

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

September 2014
Volume 46 No. 9
¥400



The
Foreign Correspondents' Club
of Japan

The DARK SIDE of CASINOS?

**Profit and
loss: a Korean
casino's lessons
for Japan**

+

The Asahi Shimbun's uncomfortable retraction
Remembering Jim Frederick
Looking at obscenity as a whole
Fadi Salameh profiled





> THEME.04
> UBIQUITY

Quiz: How many bearings are in your car?

Watching a sleek new car glide by, we think it's sad that no one says, "Check out the bearings on *that* one!" Because precisely engineered bearings are essential to your car's safety, reliability, fuel efficiency, smooth handling and comfort. Bearings are in the wheels, of course, but also in the engine, transmission, steering, air conditioner, seats, windshield wipers... even the control knobs. In fact, when you buy a new car today it comes with about 150 bearings. Considering that 80 million-plus cars are produced worldwide each year, do the math: that's about 12 billion bearings annually. And many of the world's automakers rely on NSK for top-quality bearings for every conceivable application, along with diverse components for transmissions and power steering systems. What's more, NSK researchers are hard at work on ways to reduce friction, weight and cost in order to improve durability, fuel efficiency and environmental performance while keeping cars affordable. So please, next time you see a cool car... check out its bearings.

NSK Ltd., PR Dept.
Email: pr-dept-news@nsk.com
Tel: 03-3779-7050
Nissei Bldg. 1-6-3 Ohsaki, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-8560



In this issue

The Front Page		4
From the President	Lucy Birmingham	
Chokan Taro and the last of the paperboys	Dan Sloan	
From the archives	Charles Pomeroy	
Cover		
A lesson in gambling from South Korea	Patrick Zoll	6
Profile		
Dr. Fadi Salameh of Al Jazeera	Monzurul Huq	8
The Asahi's costly admission	David McNeill	10
Obscenity, thy name is vagina	Andrew Potheary	12
Grappling with Kim	Julian Ryall	14
The Doctor is out	Tim Hornyak	15
Remembering Jim Frederick	Toko Sekiguchi	16
Club News		17
FCCJ exhibition: <i>Patterns</i> by Torin Boyd		
Join the movie committee.../Heard at the Club/ FCCJ YouTubers/New Members/New in the library		



NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

Volume 46, Number 9 September 2014

contact the editors
no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp

Publisher FCCJ

Editor Gregory Starr
Art Director Andrew Potheary
www.forbiddencolour.com
Editorial Assistants Naomichi Iwamura, Tyler Rothmar
Photo Coordinator Akiko Miyake
Publications committee members Gavin Blair (Chair), Geoffrey Tudor, Martin Fackler, New York Times, Monzurul Huq, Prothom Alo, Julian Ryall, Telegraph, Patrick Zoll, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Sonja Blaschke

FCCJ BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of July 25)
President Lucy Birmingham, *Freelance*
1st Vice President Michael Penn, *Shingetsu News Agency*
2nd Vice President Masaaki Fukunaga, *The Sanmag*
Secretary Patrick Zoll, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*
Treasurer Yuichi Otsuka, *Associate Member*
Directors at Large Suvendrini Kakuchi, *Inter Press Service* Akiko Ryu Innes-Taylor, *Associate Member* Carsten Germis, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* Milton Isa, *Associate Member*

Kanji William Sposato, *Freelance*

FCCJ COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Associate Members Liaison Milton Isa
Entertainment Sandra Mori, Suvendrini Kakuchi
Exhibition Bruce Osborn
Finance Yuichi Otsuka
House & Property Michael Penn
Human Resources Masaaki Fukunaga
Information Technology Roger Williams
Library, Archives & Workroom Koichi Ishiyama, Suvendrini Kakuchi
Membership Monzurul Huq, Peter O'Connor
Membership Marketing Bill Shin, Rie Sakamoto
Movie Karen Severns
Professional Activities Abi Sekimitsu: David McNeill
Publications Gavin Blair
Special Projects Haruko Watanabe
Web Committee Tim Hornyak
Compliance Committee Kunio Hamada
70th Anniversary Panel Yoshio Murakami
Grievance Panel Monzurul Huq, Yozo Hasegawa
Freedom of Press TBD
Food & Beverage TBD
De Roy Memorial Scholarship TBD

Foreign Press in Japan Justin McCurry

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan
Yurakucho Denki Building, North Tower 20F,
1-7-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0006.
Tel: (03) 3211-3161 Fax: (03) 3211-3168 fccj.or.jp

Published by the FCCJ
All opinions contained within Number 1 Shimbun are those of the authors. As such, these opinions do not constitute an official position of Number 1 Shimbun, the editor or the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. Please pitch and send articles and photographs, or address comments to no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp
Read the Number 1 Shimbun online:
fccj.or.jp/number-1-shimbun/

Cover illustration:
Andrew Potheary

From the President



TSUKIMI MOON VIEWING PARTIES this month will get a special treat: a perigee "supermoon" on Sept. 9, along with a Perseid meteor shower of "shooting stars." It's tough to compete with this kind of cool cosmic entertainment but the FCCJ does offer some special treats that Members can enjoy along with the moonbeams.

The Yokohama Bay Hotel Tokyu in the Minatomirai district is offering Club Members discounted rates up to about 25 percent. The hotel has 480 air-conditioned guestrooms, a full-service spa, indoor pool, four restaurants and two bars/lounges.

The Capitol Hotel Tokyu, not far from the FCCJ, is also offering us special rates with discounts up to about 43 percent. This luxury hotel has 251 rooms and 13 suites; two floors of fitness facilities including indoor pool and spa; Japanese and Chinese restaurants; a bar and lounge. Another highlight is the breathtaking panoramic view of Tokyo.

Members may also make use of special one-time usage fees at any of 19 sports clubs affiliated with the Tokyu Sports Club chain, including Tokyu Sports Oasis. Now there's no excuse for not feeling fit.

About 30 Members attended our tour last month of Google's YouTube Space Tokyo in Roppongi Hills. We were amazed by the quality of the studios and production equipment, all free for YouTube users with over 100 subscribers to their channel. The FCCJ is receiving more benefits as a YouTube user with over 1,000 subscribers. If you are interested in using the facility please email the Web Committee via the front desk: front@fccj.or.jp

Please also don't forget to take advantage of our reciprocal relationships with other press clubs around the world. You will be welcomed at clubs in the U.S., Canada, Europe, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and India. The FCCJ recently became a member of the International Association of Press Clubs (IAPC) along with about 41 other selected press organizations. <http://pressclubs.com>

The IAPC's annual general assembly was held this year in Vienna, and the 2015 assembly will be held in June in Ulaan Bataar, Mongolia. It should be an excellent opportunity to network and learn how other press clubs are tackling the many media and freedom-of-press issues facing us today. Please let us know if you're interested in attending.

Further "services" are being put into place to allay concerns over lack of transparency at board level. Members will be emailed a report on Board of Directors' decisions shortly after each scheduled monthly meeting. We will also be setting up a forum on the website for Members to share their concerns and suggestions.

Last but not least, please enjoy a moonstruck moment while gazing at this month's lunar show from our lofty windows. A Tokyo skywatcher's delight.

Go to our website for details on our Special Offers and Discounts. www.fccj.or.jp/membership/special-offers-discounts.html

— Lucy Birmingham

CHOKAN TARO & THE LAST OF THE PAPERBOYS

by DAN SLOAN

"I'm used to the rain and storms, but still I'm sleepy in the early morns"
— *Shimbu Shonen* 1965

ONCE, LONG AGO, IN a suburb not far away, an army of youth with entrepreneurial and social skills, as well as a commitment to service and the literal value of news, delivered the world's greatest print and photographic journalists to the far corners of driveways, or – if tips were lean and weather inclement – to mailboxes.

This calling, whose followers included at least three U.S. presidents, a Nobel Prize winner, John Wayne, Wayne Gretzky, and millions of pre-teens (including your humble scribe), was purportedly first heard by a 12-year-old Ben Franklin, who hand-delivered copies of the *Boston Gazette*.

Young Ben and we chosen many toiled under a moniker that hid the truly transformative nature of the vocation, dubbed "Paperboy," but ultimately a laser photo of genders, ages and nationalities.

Fast forward 240 years: a U.S. stamp in 1952 commemorated the "Free Enterprise" of carriers whose bags and baskets daily bore the news, turning the cherubic kid on street corners shoutin' "Extra, extra" into a movie cliché, as youth empowerment found literal road traction.

By 1992 the *New York Times* reported that at least 550,000 people were engaged in the delivery profession across the U.S., but noted a decade-long move to adult carriers, as the job evolved into a late-career income option.

And then, depression set in, as newspaper nations began going digital. Now, even more print media face existential questions about utility, and the once ubiquitous job of delivery is rapidly facing Smithsonian status, a video of a newspaper bag-toting youth bicyclist being used in a parental abuse case would be no surprise.

That would be the story in most developed nations except Japan, where long ago Chokan Taro's wheels of progress moved to a motorbike, and the printed word remains nearly as mighty as the sound-byte.

The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association estimates that of an approximate 47 million combined daily newspaper circulation in 2013, over 95 percent were home delivered. The rate of subscriber households stands at a stupefying 0.86, as a graying population continues to expect their daily amid rain, storms or barking poodle, by morning coffee.

That means employment in Japan for over 356,000 "delivery agents" (the name sounds more elite), over 40 percent of who are women, and 7,500 of whom are students. This also implies that the motorbike gearshifts I have heard at 4:30 a.m. for years are not soon likely to go the way of my former afternoon employer, *The Richmond News Leader*, which made its last rounds on May 30, 1992.

And while it is indeed "good news" to learn the fraternity and sorority still exist and grow, it is with undeniable nostalgia that "paperboy" now is more a standard of professional deportment of an independent, prompt, engaged and media-oriented workforce, who – alas – may be heading into middle age, but – by damn – still get the promised delivery there on time, come snow, sleet or technological obsolescence. ①

Dan Sloan is a former president of the FCCJ, Editor-in-Chief of the Nissan Global Media Center, and still owed money by Mrs. Kiepinski on Windsor View Drive.

FROM THE ARCHIVES THE GENERAL



On his first visit to the Tokyo Correspondents Club at a luncheon on March 17, 1947, General Douglas MacArthur calls for the Occupation to be brought to an early end. From the left are Eddie Tseng (China News Agency), George McArthur (AP), General Douglas MacArthur, Tom Lambert (AP), (unidentified), Bill Costello (CBS), and Robert Guillain (AFP). The reproduction above is from the autographed print in the FCCJ's archives. (U.S. Army photo)

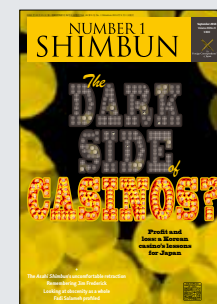
MACARTHUR'S ON-THE-RECORD statement at the Club (the forerunner of the FCCJ), saying that it was time for an end of the Occupation, was only one part of his message. He further called for a peace treaty to be negotiated, stating that the military task had been completed, the political phase was approaching completion and that continuing the Occupation would have negative effects on Japan's economic recovery. It was a turning point that resulted in the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952, which brought the Occupation of Japan to a formal end.

Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), MacArthur had declined earlier invitations to speak at the Club to

avoid setting a precedent. In fact, his first invitation had been to attend the Nov. 1945 formal opening of the Club in the five-story Marunouchi Kaikan, located between SCAP's headquarters in the Daiichi Seimei building and Tokyo Station. Though repairs had yet to be completed on the war-scarred building, it went on to provide hostel services for some 170 correspondents, who called it "No. 1 Shimbun Alley" for the next ten years.

The General had apparently refrained from visiting the Club until he had something important to communicate to the correspondents.

— Charles Pomeroy



SUPPORT YOUR CLUB MAGAZINE

Please send your story ideas to no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp, and be sure to note whether you have (or have access to) visuals.

Our rates are ¥20 per published word, ¥20,000 for a front cover photo. Photo essays: ¥15,000 for full-page photos and ¥5,000 for smaller shots. All payments will be made in chits to your member account.



LexisNexis®

Discount LexisNexis
Subscriptions
for FCCJ Members

The FCCJ is pleased to offer members a substantial discount on subscriptions to LexisNexis' news database service, Nexis.com

The Members-only deal allows for flat-rate access at **¥7,900 per month** - offering big savings on a service that normally costs ¥126,000 per month

The service will be billed by the Club. The FCCJ benefits from all subscriptions sold under this arrangement.

Nexis provides access to news and information from more than 34,000 sources, including Kyodo News, Jiji, Yonhap, Xinhua, AP, Reuters, AFP, all major world newspapers and specialist news sources. Also included is a database of U.S. and international company information, biographical databases, country profiles and a U.S. legal database.

For those already in on the secret, the application form is available on the FCCJ website or from the 19F Club office.



The four huge wheels on the tower over the mine head stand silent. Slowly rusting away, the industrial monster is a witness of times long gone by. Once the landmark of Jeongseon's flourishing local economy, today it is nothing more than a symbol of the city's rise and fall. The coal mine, opened shortly after the Korean War in the South Korean province of Gangwon, saw its heyday in the 1970s when it fueled the country's economic miracle. Jeongseon's population reached 100,000 people and the region was doing so well, people say, that even the stray dogs were fat.

The decline of the coal mine began in the 1980s and by 2000 it had closed down for good. Jeongseon's population collapsed to one-fifth of its peak. "The local people begged us to do something – anything – to secure the survival of the city," says Kim Su Bog, the region's chief for culture and tourism. "We were so desperate, we even considered applying to host a nuclear-waste disposal site."

But a different solution was found for Jeongseon, and its glittering tower of glass and steel rises over the huge dump behind the mine. Next to it stands a building that faintly resembles a castle from a Disney movie. The strange-looking complex is Kangwon Land, South Korea's only casino that is open to its own citizens.

On an average Monday afternoon the casino is busy. Most of the 200 tables for blackjack, baccarat and roulette are open for gamblers to place their bets. The 1,000 slot machines are well attended too. Some 7,000 gamblers can try their luck at any one time, and the casino's representatives say that on weekends the number of visitors often rises to 10,000, meaning a reservation is required for a seat at the tables. The casino will stay open until 6 a.m., but even at this early hour someone already seems to have used up his daily budget. "Can you lend me one million won?" I hear one gambler asking another in the men's room.

Jeongseon seems to have hit the jackpot: The casino resort has added 3,000 jobs, and another 2,000 are said to have been created at local businesses and suppliers. The municipality receives the equivalent of ¥1.5 billion per year, and a social fund of the casino distributes another ¥600 million per year – some, for example, to former miners suffering from silicosis. Furthermore, casino guests spent ¥1.8 billion

The only casino in Korea open to the country's citizens has helped to revitalize a whole region. But there are costs, and the experience can provide some lessons for Japan



Counting the chips in Macau

AP PHOTO/KIN CHEUNG

A lesson in gambling from South Korea

by Patrick Zoll

at local hotels and restaurants. The local population is now stable at around 15,000 people, and almost every family has some sort of economic link to the casino.

In Japan, as well, economic considerations are one of the main driving forces for legalizing casino gambling. Experts estimate the market's potential for the country at ¥4 trillion. (For comparison, the Pachinko industry had a turnover of ¥19 trillion in 2012.) Prime Minister Shinzo Abe intends to draw on Singapore's experience in bolstering tourism with integrated casino resorts, Japanese media reported after he visited two casinos during his visit there in May.

By 2020, when the Tokyo Olympics take place, Japan wants to reach its goal of attracting 20 million foreign visitors per year, compared with 10 million in 2013, and such Singapore-style integrated casino resorts – including hotels, conference centers and shopping malls – are seen as a substantial contribution to that goal. Pro-

ponents of the plan hope to get relevant legislation passed in the fall Diet session. Among with lawmakers from other parties, Abe's LDP is behind the plan. But the party's coalition partner New Komeito is hesitant, voicing concerns about side effects such as gambling addiction.

Back at South Korea's Kangwon Land, the casino's representatives insist that the negative effects are well controlled. The casino's own Addiction Care Center is tasked to take care of those who have trouble controlling their gaming habit. "We have a responsibility to our citizens", says Kang Sung Gun, the center's head. Each year, 3,000 visitors are banned from entering the casino, either because they ask for it themselves or because family members approach the casino. In extreme cases, Kang says, the center also covers rehabilitation therapy at a hospital. In order to ensure that the local residents do not become addicted, they are allowed to visit the casino only on a single, pre-determined day each month.

"Nothing but lies!" fumes Bang Eun Geun. He pulls some wrinkled photos from his shirt's pocket. One shows a man in a car, his head strangely twisted backwards. "He killed himself on the casino's parking lot," says Bang in an accusing tone. The priest has devoted his life to working with addicts. At least once a week someone takes his life, Bang says, "because they don't see another way out of gambling debts."

Officially there were 42 suicides in the area in 2013. Kang considers this figure far too low. In his eyes the preventative measures the casino takes are a joke: "All they want is to get the people back to the casino again as soon as possible." Many of the addicts are from the local population, he says; those who want to gamble, simply change their official residence, an easy move in South Korea. The priest talks himself into a frenzy, pointing with his index finger and thundering with a powerful voice as if preaching from the pulpit: "Casinos are a total disaster for Korea."

National statistics support the priest's view. Over 7 percent of the nation's adult population, or almost 2.7 million people, show signs of gambling addiction, says Seo Yong Seok, expert advisor at the National Gambling Control Commission. This percentage is two to three times higher than in other countries that publish similar statistics. One possible explanation, Seo says, is the extremely competitive nature of Korean society. The addiction figures cover all legal forms of gambling in Korea, including horse, bicycle and motorboat racing, lottery, sports toto and bullfights. The casinos generate one third of the industry's yearly turnover of 19.5 trillion won (nearly ¥2 trillion). The Korean players at Kangwon Land alone bet as much money as visitors to all of the other 16 casinos together, which are open to foreigners only.

Those who oppose opening casinos in Japan, warning of the dangers of gambling addiction, have reason to worry. According to recent figures published by the Ministry of Health, more than 5 million Japanese, roughly 5 percent of the adult population, are addicted to gambling. Among men the addiction rate is nearly 9 percent. According to the Nikkei newspaper, the current plan is to allow foreign visitors to enter the casinos for free while charging Japanese citizens an entry fee of several thousand yen – a restriction meant to prevent gambling dependence among locals. It's a two-tier system that is modeled after Singapore's approach, where locals are charged 100 Singapore dollars, roughly ¥8,000. The

Ministry of Health, in fact, is said to be opposed to allowing Japanese citizens to visit the casinos.

In Sabuk, the area of the city closest to Kangwon Land, another side effect is visible: pawn shops clustered around the central roundabout. "We lend money for gold, jewelry, cars," the signs read. Business is not good, insiders say, since the government has tightened regulations. The shop owners do not like to talk because it is technically illegal to lend

'Now all you see is motels, pawn shops, massage parlors and girly bars'

money to someone if the lender knows that it will be used for gambling. One woman, however, who took over her shop not long ago, does not mince her words. "I was cheated," she says angrily. "The former owner sold me the shop with false promises of easy profits." To her, it is obvious what people do with the money they get: "They go straight to the casino." People are crazy about money, she says, showing a golden Rolex someone left as collateral. "I have seen people who pawned their shoes and went to the casino in slippers."

Jang Jae Sam also uses the word "crazy." It is crazy, he says, how people in Sabuk have changed in the 15 years since the casino opened. Jang is the head of a local church, and remembers this as a very safe, almost naïve, community. "Now all you see is motels, pawn shops, massage parlors and girly bars," he says. Unlike the critical Bang, the priest who works with the addicts, Jang has mixed feelings about the casino, and admits there has clearly been a positive effect on the local economy.

Despite the big economic rewards Jeongseon is enjoying currently, the town is worried about its future. It is possible that soon one will hear "rien ne va plus" at the casino. Kangwon Land's license will expire in 2025, and locals fear that the license for accepting South Korean gamblers could go to a casino closer to the capital of Seoul – only a three-hour-drive away, and the present source of the majority of the casino's gamblers.

To avoid getting caught in another downward spiral, Jeongseon is trying to diversify. Kangwon Land already includes a conference center and a ski resort, and

a water park is under construction. Only four years from now the alpine disciplines of the Pyeongchang 2018 winter Olympics will be held in Jeongseon. In fact, Kangwon Land's model these days looks very similar to the Singaporean one that Japan is considering. Would the resort work without a casino? How many of the 3 million visitors would come back? Those are questions Jeongseon is worrying about.

For Japan on the other hand, it remains to be seen how much of the international casino business it can attract. Many casinos in East Asia aim for the same clientele that Japan will be eager to welcome, namely Chinese tourists. One reason for the creation of Kangwon Land was to make sure that Korean gamblers spend their money within Korea, rather than taking it abroad to gambling paradises like Macao or Las Vegas. More casinos in East Asia do not necessarily mean more gamblers. And competition is growing – Taiwan, for example, has legalized casinos on outlying islands in order to support their economy, even if development has been slow.

But the industry is upbeat about Japan. Big international casino operators are eagerly waiting to enter this new market, and major domestic Pachinko operators are also eyeing this business. According to latest reports, about 20 municipalities around the country are interested in hosting a casino resort. However, unlike South Korea's Jeongseon, the Japanese frontrunner is anything but an economically destitute area: the city of Osaka, one of the major economic hubs of Japan, has staked its claim, and would like to build a casino on the man-made island of Yumeshima. Other leading candidates are Okinawa, following a strategy to become a major destination for foreign tourists, and Yokohama, where large cruise ships often make a stop.

If everything goes according to plan, the first casinos will open in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. But before that, the necessary legal groundwork has to be laid. Legislators "must examine the various real-world problems and challenges related to casinos being encountered overseas," the Yomiuri Shimbun wrote in an editorial in June. And it added that hasty enactment of the bill must be avoided. One will see if the Diet takes the time for these deliberations or if it will ram through the legislation as has happened with other legislation that was dear to Abe's heart, such as the secrecy law. ❶

Patrick Zoll is the East Asia Correspondent for the Swiss daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. He covers Japan, the Korean peninsula and Taiwan.



Another
in our series
of Club Member
profiles

Dr. Fadi Salameh of Al Jazeera

by Monzurul Huq

Syrian Fadi Salameh became a journalist by pure coincidence. “I came to Japan for post-graduate studies in gastroenterology,” he says. “I was supposed to return home, where I was a practicing physician. But sometimes things happen without giving you any hint of where they might lead.”

Fadi is a familiar face these days in the Arab world. He covers Japan and East Asia for the Arabic-language Al Jazeera TV news channel, the Qatar-based network that has recently become an alternate source of news not only for the Islamic world but also for many developing countries where people are tired of watching the images brought to their homes by Western TV channels.

His conversion began while he was halfway through his PhD thesis at Tokyo Medical and Dental University, when he was asked to work as a

free-lance contributor for the Arabic news channel APTN. He accepted, and continued to work as a freelancer while finishing his schooling. When Al Jazeera started its own Tokyo Bureau in 2004, it was looking for an Arab journalist fluent in Japanese; Fadi was their natural choice.

Soon after he began at the network, a group of Japanese was kidnapped in Iraq. As part of his reporting from Tokyo, he interviewed then-Japanese foreign minister Nobutaka Machimura, who appealed to the hostage-takers for their release. Al Jazeera’s focus on the issue probably had an effect on the eventual release of the kidnapped Japanese, allowing Fadi to taste for the first time the satisfaction of doing something for those in trouble.

That same year, Japan decided to dispatch Self-Defense Forces to Iraq. Fadi was again asked to follow the development from Japan and once again became a regular face on Al Jazeera TV news covering the dispatch of Japanese SDF troops to Iraq. These two events committed Fadi firmly to TV journalism; he was drifting further and further from his medical profession.

Fadi has been stationed in Tokyo since, while also covering events in South Korea. When a group of Koreans were kidnapped

in Iraq in 2004, Fadi was asked to relocate to Seoul to report the initiatives that had been taken by the South Korean government to ensure their release. It was there that he interviewed then South Korean foreign minister Ban Ki Moon, who has since become Secretary General of the United Nations. During his 10 years with Al Jazeera, Fadi has covered all the important developments in Japan.

His first taste of covering disaster was in 2007, when he went to Niigata prefecture to report on the situation after the Kashiwazaki earthquake. The earthquake temporarily shut down Kashiwazaki-Karuiwa nuclear power plant and people from the affected areas were being evacuated to temporary shelters. Covering that disaster helped Fadi get to know Japanese people

in their Iwaki city the next day, he found the city hall completely empty and realized that the people had already been evacuated. The people he met were all talking about evacuation centers and hinting about the gravity of an accident at Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant.

As a former physician, Fadi realized at once the sense of urgency and tried to approach the power plant. Finding all the roads blocked, he went to a hospital where he was able to interview doctors. One of the doctors told him that he had already sent his family to Tokyo, a strong signal of the seriousness of the situation. Fadi feels that being a doctor helped him in the coverage of the Fukushima disaster. “Doctors tend to look behind the symptoms to find out what was wrong with

a patient,” he says. “I also tried to look at the hidden side of the story behind the nuclear accident to get a

‘DOCTORS TEND TO LOOK BEHIND THE SYMPTOMS. I ALSO TRIED TO LOOK AT THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THE STORY’

better. “At the evacuation centers I saw how calmly Japanese people were reacting to the situation,” he says. “There were few signs of panic or despair. They also talked without any hesitation, which as a journalist I’ve found extremely satisfying since we always try to get the opinion of the people who are at the center of any

clearer picture of what really was happening. Talking to doctors and people who had been evacuated was very helpful.”

His knowledge of the Japanese language gave Fadi an edge over other reporters sent from various corners of the world to report on the disaster. At evacuation centers he not only mingled with the evacuated, he also stayed with them, sharing the same food and often sleeping on tatami floors.

Covering Japan for a decade has given Fadi a broad expertise – in Japan and in journalism. However, he feels that 10 years has given him a good grasp of the depth of this vocation, and believes that it’s probably time to go back to the world of his training.

“The media in Syria has long been controlled by the government,” he says. “The country is going through many changes and so is the media. Still, if I go back to Syria, I’ll probably practice again as a physician. After all the destruction my country has gone through, people need someone with medical training more than someone walking around with a camera.”



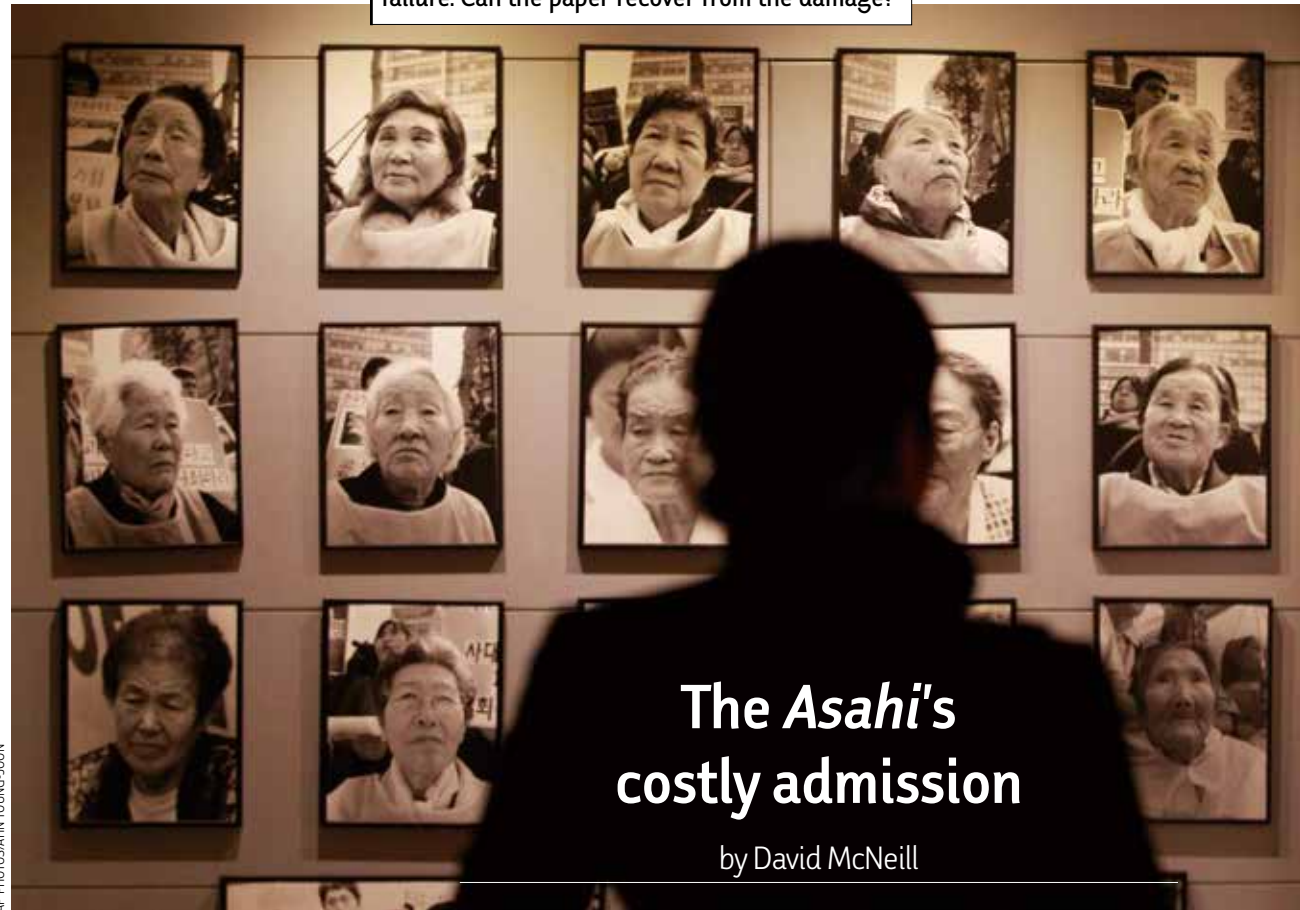
happening. A group of old people were even smiling at me as I filmed them.”

The experience of covering that early disaster prepared Fadi for the much larger disaster that hit Japan in March 2011. After calling Al Jazeera to ask to go on the air while the ground was still trembling (and being refused; no one knew how serious it was yet), Fadi was among the first group of foreign reporters to head for the disaster area. At Fukushima Prefec-

Monzurul Huq represents the largest-circulation Bangladeshi national daily, *Prothom Alo*. He was FCCJ president from 2009 to 2010.

ANDREW POTHECARY

▶ The *Asahi Shimbun* this month retracted some of its core historical coverage of the comfort women issue, a long expected but still stunning admission of editorial failure. Can the paper recover from the damage?



The Asahi's costly admission

by David McNeill

Nobody knows what Seiji Yoshida really did during World War II. A sort of reverse Walter Mitty, Yoshida wrote a confessional memoir called *Watashi no Senso Hanzai* ("My War Crimes") detailing his role in rounding up 200 women on Jeju Island for Japanese military brothels. In the 1980s, all the big Japanese daily newspapers wrote about his sensational claims. The problem is, they weren't true.

The *Asahi* newspaper, true to its reputation for liberal journalism, gave Yoshida more space than most. Starting in September 1982, Yoshida was featured in over a dozen articles through to the 1990s, by which time historians had smelled a rat. By the time of his death in 2000, his story was widely considered bogus, even among Korean and Japanese scholars on the left.

But it wasn't until Aug. 5 of this year that the *Asahi* finally came clean, retracting 16 articles and running a two-page spread explaining its decision. "We have judged that Mr. Yoshida's statement, in which he said that he took comfort women by force from Jeju Island, was fake," it told its 20

million readers. The newspaper had been "unable to see through" Yoshida's "fraudulent testimony," it admitted ruefully.

The *Asahi* did its best to minimize the fallout, publishing the admission during the *O-bon* holidays to avoid being savaged by Japan's right-wing weekly magazines. The reaction from those who have long disputed claims of organized military involvement in rounding up "comfort women," however, was swift and predictable.

Conservatives took to the airwaves the day after to gloat over the humbling of Japan's liberal flagship. An editorial in the *Yomiuri* newspaper said the *Asahi's* coverage had helped fuel anti-Japan sentiment in South Korea, and was the basis of "misperception of Japan" throughout the world. It again demanded a retraction of the 1993 Kono Statement (named after then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono) admitting organized military involvement in rounding up the sex slaves.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the *Sankei* newspaper, which has led a two-decade campaign against the Kono Statement, that "many people had suffered"

because of the *Asahi's* reporting. Shigeru Ishiba, the secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democrats, said the Diet might have to "discuss" the *Asahi's* reporting. Many conservatives called for a nationwide boycott of the newspaper.

Right-wing critics trace the pitched political battles over the comfort women issue back to the *Asahi's* coverage, and by extension blame the newspaper for Japan's diplomatic deep freeze with South Korea. Takaaki Mizuno, a veteran *Asahi* correspondent who now teaches at Kanda University of International Studies, scoffs at that view. He points out that there were many soldiers' accounts predating Yoshida's memoir.

"I always say, Japanese journalists should be ashamed that we didn't report it until 1991," Mizuno says. "It is common sense that there were other accounts because there were so many former soldiers with experience of *ianfu* (comfort women)." He says that's why so many ordinary Japanese people contributed up to \$6 million to the 1995 compensation fund, which was set up by Japan

following the Kono investigation. "They felt guilty about what happened, and sympathy toward the women," he says.

In 1997 the *Asahi* tentatively admitted it could not verify Yoshida's testimony. At least one former journalist closely associated with the paper's coverage was hounded out of an academic position in Kobe and now lives and teaches in distant Hokkaido. That might explain why the *Asahi* is reluctant to officially explain

solved," he says, but admits: "It should have been done much earlier."

There are few precedents for such a high-profile mea culpa. In 1989 the *Asahi* was forced to apologize after admitting that one of its photographers had defaced a coral reef near Okinawa. The newspaper had used the incident as a pretext to launch a crusade against environmental vandalism.

Perhaps the biggest postwar newspa-

per more mature public discussion about the comfort women issue. But Koichi Nakano, a political scientist at Sophia University, says that's unlikely. "It's going to provide ammunition for both camps and polarize the issue further," he says.

"The people who want to look at the facts would say, 'Well, the *Asahi* went wrong there but the understanding of the comfort women is not affected by this review,'" Nakano says. "But it gave more ammunition to right-wingers, who pick whatever argument suits their purposes." Mizuno agrees. "What conservatives are trying to do is not just target the *Asahi*," he says. "Their real target is Kono, [former Prime Minister Kiichi] Miyazawa and liberals in the LDP."

The bottom line, say most, is that the *Asahi's* retraction has added a great deal of momentum to the push to reverse the Kono Statement. A few days after the admission, about 40 LDP lawmakers, led by

Keiji Furuya, chairman of the National Public Safety Commission, met to pressure the government into releasing a new statement.

The decision in the mid-1990s to include references to wartime sex slaves in Japanese high school textbooks was the trigger for a backlash among Abe, Furuya and other conservatives, who formed a Diet lobby group to remove them (Abe has been careful to distance himself from the group but is still a core advisor). A rewrite or retraction of the statement, probably on the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea next year would be considered a major political victory.

"We would like to wrap up our discussions in a way that a new statement could be issued based on new facts," Koichi Hagiuda, acting secretary general of the group, told the *Yomiuri*. Any attempt to tamper with one of the core documents of Japan's postwar Asian diplomacy is likely to have explosive consequences, but that is unlikely to deter the LDP conservative wing, says Mizuno.

"The problem is that right-wingers don't care about facts." ❶

David McNeill writes for *The Independent*, *The Economist*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and other publications.



To be or not to be: left, The House of Sharing, a nursing home and museum for 10 former comfort women, in Toechon, South Korea; above, The *Asahi's* cover and spread apologising for its coverage.

the background to the retraction, though some journalists at the paper agreed to discuss it off-the-record.

According to one editor, the *Asahi* dispatched reporters to Jeju to retrace Yoshida's account, essentially a formality before so much doubt had already been sown. The issue, he said, had clearly become an impediment to reporting at the newspaper. "Readers were calling in and asking us about it. Journalists were being questioned about it repeatedly on reporting assignments," he recalls.

Eventually, under pressure from revisionists in the Abe government, something had to give. "The *Sankei* was running articles about this once a week," says the editor. The *Yomiuri* too had become more aggressive. "We felt we were being pushed into a corner." The departure of most of the reporters and senior editors who had been associated with the comfort women coverage provided the opportunity for a clean break.

In August, the newspaper's senior management rounded up mid-level editors and said the paper was going to bite the bullet. "They were told that it couldn't be avoided any more," says the editor. The reaction, he says, was "relief." Morale was high, despite the inevitable blow to the paper's prestige. "It was good to have it

per scandal involved the *Mainichi*. In 1972 its reporter Takichi Nishiyama obtained proof that Japan had secretly agreed to absorb \$4 million in costs for the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese rule. Nishiyama was convicted of revealing state secrets, sacked and hounded from his profession. In 2006 the *Mainichi* finally claimed vindication when a retired senior diplomat with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the secret transaction.

The Nishiyama episode is often cited as an example of how the Japanese state successfully deflected a potentially serious political scandal by blaming the messenger. Some analysts see parallels in the Yoshida case, which they say has also been skillfully used by conservatives to deflect from the larger discussion about war crimes.

"Abe and the government knew this was a weakness and they exerted all their pressure on the *Asahi*," says Kaori Hayashi, a media specialist at the University of Tokyo. She says the government has worked hard to bring the *Yomiuri*, the *Sankei* and even state broadcaster NHK onside on the issue. "They have now got rid of the *Asahi* as a problem."

Editors at the *Asahi* say they hope the Aug. 5 review will draw a line under the Yoshida episode and clear the way for a

Anyone who's attended one of the many Japanese festivals that celebrate the penis would be shocked at the recent heavy-handed police crackdown on female genitalia



White out: *Koppu no Fuchiko*, a popular 5cm-high character in various poses to fit on the lip of a cup, is available from "gacha" toy-vending machines.

Obscenity, thy name is vagina

by Andrew Potheary

There was no warning. On July 12, artist Rokudenashiko, whose real name is Megumi Igarashi, found 10 members of Tokyo's police force at her door and herself arrested for distributing obscene material. The main target of their visit were CAD files from which applicants to her website could purchase and print a 3D model of her vagina*.

She was using this process to crowd-fund further work, but until then there had been no hint of approbation from the authorities regarding her art, nor had she considered it bordering on the illegal. She assumed herself to be making pieces about society's attitudes toward female genitals, not anything obscene. As she said at a press conference at the FCCJ on July 24, "It may be obscene if you are depicting something actually engaging in sexual activities, but I'm just presenting a part of my body just as it is. I don't think that is obscene."

The taboo, the transgressive, or merely the human body itself has been a favored subject for artists through the ages. What is obscene, or the reaction to what is obscene, in art usually involves three

considerations: what people generally deem so (from individuals to the wider society); what is acceptable under the law; and – a sometimes non-compatible combination of those – what is actually enforced. There can be confusion along the way among any of these.

What gave Rokudenashiko's story legs (so to speak) is the continuing confusion over obscenity here. Japan is, after all, the historical home of explicit *shunga*, *Ai no Corrida* (the 1970s real-sex feature film) and Takashi Murakami's sperm-shooting boy sculpture. Not to mention the proliferation of *hentai manga*, Lolita fixations or fetish pornography.

And the confusion isn't necessarily recent. *Shunga* have had many ups and downs since the 1722 Japanese edict banning them from being published without permission, but now they are part of art exhibitions. Though the sex act was being reenacted in strip clubs in many cities around Japan, in 1976, *Ai no Corrida* director Nagisa Oshima not only had to shoot his actors' sex scenes and process the film in France, but Japanese audiences had to take tours to Guam to see the unedited

version. To this day, it is impossible to view the film without mosaic – or pretty much at all – in Japan. (I saw it uncut in 1978, in the UK, and it didn't receive an official certificate there either until 1991.)

That certainly makes *shunga* and *Ai no Corrida* both very Japanese – although both were made against out-of-step obscenity laws and remain more readily available abroad.

To a foreign audience, Rokudenashiko's arrest made yet another "weird Japan" story, even becoming fodder for a significant segment of the popular U.S. comedy program *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart. Stewart contrasted Rokudenashiko's criminalized genitals to the Kanamara Festival, where the penis is celebrated in public with erect models. As Stewart pointed out, there's a legend behind this festival of successfully dominating a vagina dentate (a castrating, toothed vagina).

Rokudenashiko addressed this seeming acceptance of the penis at the Club: "I think there is hypocrisy . . . I was arrested because some people have a bad image of the word 'vagina,' that it is something bad that should not be given attention. Such

social notions are based on men's viewpoint and there is a lack of independence of the women's viewpoint." She noted also how the Japanese slang word for vagina (*manko*) is often bleeped from TV. Is the vagina particularly hidden in Japan? If so, that would make the UK *Independent's* report even more odd: seemingly oblivious to this aspect, it referred to the vagina and artwork as "p***y" and "p***y boat" – suggesting some hiding is not just in Japan (or just about the law).

OBSCENITY AS A HOLE

When the original women's kabuki was banned for being too erotic in 1629, men took over female roles in what could be taken as an example of putting men first when it comes to public morality. But if the sidelining of the woman's parts (and women's parts) is something that began 400 years ago with the manning-up of kabuki, perhaps a lingering effect backs Rokudenashiko's argument.

Another example might be found in a couple of celebrated artist Takashi Murakami's sculptures, which add to the confusion over Japan's legal approach to what can be made and displayed without being arrested. His 1997 "My Lonesome Cowboy" is of a larger-than-life-size, naked manga-inspired man gripping an erection spurring a spiraling swathe of ejaculate. Murakami wasn't arrested (nor should he have been) and the piece was displayed to the public in galleries in Japan and worldwide. His female equivalent was "Hiropon," who spurted an equally copious rope of milk from her oversize breasts. She was naked too, but her pudenda were featureless. The male sculpture is anatomically all there and virile, while the female sculpture seems to confuse sex with breast milk, as she has nothing between her legs.

However, before we think that it's only vaginas that are the problem, let's not forget the 2013 arrest of Tokyo-based photographer Leslie Kee after an exhibition of male nudes and its accompanying book. What upset the moral powers at that time were penises.

In fact, Kee, too, had no idea that what he was doing was illegal, he simply also wanted to explore the usually hidden. In an interview in *Bouin Artinfo* he said, "I appreciate the beauty and strength of a natural man. Most of my commercial and fashion works are retouched – I have never seen an unretouched photo in a beauty campaign. However, for "Forever Young," I try to keep them un-retouched and uncensored."

The fact that both artists – and any-

one else in Japan – could be unaware of illegality is born out simply enough by the un-commented-upon appearance of the August 2014 mainstream art magazine *Geijutsu Shincho*. Its cover feature was "Female and male nudes." Among works inside by Munch, Lucien Freud and Ryoko Kimura, there is a reproduction of a work by artist John Curran entitled "Deauville:" it is a couple masturbating each other, she gripping his erection, he inserting fingers into a clearly and realistically painted vagina. As far as I know, nobody has been arrested for distributing obscenity for this.

While Rokudenashiko has been released (although her case is not closed), Kee was not so lucky: he was fined ¥1 million, though fortunately escaped a maximum two-year jail sentence.

THE UK INDEPENDENT'S REPORT REFERRED TO THE VAGINA AND ARTWORK AS "P***Y" AND "P***Y BOAT" – SUGGESTING HIDING IS NOT JUST IN JAPAN

NEW LAWS AND OLD ATTITUDES

If the police charge was about distributing CAD files, the media story was about double standards. With possession of child pornography having been criminalized in Japan only the month before, the *Guardian's* Justin McCurry, for example, was one who noted calls for another new law: "Commentators have pointed out the hypocrisy of her arrest, which comes soon after Japanese authorities resisted pressure to ban pornographic images of children in manga comics and animated films."

However, in the light of Kee's and Rokudenashiko's arrests, are calls to increase opportunities for artists to be arrested the way forward? After all, editors of manga publications have been prosecuted for selling and distributing material that has been deemed obscene under the existing law. Instead of adding to the confusion with new laws, why not focus on the need to understand what exactly is obscene? What about referencing societal attitudes to bring clarity to what people generally deem offensive – that third strand to defining obscenity?

In September 2009, for example, the respected Japanese design magazine *Idea* published a special issue dedicated to manga and anime. Included was a four-page look at 61 covers of the manga *LO*. (*LO* is short for Lolita Only: the first issue's ad copy could be translated as, "So they're children. Do you have a problem with that?") As a designer from the UK, the fact that a manga like *LO* exists was odd enough. Most of the covers were merely fully clothed schoolgirls, meaning you can decide if you have a problem with that. But there were plenty of swimsuited poses where an innocent "eye" becomes questionable – and even a nude with budding pre-pubescent breasts where the question stared out from the cover. To neutrally celebrate its design and art in a publication that I was involved in would be unthinkable to me – at least without comment. (It's quite obviously not that the UK has some moral high ground on pedophilia – in fact, it's dealing with the fallout of a major pedophile scandal right now – but that such everyday societal acceptance often goes unchallenged in Japan.)

Questionable attitudes are not limited only to manga and anime. Only last month I turned on commercial TV to find a game show featuring many foreign "talents" intent on identifying who among a group of women in a schoolroom set was actually the junior-high-school girl and who were adults. To my eyes this was far more obscene than an adult woman artist exploring ideas of the body.

Developing general attitudes can help in leaving artists freer to explore the taboo without arrest – by deciding what is just unacceptably offensive and what is more clearly an arrestable obscenity.

Should an adult woman artist be locked up for six days, at times handcuffed in hot and airless rooms, when she was unaware that she had transgressed the law, only that she wanted to transgress repressive attitudes to the adult vagina (pixilated in imagery of real sex and AKB'd to oblivion in popular culture)? Doesn't this confirm to us that the real obscenity is not the image of a part of the body, or even its associations with sex, but the arrest itself? ❶

*Although this story is often about hidden female genitalia, everyone and Rokudenashiko herself refers to her works as about the vagina, when in fact it is mostly the vulva she has been dealing with. However, for simplicity, I've continued the nomenclature.

Andrew Potheary is a freelance graphic designer and the art director of *Number 1 Shimibun*.

▶ A former wrestler turned politician, Antonio Inoki is trying to pin down the most difficult opponent of his career: Japan-North Korea relations



Grappling with Kim

by Julian Ryall

Antonio Inoki is preparing some gags for his North Korean hosts when he arrives in Pyongyang to jointly host a two-day international wrestling event at the end of August.

After all, the former professional wrestler who has turned his hand to politics told a large audience at the FCCJ on Aug. 21 that laughter can be used to help bring down barriers and encourage friendship. Warming to his theme, the 71-year-old Inoki recounted a previous occasion on which he tickled Pyongyang dignitaries' sense of humor, back in 1995, shortly after North Korea had fired missiles in the direction of Japan.

After letting out one of his trademark yells to get everyone's attention, Inoki informed his hosts that while North Korea may have missiles pointed at Japan, it also has very beautiful women. Therefore, he went on, Japanese men were pointing their missiles back at North Korea.

Inoki did not recount whether the North Koreans provided anything more than polite laughter in return. But he really does need to work on his jokes if he is going to achieve his stated aim of using his own brand of diplomacy to enhance understanding between North Korea and Japan and promote peace.

Inoki, who entered politics in 1989 and is a member of the conservative Japan Restoration Party, has visited North Korea on 29 previous occasions. In 1995 he took part in a bout against Ric Flair, the American wrestler, at a wrestling extravaganza that was held in Pyongyang.

Confessing that he is "a little low on vital-

ity" now, Inoki emphasized that he believes sporting diplomacy can heal old wounds. "For many years, I have been working towards world peace through sporting exchanges and, in diplomacy, I believe the most important factor is trust," he said.

Inoki believes that communication is also required. "It is very important to go to North Korea, to have a drink with them and to be able to talk things through," he said. "In that way we can learn about each other and understand each other better."

The wrestling tournament is scheduled to take place at the 20,000-seat Ryugyong Chung Ju-yung Stadium in Pyongyang on Aug. 30 and 31, with wrestlers from France, Russia, Brazil and China taking part.

That will make it a fraction of the scale of his last wrestling endeavor inside North Korea, the 1995 tournament that attracted an estimated 340,000 spectators. The stadium used in 1995 is now being renovated and the event is required to stay within the bounds of the international sanctions that are still being imposed on North Korea, Inoki said. The sanctions are primarily financial, meaning that many of those involved in the trip are doing so on a voluntary basis.

It is not known whether North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will attend the event, although he has in the past shown a desire to be associated with famous sporting figures. In January, retired NBA star Dennis Rodman caught the world's attention

when he arranged an international basketball match to celebrate Kim's birthday and declared the dictator to be his "friend for life." Rodman also sang "Happy Birthday" to Kim ahead of the exhibition game and apparently partied on the dictator's private island.

Inoki's visit comes after the Japanese government eased some of the sanctions imposed during the 1990s in an effort to force Pyongyang to abolish its nuclear weapons and missile programs as well as to return dozens of Japanese nationals kidnapped by North Korean agents.

"The issue of the abductions is finally being discussed and I believe that it is important for both sides to have meaningful discussions to truly know each others' thoughts and hearts," Inoki said. "This is how we can achieve peace."

Ideally, he added, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe would himself go to North Korea to meet Kim and solve many of the two nations' problems, although he admitted that the time might not yet be ripe for so dramatic a step. "Sporting exchanges have been connected with peace for a long time, so this sort of approach is already well understood," Inoki said. "These are the sorts of channels that nobody can oppose."

"One door has to stay open," he added. "For many years, all the doors between North Korea and Japan have been closed, but I believe we only live once and I need to continue to keep this door open through sporting exchanges." ❶

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

▶ Dr. Eugene Aksenoff led a remarkable life of assistance to the down-and-out and the glitterati alike. Upon his passing, everyone has a story

The Doctor is out

by Tim Hornyak

I thought it wise to get some vaccinations before my first trip to rural Thailand. I'd heard the place for that in Tokyo was the International Clinic in Roppongi, and was amazed to find it in a prewar house squeezed into a cramped corner lot shaded by persimmon, fig and avocado trees. Inside the house was a smiling man who seemed to come from another world.

Dr. Eugene Aksenoff sat at his large wooden desk in front of walls covered with hundreds of photos of smiling children, his young patients from Japan and overseas. I was astounded when he told me he'd come to Japan before the end of World War II, before Donald Richie and every other old-timer *gaijin* I'd met.

So it is understandable that Aksenoff's passing on Aug. 5 at age 90 came as a shock to the foreign community in Tokyo. Having been in Japan for over 70 years, he was like a beacon for residents and visitors alike.

"He was the sort who made you feel better the moment you entered the office," says *Kyodo News* editor Darryl Gibson, who was once treated by the doctor for an infected wound from diving. "Even if he did nothing other than listen to you describe an ailment and tell you not to worry, you immediately felt better."

"He was one of the nicest men you could ever meet," agrees Bill Hersey, longtime social columnist for *Tokyo Weekender* magazine. "He used to take care of all kinds of people who didn't have any money — young fashion models who came here and got sick, laborers, anybody."

The unheralded, day-to-day care of people at the International Clinic didn't make Aksenoff famous — it was his status as doctor to the stars. Among the photos tacked to the walls of his office is a snapshot with Michael Jackson, one of many celebrities who benefitted from Aksenoff's hotel house calls over the years.

"His priority was kids, very old people, and very sick people. But for most of the hotels in Tokyo, he was the doctor," says Rumi Yamamoto, a nurse who worked with Aksenoff for 21 years, and helped him treat such VIPs and their families as

Steven Seagal, Stevie Wonder, Rhianna, Oasis, KISS and jazzmen from Blue Note Tokyo. Frank Sinatra, John Wayne, Madonna, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie and Lady Gaga were also Aksenoff patients.

The doctor would answer urgent calls from hotels at all hours of the night, Yamamoto recalls. He was so dedicated to his work that when he was discharged from the hospital for his own ailments in his later years, he would immediately



'HE WAS SO KIND TO EVERYONE HE MET. THAT'S WHY HE LIVED SO LONG.'

return to his clinic. In the end, in fact, his staff were lifting him up the front steps in his wheelchair.

As Yamamoto sits at Aksenoff's desk beside a shelf full of books in English, Japanese, German and Russian, she pulls out more mementos: a letter of thanks from Jacques Chirac when he was mayor of Paris, a copy of Aksenoff's Japanese medical license from 1951, and a young Aksenoff in a cadet-style school uniform in the 1940s.

The way Aksenoff would tell the story, his parents were White Russians who had fled Russia to Harbin, China where Aksenoff was born in 1924. When he was about five years old, a European doctor treated him for a cold. He was so deeply impressed by the man's kindly manner and the cleanliness of the hospital that he resolved to become a doctor himself one day.

After Japan seized Manchuria and created the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, Aksenoff's father made some Japanese acquaintances through raising horses. One of them was Count Yoshitaka Tsugaru, a Japanese noble who invited Aksenoff fils to Japan to study medicine.

Aksenoff found himself one of the few Caucasians in Tokyo during the war, which he spent studying Japanese at Waseda University and medicine at Jikei University. He paid for his tuition by playing captured American pilots in propaganda films. After the war ended, he worked with the U.S. military as a translator, did a stint at Seibo Hospital and helped establish the Tokyo Medical and Surgical Clinic before opening his International Clinic in 1953.

Though Aksenoff was actually a stateless person who never took Japanese citizenship, the Russians who filled his practice during the Cold War drew the attention of U.S. and Japanese authorities and he was soon

suspected of being a Soviet spy. According to author Robert Whiting, Japanese intelligence agents arrested him for espionage because he'd been seen with a transmitter bearing markings that resembled Cyrillic. But he was released a week later when a Toshiba engineer explained that the symbols were Toshiba's markings for digital equipment and the transmitter wasn't a Soviet radio at all.

Aksenoff took it all in stride.

"He was a generous person," says Whiting. "He and Nick Zappetti, who ran Nicola's pizzeria nearby, had a deal whereby if a patient was down and out and couldn't pay, Aksenoff would treat him for free and send him down to Nicola's for a free meal."

There seem to have been as many tales surrounding Aksenoff as his patients. One thing that friends agree on is the doctor's golden character.

"He was so kind to everyone he met. Everyone came to him because they wanted to see him and hear his stories," says Dr. Grant Mikasa of the American Clinic Tokyo, a former colleague. "That's why he lived so long." ❶

Tim Hornyak is Tokyo correspondent for IDG News Service.

Remembering Jim Frederick

by Toko Sekiguchi



Before he became the renowned author of one of the most important books to be written about the war in Iraq, Jim Frederick was an accidental Tokyo bureau chief.

When he arrived in Tokyo in late 2002 at the ripe old age of 31, it was as *Time* maga-

zine's roving Asian business correspondent. He was still in the process of relocating from New York where he was a senior editor at *Money* magazine, to *Time*'s Asian headquarters in Hong Kong.

Jim was brought in to do a story on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's bank reforms – parachuting in to interview a few people, write up the story, expecting to return to furnish his still-empty Hong Kong apartment within a week.

Instead, Jim stepped into a bureau in flux. *Time*'s Tokyo bureau had been chiefless for months, staffed mostly by stringers and crippled by rivalries among trial bureau chiefs. At their best, foreign bureaus, with their size, distance from the politics of the mothership and proximity to their subjects, can be homey, efficient and exciting places to work. But back then we more resembled *Heart of Darkness* than anything else.

As an intern-turned-stringer, I was at the end of my rope. In the post-9/11 world of international journalism, Tokyo was far off the grid, and full-time employment seemed just as distant. I was working several jobs to make ends meet, and the frustration of being mixed up in the politics of a giant machine that wouldn't commit to me was overshadowing the joy of reporting for one of the world's most iconic news organizations.

Jim saw the mess and while fully intending to return to his new life in Hong Kong, got to work repairing the bureau while reclaiming Tokyo's rightful place in *Time*'s coverage. With the authority and compas-

sion of a seasoned manager, Jim convinced me, along with another stringer, to keep the faith until the company freed up the budget to get us fully on board. One week turned into two, then a month, then three months – somewhere along the way, Jim accepted the interim bureau chief position and pretty soon *Time* stopped looking for a new bureau chief altogether.

For the next four years, Jim, with his youthful Midwestern optimism, turned us cynical stray-cat like stringers into loyal, committed staff reporters, and Tokyo became known as a close-knit, highly functional bureau genuinely passionate about redefining Japan coverage. He was one of those rare journalists who relished being boss – and was damn good at it. That he wrote fantastically about Japan's show business, Edo-period Buddhist art and Bank of Japan's monetary policy goes without saying. Jim was also a natural leader, who led not only by example but was also deeply caring, generous with his time and energy to anyone who asked.

Outside of the office, Jim was the life of the party. He was a *Time* bureau chief of yesteryear – tall, handsome and infinitely charming, he entertained sources and any colleagues who came through Tokyo alike, treating them like kings and queens. Jim could drink most anyone under the table and often did, sending them home with massive hangovers and unforgettable – albeit fuzzy – memories. I've yet to meet another foreign correspondent who can disarm foreign ministry officials to a point where they insisted on showing us the "Japanese salaryman way of drunkenness," tying their neckties around their heads in a posh Roppongi restaurant in the wee hours of the night.

Jim won exclusive access to the most

sought-after stories of the time in Japan – an interview with U.S. Army sergeant Charles Jenkins, who spent half a century in North Korea before being released in 2004 to Japan, the home country of his wife who was snatched off the shores of Sado Island by North Korean kidnapers. Jim left Tokyo in 2006 to become a senior editor in London, but the relationships he cultivated in the U.S. military ultimately led to his 2010 masterpiece, *Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent Into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death*.

Much has been written about the importance of *Black Hearts*, most recently in Jim's obituaries in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. When I first heard that he would be spending months in Iraq to write an immensely difficult book about the war, what I remembered was one of the first conversations I had with Jim in 2002 about where he saw himself in 10 years. Non-profit PR, or consulting, maybe. Perhaps still in journalism. But definitely not in some war zone, Jim said.

In the same stretch of conversation during his first weeks in Tokyo as the reluctant interim bureau chief, I often asked him what kept him from abandoning a messy situation to pick up where he left off in Hong Kong. Jim said he couldn't leave knowing that he was in a position where he could right the wrongs. Sometimes duty calls and you have to rise to the task. Jim always went over and beyond, redefining the role for those who came after him.

Jim took the helm of *Time International* after the publication of *Black Hearts*. To those who knew him, it wasn't all that surprising that his frustration with that position – of not having the freedom to use his power for good – led him to leave the prestigious role in 2013, and take his bride and soul mate, Charlotte, on a year of traveling the world.

During the 12 years that I knew him, Jim had checked off a great deal of what was in his bucket list – including an extended stay in Tokyo with Charlotte to experience the city in a way that his work got in the way of doing 10 years ago.

One day before he passed away from a heart attack while on his exercising machine at the tender age of 42, Jim wrote on his Facebook wall that he and Charlotte were starting a media consulting company called Hybrid Vigor Media. Life suited Jim so well. I'm honored to have known and worked with him, and still a little angry about the injustice of having to sum it up. ❶

Toko Sekiguchi reported for *Time* magazine from 2001 to 2007. She currently works as a Tokyo correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*.

FCCJ EXHIBITION *Patterns* by Torin Boyd



THIS SERIES OF IMAGES was taken over several years and is the result of a subconscious effort: that is, I never actually sought to create a body of work in which patterns and shapes were a common denominator. That all changed one day in 2003 when I was editing my work to build a new portfolio. In looking over my many images, I realized I'd been utilizing patterns on a regular basis for both my professional and personal work. I had developed a photographic style without even knowing it.

Presented at the FCCJ is a selection of what I feel are my best pattern images. They span over two decades with many being taken while on assignment for such publications as *National Geographic*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Time*, *The New York Times* and the *JAL* in-flight magazine. Several are images that never made it to print and are being shown for the first time. ❶



American photojournalist **Torin Boyd** has been based out of Tokyo since 1986. He has worked in over twenty countries and throughout the 1990s was a contract photographer for *U.S. News and World Report*. He has co-authored two books on Japanese photographic history.



FCCJ YOUTUBERS

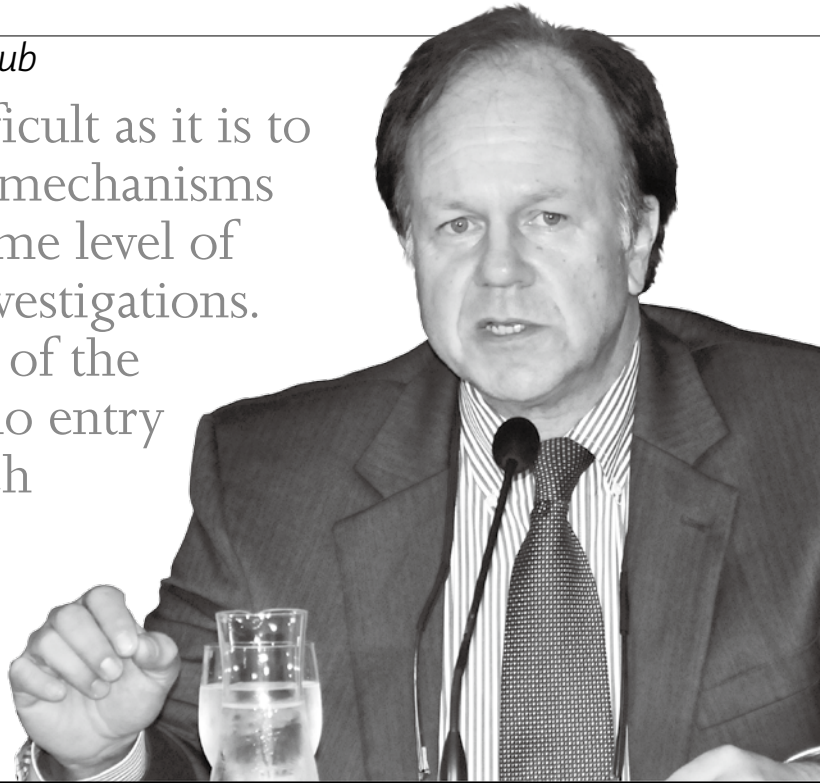
On Aug. 7, a delegation of FCCJ Members were led by YouTube's Soraya Umewaka through the facilities of the YouTube Space Tokyo studios on the 29th floor of Roppongi Hills. The studios are free for YouTube users with over 100 subscribers to their channel. Since the FCCJ channel has over 1,000 subscribers, Members are able to make use of the production space and equipment. The video must be approved by the Web Committee, be related to news in Japan and be uploaded first to the FCCJ channel. For more information, email the Web Committee via the front desk.

(Photo by Tim Hornyak)

Heard at the Club

“In Chernobyl – as difficult as it is to work there – there are mechanisms in place to promote some level of support of scientific investigations. In Fukushima, because of the complexities, there is no entry at all for formal research activities in the zone.”

Timothy A. Mousseau,
Professor of Biological Sciences,
University of South Carolina,
“Fukushima Catastrophe and its
Effects on Wildlife”
Aug. 22



JOIN THE MOVIE COMMITTEE ...

... at 6:30 pm on Thursday, Sept. 18 for Takashi Koizumi's first film in five years, *A Samurai Chronicle*, followed by a Q&A with the writer-director and his star, Koji Yakusho. Based on the Naoki Prize-winning novel by Rin Hamuro, it is a film of autumnal magnificence, both in its stunning scenery and its sublime performances. Set at the end of the Edo period, it is the elegiac story of a samurai's final three years before he must keep his promise to commit *seppuku* as punishment for a crime he committed seven years before the tale begins. But it is also a detective story and a love story, with strong messages about fatherhood, community and honor. Koizumi was the longtime assistant to Akira Kurosawa and the director of the award-winning *After the Rain* (2000) and *Best Wishes for Tomorrow* (2008), which he cowrote with Roger Pulvers. (Japan, 2014; 129 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.)

– Karen Severns

© 2014 SCFP

NEW MEMBERS



TIM HORNYAK is the Tokyo correspondent for IDG News. Hornyak first came to Japan in 1999, joining Kyodo News' copy desk while freelancing for publications such as *Scientific American*. He later worked at NHK News and continued to write about technology and travel, co-authoring guidebooks to Japan and Tokyo for Lonely Planet. He is the author of *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*, which was the subject of an FCCJ book break. While living in Canada from 2009 to 2013, Hornyak wrote for CNET News' high-profile technology and culture blog *Crave* before joining IDG News for another stint in Japan. Hornyak was raised in Montreal and enjoys skiing, hiking and onsen.



MAHA MATSUMURA is a reporter for Al Jazeera Network (Doha). Although one of her parents is from Syria and the other from Japan, she decided to settle in Tokyo for the last decade. In 2010, she joined the world of media as a correspondent for Dubai's MBC channel. Time has allowed Matsumura to successfully forge trustworthy and dependable relationships across various fields.



STEPHEN C. ROSS reports, produces, shoots and edits video news for broadcast and online media organizations. Ross is a 1986 graduate of Columbia University and from 1994 to 1997 a “JET” (Japan Exchange & Teaching Program Fellow). He previously reported for CBS affiliate station KOLN-TV in Nebraska's capital city, for Turkish-owned Ebru News in New York City, and other stations. Ross was a Donald T. Sheehan International Fellow to the 2011 Wharton Seminars for Business Journalists, and recipient of the Gold

Award in the 2013 Stanford University US-Asia Technology Management Center's “Untold Story in Innovation” journalism award competition.

REINSTATEMENT (REGULAR)



ASGER R. CHRISTENSEN is correspondent for *Orientering* and contributor of news and analysis to a broad range of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) platforms and other Danish and Scandinavian news media. He was an active member of the FCCJ from 1989 until 1995 as correspondent for the Danish daily *Politiken* and other Scandinavian media. After returning to Denmark in 1995, he was foreign editor of daily *Aktuelt*, and the leading Danish news agency, Ritzau. Until last year he was employed by DR, as well as working as chief editor of the radio news background program *Orientering* and Online frontpage editor of the DR website. He is a senior fellow at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.

PROFESSIONAL/JOURNALIST ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deborah Ann Desnoo, Plug In, Inc.
Roger Sherrin, Roger Sherrin Global Professional Coach
Ewerthon Tobace, BBC Brazil
Saori Tanaka, MID Academic Promotions Inc.

Kazuyuki Suzuki, Mitsubishi Corporation
Motohide Takeda, Mitsubishi Corporation
Akiko Kudo, NTT Communications Corporation
Keiji Ushiyama, GENEQ Corporation

Sake Brewing Co., Ltd.
Kazuhide Matsui, MARS Company
Takikazu Shibazaki, Kawasaki Flora Auction Market Co., Ltd.
Takeshi Masuda, Nomura Co., Ltd.
Masahiro Nakagawa, Nomura Co., Ltd.
Masakazu Ota, Model Language Studio

Yoshihiro Nishihara, Sony Life Insurance Co., Ltd.
Eriko Hishinuma, Hishinuma Associate
Toshichika Zaima, Universal Communication Design Association
Sonoko Suzuki, Kyoto University of Art and Design
Yutaka Shimazaki, Marubeni Corporation
Norio Hirokawa, Hiro Co., Ltd.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Casey Wahl, Wahl & Case K.K.
Romen Barua, Wahl & Case K.K.
Jarrod Stenhouse, Destination Asia

Takakazu Ikeda, Tokai Bussan Co., Ltd.
Kenji Omoto, Sankyo Corporation
Yoshikazu Nakajima, Hakutsuru

Satoshi Takahata, Saga Forest Carriers Intl. Tokyo Inc.
Kazuo Ohmori, Sumitomo Corporation

REINSTATEMENT (ASSOCIATE)
Isao Saito, U & IHR Consulting

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

The Power of the Weave: The Hidden Meanings of Cloth

Tanaka, Yuko ; translated by Geraldine Harcourt
International House of Japan
Gift from George Baumgartner

The Rise of Sharing: Fourth-Stage Consumer Society in Japan

Miura, Atsushi
International House of Japan
Gift from George Baumgartner

Toshihiko Izutsu and the Philosophy of Word: In Search of the Spiritual Orient

Wakamatsu, Eisuke
International House of Japan
Gift from George Baumgartner

Senkaku hanbaku manual Hyakudai

Ishiw, Nozomu
Shukousha
Gift from the author

Nihon bomeiki no Ryo Keicho

Li, Kai (Li, Hai)
Obirin Daigaku Hokuto Asia Sogo Kenkyujo
Gift from the author

Shori suru kigyō homu
Minato Sogo Horitsu Jimusho
Lexis Nexis Japan
Gift from Nobuaki Minato, one of the contributors

The Comfort Women Issue: A Review of the Facts and Common Misunderstandings

Nishioka, Tsutomu
Japan Policy Institute
Gift from the author

Dare mo kataranakatta Nichi-Bei kaku mitsuyaku no shotai

Tawachi, Takashi
Kadokawa
Gift from the author

Hodo sarenai keisatsu to masukomi no fuhai: eiga Pochi no kokuhaku ga abaita mono

Terasawa, Yu
Inshidentsu
Gift from the author

Nagasarenai ikikata

Yamasaki, Takeya
Mikasa Shobo
Gift from the author

Naze ichiryū no hito wa ocha o tanoshimu noka: Nihon bunka no saikoho totatsuten

Yamasaki, Takeya
PHP Kenkyujo
Gift from the author

Hard Choices

Clinton, Hillary Rodham
Simon & Schuster

The Railway Man
Lomax, Eric
Vintage



Innovation
that excites

WHAT IF_ AN ELECTRIC CAR WAS BUILT FOR THRILLS? 100% ELECTRIC NISSAN LEAF



100% TORQUE OFF THE LINE

Model may vary by country.

nissanwhatif.com