainable number."

And even though few Japanese consume whale meat today, the government is sticking to its contention that whale is an important part of Japan's food culture. "Even if some country thinks that whales are special or sacred, as long as whales are sustainably utilized then that view should not be forced on others," he said. "If people in India tried to impose their way of treatment of cows on the rest of the world and tried to promote the prohibit-

ing of eating hamburgers at McDonald's, what would happen?"

Morishita's comments at the FCCJ coincided with the government-backed "whale week" at Japanese restaurants, with Yoshimasa Hayashi, the minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, photographed enthusiastically tucking into a bowl of whale meat. "Whaling and whale-meat cuisine is an important part of Japanese culture," Hayashi said. "I would like to proactively provide information about it to the public widely and deepen the understanding for the whaling."

Equally, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a parliamentary commission in Tokyo on June 9, "I want to aim for the resumption of commercial whaling by conducting whaling research in order to obtain scientific data indispensable for the management of whale resources. To that end, I will step up further efforts to get understanding from the international community."

The reaction from environmental groups was predictable and swift. "If Prime Minister Abe genuinely seeks understanding from the international community, complying with the judgment of the World Court would be a good start," said Patrick Ramage, head of the International Fund for Animal Welfare's whale program.

"What is 'regrettable' is that the respected leader of a great nation would suggest, in 2014, that Japan's cultural relationship with whales is defined solely by eating them," said Ramage. "Claiming an attack on one's culture in an attempt to preserve the narrow interests of a small cadre of government bureaucrats is beneath the stature of a world leader such as Prime Minister Abe."

Ramage suggested that the "zeal" with which the fisheries ministry is now promoting the consumption of whale is little more than "a cheap political stunt" designed to draw attention away from "his failure to adequately address the needs of Japan's agricultural and fisheries sectors."

"As the world continues to turn away from whaling, photo ops such as the one showing Minister Hayashi chowing down on whale meat will only undermine Prime Minister Abe's goals to double the number of foreign tourists to Japan," Ramage said. "The 'Cool Japan' that Prime Minister Abe so badly wants to sell to the rest of the world will fail if Japan continues to pretend that eating whales somehow protects and promotes its proud cultural heritage." ❶

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

▶ Reporters Without Borders shines a light on the efforts of an indefatigable journalist to expose corruption and improve media-watchdog abilities

## Yu Terasawa is an information hero

by Suvendrini Kakuchi

In a country where the act of merging with the crowd is almost a religion, internationally recognized freelance journalist Yu Terasawa doesn't seem to mind being outside the congregation.

It's been that way since his college days. Over a two-decade long career, this plucky journalist has investigated and systematically exposed wrongdoing in the halls of two of Japan's institutional goliaths – the impenetrable police system and the equally lofty mainstream media.

Highlighted in his reports, published in weeklies like *Spa!* or *Friday*, are cases of blatant police corruption that are rarely documented elsewhere in the mainstream media. Terasawa contends a key reason for the media silence is the well-entrenched kisha "press club" system that relies on embedded journalists from the established media to cover the top ministries. Having reporters embedded in the government bureaucracy results in a news flow of information that has been released through a single, narrow prism, and leads to self-censorship from a fear of losing access.

This has led to international criticism, not only for restricting access for overseas news organizations, but also for creating cozy relations between the press and bureaucrats and endangering the peoples' right to important information. "By restricting the rights of freelance journalists to press conferences or other meetings with officials, the Japanese press has lost the diverse opinions and depth that is crucial to responsible media reporting," Terasawa said during a recent interview.

This past May, in a tribute to his dedication to investigative reporting, Terasawa was named one of 100 Information Heroes from around the world, selected by the France-based Reporters Without Borders. Speaking at the FCCJ, the 47-year-old reporter described his roller-coaster life fighting discrimination, and his years battling

court cases. In one case filed in 2004, he demanded ¥2.4 million compensation for being refused a seat in the Tokyo District Court's press gallery – typically reserved only for the court's kisha club members. After arguing that the practice is against the constitutional protection of press freedom, Terasawa lost when the judge ruled media access to court proceedings does not fall under press freedom.

Undaunted, he presses on. In June, Terasawa and 43 other freelancers will attend the first trial in a case they have filed against the recent Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets. The controversial law gives the heads of administrative organs the legal right to restrict information to the public.

Terasawa views the new law as sealing the fate of freelance reporters. "What makes insiders talk to freelancers is that they are fed up with the pressure in Japan to conform," he says. "These courageous people are the lifeline for the fledging investigative community that plays such a crucial role of balancing the spoon-fed Japanese media." Indeed, the tragic case of exposure to dangerous radiation levels among Fukushima residents after the 2011 nuclear accident reflects the pathetic state of the Japanese media due to the lack of access to independent information. Official statements and press releases downplayed the extent of radiation contamination, a situation the government has defended as necessary to avoid panic and social upheaval.

Terasawa's focus on police corruption has also led him to tackle the deep-rooted practice of *amakudari* in the police organization. His reporting has forced high level police officials to resign after being exposed for cases of bribery and sexual harassment, including rape. "My long years in this

murky world have led to some eye-opening experiences," he said.

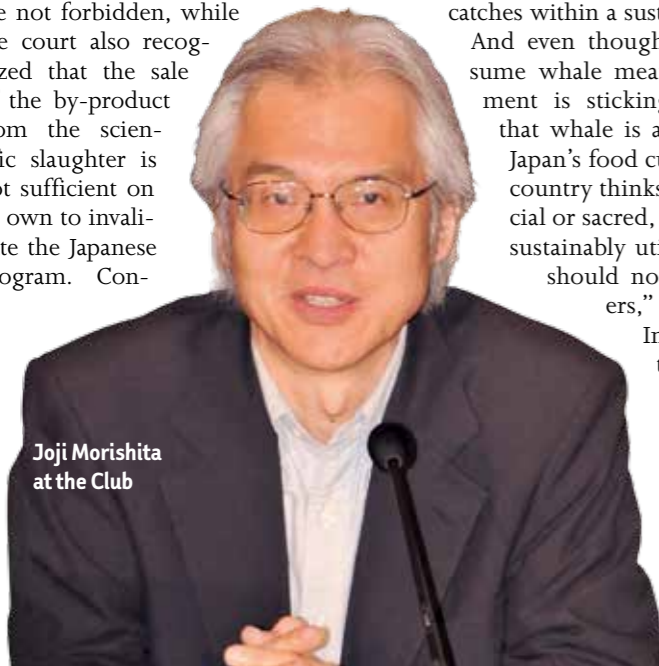
One of his landmark series pried open the lid on a carefully protected system of police administrations using public money to hire automobile-towing companies operated by former police officials, and documented the pressure on police officers to follow an unspoken system with unwritten rules for collecting a pre-decided budget from speed fines. "The unfortunate victims pay speed fines plus towing fines that can be as much as double the original penalty," Terasawa said. "I found out that the extra towing fine is to support companies established by former police officers."

Terasawa has made a tireless commitment to transparency in his investigative reporting, and makes it a point to have his byline appear, in comparison to the usual anonymous reportage that appears in the mainstream media. He says the international reward he has received is in stark contrast to the brickbats hurled at him in Japan. "I face constant threats from unknown callers, have been violently assaulted by police offices, and had my car smashed," he said. "I've also been arrested and thrown in jail simply because I was asking too many questions."

A few months ago, in April, Terasawa and some like-minded colleagues launched the Free Press Association. The organization invites their own news sources to speak to an audience of journalists that include bloggers, internet media reporters and other interested parties.

Finally, the discussion turned to a key obstacle to investigative reporting in Japan: the country's public aversion to controversy and pride in social harmony. It is a trend that has forced citizen-led protest movements to the fringes, and little remains of the attitudes that led to the massive protests in the 1960s against the U.S.-Japan security pact. A sprinkling of that past seemed to emerge in the anti-nuclear protests, when people enraged by government attempts to minimize the dangers of radiation took to the streets following the Fukushima meltdowns. But, as Terasawa explains, the public focus remains on finding stable jobs in established organizations, rather than changing their country's opacity. This leaves the mainstream press happily ensconced in their press clubs while freelancers like Terasawa chip away at their stone walls in their desire to find – and report – the truth. ❶

Suvendrini Kakuchi is a reporter for Inter Press Service, an international wire service, and a regular commentator on Asian issues for Japanese publications and television.



Joji Morishita at the Club



Yu Terasawa at the Club



▶ Will the sexist heckling of Ayaka Shiomura increase mistrust in Abe's "Womenomics" campaign?

## The assemblywoman vs. the dinosaurs

by Julian Ryall

It was not just the casually sexist remarks that were bandied about as she addressed the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly chamber on June 18 that angered Assemblywoman Ayaka Shiomura. That was naturally bad enough, she told a press conference at the FCCJ six days later, but it was compounded by the subsequent sniggering and the wink-wink, nudge-nudge among members of the male-dominated chamber.

Then, despite following the appropriate procedures for a filing a grievance in the chamber, its guardians informed the Your Party politician that nothing could be done against the perpetrator – or perpetrators – as she had no evidence to identify her heckler. “They concluded by saying that as the person responsible could not be found, they could not therefore take any further steps,” Shiomura said. “The end result, as far as they were concerned, was that there was no problem and that nothing had occurred.”

But Shiomura, a 35-year-old politician serving her first term in the assembly, refused to allow the men who rule the chamber to wash their hands of the matter quite so easily. Thanks, in part, to a similar sense of displeasure among the domestic media, combined with her own Twitter and Facebook messages, sufficient pressure was brought to bear to force one of her hecklers to come forward.

Akihiro Suzuki, 51, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party, apologized on June 23. He admitted interrupting Shiomura's speech on support for women trying to become pregnant or

struggling to raise children by saying, “Can't you even have babies?” Other comments – “You're the one who should get married first” and “She must be single” – also were heard coming from the LDP's seats in the chamber.

Sadly, Shiomura said, that is the sort of place the debating chamber of the nation's capital has become. “There are not so many female politicians, and I can't deny that it is difficult for a woman to work in this kind of environment,” she said. “This is very much a world that is dominated by men. It is an environment in which men feel free to say whatever is on their minds,” she said. “And that is the basic problem that has caused this to happen.”

Shiomura said she had “braced herself” before making what was to be her maiden speech in the chamber as there had been similar catcalls when she had participated in an earlier debate.

But the volume that the heckles were delivered at and the “old-fashioned thinking” shocked her. “It was so unexpected in this modern age, it was not something that I had prepared myself for,” she said.

Then things got worse.

“I thought that since there were people around me, they must have heard the comments and would be similarly shocked,” she said. “But the response of the chamber was just a great deal of laughter. The moment had become enjoyable for this audience. I felt tremendous

sadness and the beginnings of anger.” That sense of injustice was deepened by the chamber declining to make any effort to investigate the matter.

The majority of the mainstream Japanese media sided with Shiomura's frustration, claiming such outbursts have no place in society, let alone in Tokyo's decision-making chamber. The *Mainichi Shimbun* commented, “More than merely ill-mannered and graceless, what the man shouted at Shiomura has disturbingly deep roots. This most recent incident is a sign of just how late in coming is any truly radical change in prevailing attitudes to women,” it said in an editorial.

Some of the tabloids preferred to use the opportunity to rake some muck, with Shiomura being asked to respond to suggestions in the weekly *Shukan Bunshun* that she was involved in an affair with another member of Your Party. The allegations are “groundless,” she replied.

*Tokyo Sports* also quizzed Shiomura about a comment she made on a TV show in 2007 confirming that she took ¥15 million from a man as compensation for ending their relationship. That exchange involved “wit,” she claimed, unlike the heckles in the chamber, which were “just sexual harassment that was like bullying.”

Sidestepping a question at the FCCJ event about whether she forgave Suzuki for his comments – Shiomura would only say that her feelings are still “complex” – she did express fears for the success of the government's policy of greater opportunities and equality for Japan's women.

“I think that what Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe says about women in society here is correct, that he wants to reinvigorate the role of women and to enable them to display their skills and power. But if we look at the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly we see a place that is filled with people who do not think along the same lines at all,” she said.

“When we have assembly members and administrators whose thinking is so old-fashioned, I have to ask how we can truly create the policies and realize the dream of empowering women.” ❶



Ayaka Shiomura  
at the Club

HAIJIME OKINA

## FCCJ EXHIBITION SUMI-E: India and Japan by Yoko Koyano



EVER SINCE I FELL in love with India 30 years ago, I've thought of it as my spiritual home.

I have visited the holy city of Benares at least once every year. There, sitting on the bank of the Ganges. I scoop up a handful of the holy water, the *Gangajal*, and after using it to prepare my sumi ink, I draw the people and the landscapes of that beautiful land.

Of course, I also draw Japanese motifs, and in this exhibition I have included paintings depicting *ojizousama* (stone Buddha statues in the shape of a child) and *rakan* (achiever of Nirvana). ❶



Yoko Koyano started her sumi-e career in 1977. Since her first visit to India in 1980, she has been making Indian-themed work and has exhibited in over 10 Indian cities. Her work has also been used as titling for Japanese TV shows and plays.

G&T NITE...



Mari Keniry, visitor Hsu Kai Chun from Taiwan and Mary Corbett were part of the crowd that showed up at the Club on June 6 for the "Tanqueray Gin & Tonic Nite." Mari is holding the "copa"-style glass, which has become de rigeur for G&T aficionados. Mary wrote the story on the popular drink which appeared in the May issue of this magazine, and came up with the idea for the special event.

JOIN THE MOVIE COMMITTEE...



... for two must-see documentary screenings about Asian youth in July. On Tuesday, July 15 at 7 pm, we welcome Haryun Kim with her intimate portrait of migrant-worker children in Guangzhou, China, *A Class of Their Own* (above, left). The nation's economic boom has created a constant stream of job-seekers to its cities, bringing with them more than 20 million children. Kim's film reveals the shocking reality of the growing education underclass in China, even as its young subjects – and several devoted teachers – captivate us with their candor.

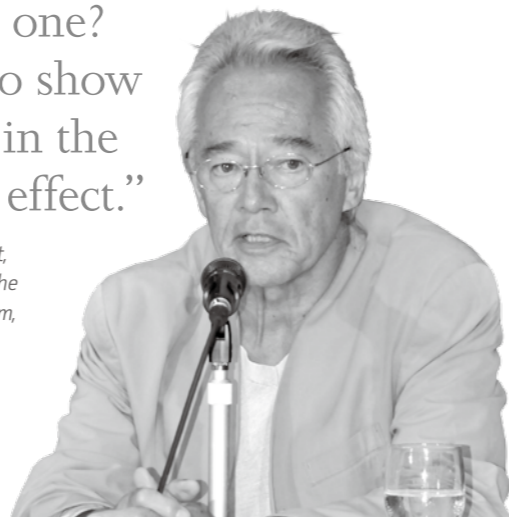
On July 24, we welcome Shingo Ota with his heartbreaking film on youth suicide in Japan, *The End of the Special Time We Were Allowed* (above right). When a childhood friend kills himself in the midst of a documentary project with Ota, the director fulfills his final wish and finishes the film. More than just a record of a life cut short, it is a very personal and, finally, revelatory work.

– Karen Severns

Heard at the Club

"The estimate for remodeling the old stadium is less than half the estimated price of ¥170 billion for the new one. Why a new one? I think it's to show an increase in the Abenomics effect."

Edward Suzuki, Architect, Calling for remodeling the existing National Stadium, June 13



KEEPING AN EYE OUT...

The May issue of the trendy global magazine, *Monocle*, featured a story on Asia's remaining foreign correspondents' clubs – Tokyo, Bangkok and Hong Kong – with the lion's share of pages devoted to our FCCJ.



NEW MEMBERS



**JÜRGEN HANEFELD** is the new East-Asia correspondent for ARD German Radio, a network consisting of non-commercial and non-governmental television and radio stations throughout Germany, which runs studios all over the world.

Jürgen was born in Hamburg and started his journalistic work while studying at the universities in Mainz and Göttingen. Initially specializing in travel and traffic, he changed his main interest to reporting on foreign politics. He lived in Singapore and Amman (Jordan) for several years and worked as travelling correspondent in India and Africa. From Tokyo, Hanefeld covers current affairs in Japan, the two Koreas and Taiwan as well as some of the Pacific Island States.



**HAU BOON LAI** is the Japan Correspondent for the Straits Times. After a stint in the Japan bureau from 1999 to 2003, Boon Lai left the paper to pursue other interests – including small ventures to feed his entrepreneurial spirit and a spell as an educator – but discovered that none of it compared with the satisfaction of being at the forefront of news coverage. Boon Lai rejoined the newspaper in 2011 and was posted for a second time to Tokyo, in September 2013. He is here as he believes that Japan – despite being in the midst of what is described as over two decades of stagnation – is still a force to be reckoned with.



**KAZUTAKA SATO** is a reporter and video/photo journalist who was born in 1956. He has covered war zones such as Bosnia, former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Africa, Indonesia, Central Asia and more, and has received a number of awards, including the Vaughn/Ueda Prize. He was shooting a documentary in Afghanistan on 9/11 and covered the resulting events leading to the fall of Kabul.

He reported from Baghdad as special correspondent for NTV in 2003, at the time of the U.S. invasion. His documentaries include *Winter of Sarajevo* and *A Civil War without End: Afghanistan* for NHK.

REGULAR MEMBERS

Juergen Hanefeld, ARD German Radio  
Kazutaka Sato, the Japan Press

REINSTATEMENT (REGULAR)

Boon Lai Hau, the Straits Times

PROFESSIONAL/JOURNALIST

Hiroyuki Tomimatsu, West Wing Asia Inc.  
Yumiko Yokota, Sakura Financial News, Inc.

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Richard Berger, Canon Inc.

Miko Kitano, Austrian Mint Japan Office  
Hiroshi Sekiguchi, Kousokuya Inc.  
Kazunori Hori, Hong Kong Tourism Board  
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Nana Itagaki, Fujifilm Corporation

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Katsumi Yoshitake, NSK Ltd.

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**The Archaeology of Japan: From the Earliest Rice Farming Villages to the Rise of the State**  
Mizoguchi, Koji  
Cambridge University Press  
Gift from the Publisher

**Nenkan Kaigai Jijo 2014**  
Takushoku University (ed.)  
Soseisha  
Gift from Kaigai Jijo Kenkyujo, Takushoku University

**Nihon no Chosen Tochi o Kensho suru: 1910-1945**  
George Akita; Brandon Palmer; Ko Shioya (trans.)  
Soshisha  
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**Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan**  
Kingston, Jeff (ed.)  
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**Capital in the Twenty-First Century**  
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