



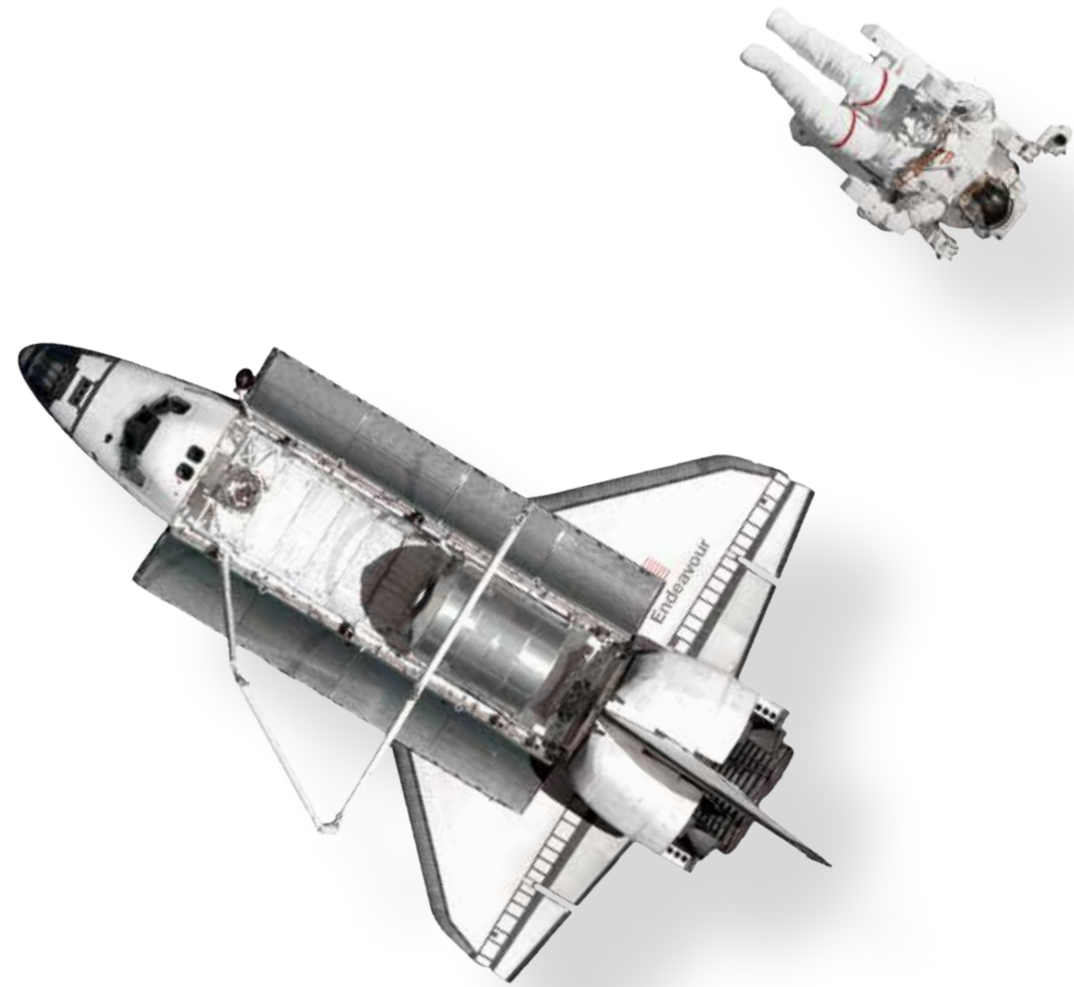
# NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

April 2015, Volume 47 No. 4, ¥400



Five years  
as a Tokyo  
Correspondent

The real story  
of Japan's  
Constitution



> THEME.11  
 > INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

# At 400 kilometers above the Earth, failure is not an option

Orbiting the Earth at an altitude of 400 kilometers since the 1980s, the International Space Station surely ranks among the supreme technological achievements of humanity. And NSK is proud to be aboard with a variety of components that continue to meet exacting standards of performance that are literally out of this world. In orbit, failure is not an option. To make it in space, components must be able to function for decades in a zero-gravity vacuum while withstanding extreme swings in temperature. It's just the kind of tough spec we love at NSK.

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



## In this issue

p5 & 14

The Front Page	
<b>From the President</b> by Lucy Birmingham	4
<b>Tales from the round tables</b> by The Shimbun Alley Whisperers	4
<b>From the archives</b> by Charles Pomeroy	5
Cover features	
<b>On my watch</b> by Carsten Germis	6
<b>Scooping the General</b> by Eiichiro Tokumoto	8
<b>Halt!</b> by Gavin Blair	10
<b>Suvendrini Kakuchi</b> by Monzurul Huq	12
<b>The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand: Surviving the winds of war in southeast Asia</b> by Dominic Faulder	14
<b>Remembering the subway horror</b> by Julian Ryall	16
Club News	17
FCCJ exhibition: <i>Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts: Selection from the Young Portfolio Acquisitions/Heard at the Club/ Remembering Robert/Join the Film Committee/ New Members/New in the library</i>	

NUMBER 1  
 SHIMBUN

Vol. 47, Number 4 April 2015

contact the editors  
[no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp](mailto:no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp)

Publisher FCCJ

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

**FCCJ BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**President** Lucy Birmingham, *Freelance*  
**1st Vice President** Michael Penn, *Shingetsu News  
 Agency*  
**2nd Vice President**  
 Masaaki Fukunaga, *The Sanmarg*  
**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  
**Film** Karen Severns  
**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  
**Professional Activities** David McNeill,  
 Tetsuo Jimbo  
**Publications** Gavin Blair  
**Special Projects** Haruko Watanabe  
**Web Committee** Tim Hornyak  
**Compliance Committee** Kunio Hamada  
**70th Anniversary Panel** Yoshio Murakami  
**Freedom of Press** Jake Adelstein  
**Food & Beverage** Rike Wootten  
**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](http://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](mailto:no.1shimbun@fccj.or.jp)  
 Read the Number 1 Shimbun online:  
[fccj.or.jp/number-1-shimbun/](http://fccj.or.jp/number-1-shimbun/)

**Cover photograph:**  
 Andrew Potheary





From the President

LAST MONTH SAW A remarkable flourish of activity at the FCCJ. After nine months of negotiations, we finally inked an agreement with Mitsubishi Estate to move four blocks into a new building complex in the central Marunouchi district which will be ready in 2018. There is a skyscraper of work ahead, but this a good chance to raise a virtual toast to our hard-working House & Property Committee that is leading the charge.

The March 5 General Membership Meeting (GMM), which included voting on the 2015 budget, was our first as a public interest association (*koeki shadan hojin*). The meeting went remarkably well, thanks to the newly required pre-meeting preparations.

The budget and a ¥1,000/month special levy were both passed by a large majority. The levy will continue until March 2019, and is to be used for the Club move, including but not limited to purchasing fixtures, covering associated legal and document fees, and the repair and maintenance of existing facilities.

The board thanks everyone who participated in the GMM by attendance, absentee vote or proxy. It's crucial for the Club's success to get Regular (journalist) Member participation at both the March GMM and the Annual General Membership Meeting (AGMM) in June, when we have our Board of Directors elections. It's your chance to be involved in improvements to the Club!

Last month we also offered an extraordinary number and variety of press conferences and events focused on the fourth anniversary of the March 11, 2011, Tohoku disaster. Many committees were involved, including the "new" Film Committee (formerly the Movie Committee), the Library

Committee, the Exhibition Committee and, of course, the PAC Committee.

For the 20-year anniversary of the Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subways, PAC organized a moving presser with survivor and documentary filmmaker Atsushi Sakihara. He stressed the importance of not forgetting the lessons learned, a reminder for us not to ignore the small memorial plate in the underground passageway at Kasumigaseki Station, not far from the Club. We need such regular reminders of the dangers of brainwashing, propaganda and chemical terrorism.

Prominent PAC speakers also included World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda. Tokyo's Shibuya Mayor Toshitake Kuwahara shared the ward's pioneering proposal to offer marriage certificates for same-sex couples.

The Food & Beverage Committee offered a delightful selection of wine, shochu and saké tastings throughout the month. And last but not least, the Entertainment Committee organized Saturday Night Live performances over all four weekends.

This month, don't miss our two Asa-kai morning talks on Tues. 7, with Mr. Ryuta Shiiki, Founder & CEO of animation and entertainment company DLE, Inc.; and Tues. 21 with the brilliant and beautiful artist/designer Sputniko!, assistant professor at MIT Media Lab. Another highlight will be Book Break on Mon. 20 featuring award-winning author and translator Roger Pulvers.

Rather than being T.S. Eliot's "the cruellest month," I hope the cherry blossoms and Bacchus help inspire a delightful April for everyone.

— Lucy Birmingham

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

FROM THE ARCHIVES



READY TO RETURN



**Drawing the second largest audience in the Club's administrative year of 1980-81, the Dalai Lama assured members on Nov. 12, 1980, that he eventually expected to return to Tibet "... when the people there were happy and content." Only Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki had attracted a larger attendance some two months earlier. That's Jack Russell (NBC News), President of the FCCJ, in the foreground. Ed Reingold (Time), who succeeded Jack as president, is visible to the far left.**

Unable to achieve rapprochement with the PRC, the Dalai Lama continued to dedicate his life to peace and reconciliation, traveling the world to meet world leaders and to conduct lectures, conferences, and workshops. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for supporting nonviolence and global environmental protection. Health concerns led to his semi-retirement in 2008 and in 2011 he gave up his position as Tibet's political leader.

One description that sums up the Dalai Lama nicely was found in this bio ([www.biography.com/people/dalai-lama-9264833](http://www.biography.com/people/dalai-lama-9264833)) and reads...

*Dalai Lamas are believed to be the reincarnation of Avalokitesvara, an important Buddhist deity and the personification of compassion. Dalai Lamas are also enlightened beings who have postponed their own afterlife and chosen to take rebirth to benefit humanity. "Dalai" means "ocean" in Mongolian (the name "Gyatso" comes from the Tibetan word for ocean). "Lama" is the equivalent of the Sanskrit word "guru," or spiritual teacher. Put together, the title of Dalai Lama is literally "Ocean Teacher," meaning a "teacher spiritually as deep as the ocean."*

— Charles Pomeroy

BORN LHAMO THONDUP ON July 6, 1935, he became Tibet's spiritual and political leader as the Dalai Lama in 1950 at age 15, but invasion by the People's Republic of China (PRC) cut his rule short later in the same year. He and thousands of his followers

established a separate government in Dharamsala in northern India in 1959 after a failed uprising by the Tibetan people. Later efforts to make Tibet a self-governing democratic "sanctuary," with the PRC responsible for foreign policy and defense, were unsuccessful.

TALES FROM THE ROUND TABLES



WHEN THE DOLLAR RULED

"THERE NEVER WAS A luckier generation than that which knew Japan in those years," reminisced James Michener with great affection in a 1951 *Number 1 Shimbun* article. Post-war Japan was emerging as a critical ally of the United States in the region, and with the outbreak of the Korean conflict, the economy was finally beginning to show signs of a recovery. Occupation-era restrictions and rules for travel

were being relaxed.

If you could ignore the city landscape still hideously pockmarked by the incendiary bombings in the final chapter of war and the suffering from chronic shortages of daily necessities, Tokyo offered some of the world's best hospitality and charm – which made it a favorite hub for many correspondents who were flocking in those years to the still very exotic East.

It sure didn't hurt that things were

enchantingly cheap, particularly for those earning dollars – easily increased if one played the currency manipulations on the streets. Even more heavenly was life for those correspondents who had access to "the golden P.X. on the Ginza," as Michener described the U.S. Occupation retail outlet. It peddled "full meals at thirty-five cents, haircuts at fifteen cents, shoeshines at five cents and Kodak film at twenty cents," not to mention bourbon, steaks and silk stockings far beyond the wildest fantasies of most Japanese. "The more daring of us lived mainly on the Japanese economy," he adds, "and to do so on American incomes was an experience."

But then again, not everything was cheap even back then. There were the famously beckoning houses in Tokyo where beautiful women made every customer feel they were God's chosen (which, of course, many of the Western journalists were already inclined to believe during their time in Asia). One such legendary establishment was Miyoshi. Guests were welcomed with lavish entertainment in a large tatami room, after which a beautiful attendant would lead the way across a pond and into a small guest room where "she would see that her guest was properly bathed, helped into a starched yukata, and bedded down in a comfortable futon," according to the annals of the FCCJ.

So just imagine how sumptuous the reception would have been for an injured hero like UP's Bob Vermillion when he returned to Tokyo for R&R after breaking his leg jumping with the paratroopers during the Munsan operations in the Korean War. He made a beeline to Miyoshi for his R&R. So impressed was he by the hospitality that he invited a bunch of FCCJ friends over for some memorable evenings. When he finally reported back to the office after a few weeks, friends and colleagues commented how he looked like a new man.

He needed all his recovered strength to remain standing when, a few days later, a well-dressed lady from the friendly establishment delivered the

bill for his stay to his office. He paid the whopping bill, which was enough to buy a small house. His boss, Ernie Hoberecht, was not amused.

There were no such financial concerns for Errol Flynn. The action hero and global heartthrob was introduced to Miyoshi by a very tipsy Vermillion, who happened to jump into Flynn's limousine outside the Club one night after mistaking it for a cab. Club legend has it that Flynn liked Miyoshi so much, he moved his entire crew into its surroundings for the duration of his movie shoot, with – the Round Table recalls – no qualms whatsoever about the price.

— The Shimbun Alley Whisperers



*Confessions of a foreign correspondent after a half-decade of reporting from Tokyo to his German readers.*

# On my watch

by CARSTON GERMIS



My bags are packed, as the song goes. After more than five years as the Tokyo correspondent for the German daily, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, I will soon leave Tokyo for home.

The country I'm leaving is different from the one I arrived in back in January 2010. Although things seem the same on the surface, the social climate – that has increasingly influenced my work in the past 12 months – is slowly but noticeably changing.

There is a growing gap between the perceptions of the Japanese elites and what is reported in the foreign media, and I worry that it could become a problem for journalists working here. Of course, Japan is a democracy with freedom of the press, and access to information is possible even for correspondents with poor Japanese language skills. But the gap exists because there is a clear shift that is taking place under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe – a move by the right to whitewash history. It could become a problem because Japan's new elites have a hard time dealing with opposing views or criticism, which is very likely to continue in the foreign media.

The *Nikkei* recently published an essay by their correspondent in Berlin about the February visit to Japan of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. He wrote: "Merkel's visit to Japan was more conducive to criticism of Japan than friendship. With Japanese experts, she discussed her country's policy to end nuclear power. She talked about the wartime history when she visited the *Asahi* and when she met with Abe. She also talked with Katsuya Okada, president of the DPJ, the largest opposition party. . . . Friendship was promoted only when she visited a factory run by a German company and shook hands with the robot Asimo."

That seemed harsh. But, even accepting the premise . . . what is friendship? Is friendship simply agreement? Is not true friendship the ability to speak of one's beliefs when a friend is shifting in a direction that could cause him harm?

And surely Merkel's visit was more complex than just critical.

Let me make my own stance clear. After five years, my love and affection for this country are unbroken. In fact, thanks to the many fine people I've met, my feelings are stronger than ever. Most of my Japanese friends and Japanese readers in Germany have told me they feel my love in my writing, especially following the events of March 11, 2011.

Unfortunately, the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Tokyo see things completely differently, and it seems some in the Japanese media feel the same way. To them I have been – like almost all my German media colleagues – a Japan basher capable of only delivering harsh criticism. It is we who have been responsible for, as the *Nikkei's* man in Berlin put it, the two countries' bilateral relations becoming "less friendly."

## Changing relations

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is politically conservative, economically liberal and market oriented. And yet, those claiming that the coverage of Abe's historical revisionism has always been critical are right. In Germany it is inconceivable for liberal democrats to deny responsibility for what were wars of aggression. If Japan's popularity in Germany has suffered, it is not due to the media coverage, but to Germany's repugnance at historical revisionism.

My tenure in Japan began with very different issues. In 2010, the Democratic Party of Japan ran the government. All three administrations I covered – Hatoyama, Kan and Noda – tried to explain their policies to the foreign press, and we often heard politicians saying things like, "We know we have to do more and become better at running the country."

Foreign journalists were often invited by then Deputy Prime Minister Katsuya Okada, for example, to exchange views. There were weekly meetings in the Kantei, the PM's residence, and officials were willing to discuss – more or less openly – current issues. We didn't hesitate to criticize the government's stance on certain issues, but officials contin-

**Island hopping** The author on a South Korean junket to Takeshima that got him called into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ued to try to make their positions understood.

The rollback came soon after the December 2012 elections. Despite the prime minister's embrace of new media like Facebook, for example, there is no evidence of an appreciation for openness anywhere in his administration. Finance Minister Taro Aso has never tried to talk to foreign journalists or to provide a response to questions about the massive government debt.

In fact, there is a long list of issues that foreign correspondents want to hear officialdom address: energy policy, the risks of Abenomics, constitutional revision, opportunities for the younger generation, the depopulation of rural regions. But the willingness of government representatives to talk with the foreign press has been almost zero. Yet, at the same time, anyone who criticizes the brave new world being called for by the prime minister is called a Japan basher.

What is new, and what seems unthinkable compared to five years ago, is being subjected to attacks from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – not only direct ones, but ones directed at the paper's editorial staff in Germany. After the appearance of an article I had written that was critical of the Abe administration's historical revisionism, the paper's senior foreign policy editor was visited by the Japanese consul general of Frankfurt, who passed on objections from "Tokyo." The Chinese, he complained, had used it for anti-Japanese propaganda.

It got worse. Later on in the frosty, 90-minute meeting, the editor asked the consul general for information that would prove the facts in the article wrong, but to no avail. "I am forced to begin to suspect that money is involved," said the diplomat, insulting me, the editor and the entire paper. Pulling out a folder of my clippings, he extended condolences for my need to write pro-China propaganda, since he understood that it was probably necessary for me to get my visa application approved.

Me? A paid spy for Beijing? Not only have I never been there, but I've never even applied for a visa. If this is the approach of the new administration's drive to make Japan's goals understood, there's a lot of work ahead. Of course, the pro-China accusations did not go over well with my editor, and I received the backing to continue with my reporting. If anything, the editing of my reports became sharper.

The heavy handedness has been increasing over the past few years. In 2012, while the DPJ was still in power, I took a junket to South Korea, interviewing former comfort women and visiting the contested island of Takeshima (Dokdo to Koreans). Of course it was PR, but it was a rare chance to see the center of the controversy for myself. I was called in by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a meal and discussion, and received a few dozen pages of information proving that the island was Japanese.

In 2013, with Abe's administration in charge, I was called in once again after I wrote about an interview with three comfort women. This also included a lunch invitation, and once again I received information to help my understanding of the prime minister's thoughts.

But things seem to have changed in 2014, and MoFA officials now seem to openly attack critical reporting. I was called in after a story on the effect the prime minister's nationalism is having on trade

with China. I told them that I had only quoted official statistics, and their rebuttal was that the numbers were wrong.

## My departing message

Two weeks before the epic meeting between the Consul general and my editor, I had another lunch with MoFA officials, in which protests were made of my use of words like "whitewash history," and the idea that Abe's nationalistic direction might "isolate Japan, not only in East Asia." The tone was frostier and, rather than trying to explain and convince, their attitude was angrier. No one was listening to my attempts to explain why German media are especially sensitive about historical revisionism.

I've heard of an increase in the number of lunch invitations from government officials to foreign correspondents, and the increased budgets to spread Japanese views of World War II, and the new trend to invite the bosses of foreign correspondents deemed too critical (via business class, of course). But I would suggest the proponents tread carefully, since these editors have been treated to – and become inured to – political PR of the highest caliber and clumsy efforts tend to have an opposite effect. When I officially complained about the Consul's comments about my receiving funds from China, I was told that it was a "misunderstanding."

So here's my departing message: Unlike some of my colleagues, I do not see a threat in Japan to freedom of reporting. Though many critical voices are more silent than during the DPJ administration,

## "Protests were made of my use of words like 'whitewash history'"

they are there – and perhaps in larger numbers than before. The closed-shop mentality of the Japanese political elite and the present inability of the administration leaders to risk open discussion with foreign media doesn't really affect press freedom; there are plenty of other sources to gather information. But it does reveal how little the government understands that – in a democracy – policy must be explained to the public. And the world.

It doesn't strike me as funny any more when colleagues tell me that the LDP doesn't have anyone in the press affairs department who will speak English or provide information to a foreign journalist. Nor does the fact that the present prime minister, who claims to be well traveled, has declined to make the short trip to speak to us at the Foreign Correspondents' Club. In fact, I can only be saddened at how the government is not only secretive with the foreign press, but with its own citizens.

In the past five years, I've been up and down the Japanese archipelago, and – unlike in Tokyo – I've never had anyone, from Hokkaido to Kyushu, accuse me of writings that were hostile to Japan. On the contrary, I've been blessed with interesting stories and enjoyable people everywhere. Japan is still one of the most wealthy, open nations in the world; it's a pleasant place to live and report from for foreign correspondents.

My hope is that foreign journalists – and even more importantly, the Japanese public – can continue to speak their minds. I believe that harmony should not come from repression or ignorance; and that a truly open and healthy democracy is a goal worthy of my home of the last five great years. ●

Carston Germis was the Tokyo correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* from 2010 to 2015 and a member of the Board of Directors of the FCCJ.



# Scooping the General

*How a journalist infuriated MacArthur by breaking the story of the real authors of Japan's Constitution.*

by EIICHIRO TOKUMOTO

On the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, various issues regarding post-war history are being debated around the world. Among them is one of the most contentious subjects in Japan: the Constitution – its creation, its value and its future. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has long advocated a departure from traditional post-war government policy, has regularly pushed for revising the Constitution. While campaigning in the general election that brought him to power for the second time in 2012, Abe went as far as remarking, “It’s a disgraceful Constitution. Speaking frankly, that’s because it was not written by Japanese.”

Of course, the document also has its defenders, who say it was the basis for the many years of peace and prosperity the country has enjoyed in the post-war era. But, irrespective of the position people take toward the Constitution, no one can doubt the impact it has had on the nation.

The process by which Japan’s Constitution was created was bizarre right from the start. For six years and eight months of U.S. Occupation following the country’s defeat in August 1945, the country was being run by the GHQ – General Douglas MacArthur’s General Headquarters. During this period

constitution: legislative, judicial, the role of the Emperor, and so on. Huddled in the Dai-Ichi Life Insurance Building and working around the clock, the staff completed a draft in just over a week. This was a top-secret project even within the GHQ.

## “Inconsistent with Japanese Tradition”

On Feb. 13, Whitney handed the MacArthur-approved type-written draft – in English – to Prime Minister Kijuro Shidehara’s Cabinet. It included sections that ensured civil liberties, strengthened parliamentary control and, in a move that remains controversial today, renounced war. The draft shocked the officials, with Foreign Minister Shigeru Yoshida complaining that it was inconsistent with Japanese tradition.

The government was told that if the new draft was not accepted, the Americans would take it directly to the people, sidelining the entire Japanese political structure. In the end, they had no recourse and the draft was accepted at an extraordinary cabinet meeting on March 6. None of this back-room maneuvering was reported by the Japanese press.

General MacArthur wasted no time in issuing an announce-



ment, which read, “It is with a sense of deep satisfaction that I am today able to announce a decision of the Emperor and Government of Japan to submit to the Japanese people a new and enlightened constitution which has my full approval.” With nearly the entire Japanese population oblivious to the document’s real authors, the Diet’s deliberations on ratifying the constitution commenced.

In the midst of the process, on July 3, a shocking article appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*. The headline of the scoop read: “Democracy Levied On Fumbling Japan While Premier Waits.” The text underneath reported that it had not been the Japanese government that was responsible for producing the new constitution, but American staff at the GHQ.

It read: “New details of how Japan’s new draft constitution was prepared by the Government Section of the Allied Headquarters and imposed upon a reluctant Japanese Government, whose own fumbleings had failed to satisfy American occupation authorities, were disclosed today to this correspondent.

“As one of the most historic developments of the occupation, it sheds additional light on the manner in which the form, if not the feeling, of democracy is being brought to Japan.

“It is, moreover, a significant chronicle of how for the first

time in history a democratic character has been given to a nation not because its people had any special yearning for the Western style of democracy but virtually because they had no choice in the matter.”

The article continued: “Through skillful manipulation of the Japanese press, it was made to appear that the initiative for this bold step had come from within the walls of Tokyo’s Imperial Palace.”

The author of the article was one Gordon Walker, the *Christian Science Monitor*’s Chief Far Eastern correspondent and a member of the Tokyo Correspondents’ Club (forerunner of the FCCJ). After joining the paper in 1933, he had worked as a war correspondent in the Pacific theater, in places like New Guinea and the Philippines.

MacArthur and his GHQ went ballistic over how the top secret project was leaked, particularly to a foreign correspondent. The GHQ went so far as to send military police to the Correspondents’ Club looking for Walker, but nothing came of the search, and calmer heads must have prevailed in cooling down the agitated response.

## Gordon Walker’s “Deep Throat”

So how was Walker able to obtain the inside details of the constitution’s revision, and who was his source? His “Deep Throat” was a 30-year-old Japanese woman named Haru Matsukata, who was then working as an assistant at the *Monitor*’s bureau.

Born in Tokyo in 1915, Haru Matsukata was the granddaughter of Meiji-era statesman Masayoshi Matsukata. She attended the American School in Japan, and later graduated from Principia College in Illinois. Following the war’s end, she was offered a job by the Occupation, but turned that down to put her language ability to work as Walker’s assistant at the

policies. The former were accorded special privileges, such as opportunities for exclusive interviews with Gen. MacArthur; the latter were subjected to blatant discrimination and harassment. Walker was clearly one of the latter, and – in one instance – was denied reentry after leaving Japan for an assignment in China.

The G2 Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, also monitored reporters at the press club, and investigated their political beliefs and known associates. A secret G2 report dated Feb. 27, 1947 noted that Walker was “one of the most active members of the leftist clique at the Correspondents’ Club.”

Haru Matsukata was also to feel the repercussions after her name appeared on GHQ’s blacklist for having been Walker’s informant. One day, she met Jiro Shirasu, an old family friend and close aide to Shigeru Yoshida, who at the time held the post of Vice President of the Central Liaison Office. This acted as the liaison organization between the GHQ and the Japanese government.

Shirasu, who sat at the central switchboard to the secrets of the two governments, blurted out to Haru, “I am greatly shocked that you, a granddaughter of Prince Matsukata, are a communist.” Haru began to realize that her journalistic activities were affecting her whole family. She wrote: “So I severed my connections with the press, taking a position at the Swedish legation until the end of the occupation. . . .”

Despite the “fiction” of its creation, the new Constitution was eventually promulgated on Nov. 3, 1946, and went into force from May 3 of the following year. And Walker? He went on to cover the civil war in China, the Korean War and other stories in Asia during in the 1950s. He died in 1959 at age 42.

Haru Matsukata returned to journalism after the Occupation ended in 1952, and became the Tokyo office manager of

**“My first entry into the Press Club was in 1946 with a .45 strapped to my side, hunting down a correspondent”**

the U.S. weekly, the *Saturday Evening Post*. She was also the first Japanese woman to be elected to the Correspondents’ Club board of directors. In June, 1955, during lunch at the Club, she met future U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer, and they were married in January of the following year.

One other person who was caught up in the drama of those days in 1946 was a young GI in the military police assigned to GHQ. Jack Russell was later to work as a Tokyo correspondent for NBC, and served as FCCJ president from July 1980 to June 1981. During a panel discussion in July 2005, held in observance of the 60th anniversary of the end of the war, Russell recalled his days under MacArthur.

“My first entry into the Press Club was in 1946 with a .45 strapped to my side, hunting down a correspondent. His name was Gordon Walker, who worked for the *Christian Science Monitor*. MacArthur was trying to hang this guy, as he didn’t like what Walker was writing about the Occupation.”

Russell, as it turned out, didn’t take Walker into custody.

“Of course, as my father was a newspaper man, I was going to cover this guy up anyway,” he confided, to approving laughter from the audience. ●

### MacArthur barks

Gordon Walker got the scoop on how the GHQ forced their own draft of the Constitution on the Japanese government.



### Jack of all trades

Jack Russell’s first visit to the Correspondents’ Club was as an armed MP, sent to arrest a journalist. He later became FCCJ president (right).



*Monitor*. As she was to later write in her autobiography, *Samurai and Silk*, “I accepted Gordon’s offer as being more likely to permit me to renew my youthful hopes of working for better understanding between Japan and America.”

Haru had obtained the inside information from her friends, including her relative Saburo Matsukata, who worked as chief editor of the Kyodo News Agency. Translating the information into English, she passed them along to Walker. One of these was an item about the writing of the Constitution. As Haru reminisced in her book: “I remember how nervous I was about passing this information on to Gordon, since I knew MacArthur and his staff would be furious with the contradiction of a fiction the Americans were to maintain stubbornly for years. Despite my fear, I decided to let the cat out of the bag because this was indeed a major falsehood that merited exposure.”

Walker wrote follow-ups about the Constitution on July 11 and 29. In them, he used the word “fiction” to describe the official story about the writing of the draft, further infuriating GHQ. At the time, GHQ’s Public Relations Office categorized correspondents as loyal or critical, depending on whether they praised or criticized Occupation

Eiichiro Tokumoto, a former Reuters correspondent, is an author and investigative journalist.



After covering conflicts and humanitarian disasters around the world for more than two decades, freelance cameraman Yuichi Sugimoto suddenly found himself unable to leave his own country. Forced to surrender his passport on Feb. 7 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prevent him traveling to Syria, the Niigata native was told not to expect that it would be returned. Aside from being somewhat reminiscent of the Sakoku Edict of 1635 that largely isolated Japan for more than two centuries, his case raises questions about freedom of the press, freedom of movement and whether the holding of a passport is a right or a granted privilege.

The root of Sugimoto's woes lay in an interview he gave to a local Niigata newspaper at the beginning of February, during the course of which he told the reporter he intended to visit Syria again to cover the conflict there. A couple of days later he was contacted by a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, citing the article and asking if he was planning to visit Syria. Sugimoto says he explained he had travelled to the region numerous times, and that he wouldn't be going to areas controlled by the so-called Islamic State. With memories of the murder of fellow freelancer Kenji Goto still raw in the nation-

*Can the government take away a journalist's passport – and the right to do his job?*

# Halt!

by GAVIN BLAIR

al psyche, the official asked him not to travel to the region; Sugimoto explained his intentions were unchanged.

Returning to his apartment on the evening of Feb. 7, he noticed a group of men standing in a nearby parking lot. The men approached as he reached his front door and identified themselves as foreign ministry officials accompanied by local police officers. Once inside his apartment, a lengthy to-and-fro ensued about his intentions to travel, culminating with the ministry officials' demand that Sugimoto surrender his passport. After being repeatedly threatened with arrest and shown a document from Minister of Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida ordering the confiscation of his passport, Sugimoto complied.

One of the officials, a deputy director of the consulate division of the ministry, told Sugimoto the confiscation of his passport was permanent and under no circumstances would he get it back.

On Feb. 12, Sugimoto held a press conference at the FCCJ, where he recounted what had happened. He said he believed this was the first case of the Japanese government confiscating the passport of a journalist in the post-war era. "I'm concerned that this could set a very bad precedent in this country . . . affecting the freedom to report news," said Sugimoto.

Sugimoto declared his intention to fight the government in the courts to get his passport returned and asked the

assembled foreign correspondents whether their own governments would take similar actions. A number of members of the assembled media told Sugimoto that the authorities in their home countries would be either unable or unwilling to confiscate the passport of a journalist, though some later conceded they were unaware of the legal specifics.

Under the Japanese Passport Law, there is a provision that allows the government to confiscate a passport if it will protect the holder's life, though Sugimoto pointed out his intention was to travel to Kobani, an area controlled by Kurdish fighters who have conducted a number of press tours for foreign journalists.

Kazuko Ito, a Tokyo-based lawyer and head of Human Rights Now in Japan, is fully supportive of Sugimoto's position, but has concerns about the implications of a ruling against Sugimoto, particularly given the current political climate.



**By official request** While at the FCCJ, Yuichi Sugimoto shows the ministry's order confiscating his passport.

"I have no doubt that this is a violation of the Constitution. It is a violation of the freedom of the press, as well as freedom of movement, both of which are guaranteed by the Constitution. However, it is not predictable how a court, and eventually the Japanese Supreme Court, might rule," said Ito. "To date, I have not learned of any constitutional precedent for confiscating the passport of Japanese national."

"If there is any chance that the court would rule that the state does have authority to restrict overseas activities, we have to think about the implications for other journalists and humanitarian workers in deciding whether to pursue litigation on this," she said. "No matter whether the Sugimoto case is going to be a legal fight or not, our society should raise its voice against such interventions against the individual freedom by the government."

Sugimoto firmly believes his rights have been infringed by an unconstitutional confiscation. "It's written in the Constitution that citizens have the right to travel, but that is being ignored. I understand if Japan went to war, for example, that

the interests of the nation would come first, but this is everyday life," said Sugimoto. "It's as if there is no Constitution."

"The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken my job and my life work," he said. "These are basic human rights. The foreign ministry is not thinking about Japanese citizens, it is thinking about the ministry. This was a kind of performance in the wake of Goto-san being murdered."

Although he was told that the confiscation was permanent, ministry officials have since told him he may now apply for a new passport, which he was in the process of doing at the time of writing. Ministry officials have since inferred to Sugimoto that he likely will be given a new passport, though he says they wouldn't give him a definite answer.

By coincidence, on the same day as Sugimoto's FCCJ press conference, in Britain the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) received Royal Assent, allowing authori-

duce valuable results, and sometimes not, pointed out Lloyd Parry. "Often the difference between wisdom and foolishness, success and failure, is very hard to judge and measure, even with hindsight. If Kenji Goto had somehow come out alive with a story about Isis, he would have been regarded very differently," he said. "No one – certainly no government – is entitled to make that judgment on journalists' behalf."

Lloyd Parry believes that no British leader would dare try anything like the confiscation of Sugimoto's passport. "It would bring a storm of anger and denunciation which no government would wish to provoke," he said.

Some of the public's reaction in Japan to the murders of Kenji Goto and his friend Haruna Yukawa has been less than sympathetic, while Sugimoto has faced criticism for wanting to travel against the advice of the government. Lloyd Parry pointed out the very different reaction to the exploits of extreme skier and mountaineer Yuichiro Miura, who is lauded despite engaging in high-risk activities that endanger his teams and potentially, rescuers.

"Such rescue efforts are immensely expensive. Mr. Miura has no serious scientific purpose – it is just for glory," he said. "And yet when he plans such undertakings, he is cheered, and when he comes home they pin medals on his chest."

If the U.S. government were to confiscate passports of its journalists, the reaction would be far more vocal than it has been in Japan, believes Martin Fackler of the *New York Times*.

"It would also be ineffective, as so many foreign correspondents for U.S. media are non-U.S. citizens," he said.

"I know plenty of journalists who have gone to places like Cuba and North Korea to report, including myself," Fackler said. "We certainly

**"Citizens have the right to travel . . . It's as if there is no Constitution."**

don't hide the fact that we have gone since we use the date-line in our stories. It never occurred to me that the government might try to stop me by confiscating a passport.

"And given that the U.S. has already declared that it won't pay ransom for citizens who are kidnapped, it has essentially washed itself of responsibility for us if something happens. Maybe that makes it unnecessary to grab passports. The government can just say it was our fault for being there," said Fackler.

Despite receiving some anonymous phone calls from people accusing him of being a traitor, Sugimoto said local people have been overwhelmingly supportive, some even stopping him on the streets of Niigata to have their picture taken with him.

The Japanese media, however, has been muted in its response. NHK Niigata made a 30-minute program about Sugimoto that was due for broadcast on February 13. That didn't happen. "Being a public broadcaster, NHK has delayed showing the program as they would get complaints about it," said Sugimoto.

While the media companies that Sugimoto worked for over the years have reported on his case, none have come out in open support of him. But Sugimoto says that some of them have recently bought video footage and still photographs that he shot previously in Syria and Turkey.

"I don't know whether you'd call it support, but it's better than not having any money," said Sugimoto. ●

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



# Suvendrini Kakuchi

by MONZURUL HUQ

Journalism in South Asia has always been a risky profession. Most of the countries of the region have gone through periodic phases of strict media control, a situation that takes away much of the charm from an enjoyable profession. Intimidation from powerful groups with strong political connections has always been a part of life. The result was that – for many – journalism was not a preferred career choice, especially two or three decades ago. Of course there were exceptions, and Suvendrini Kakuchi, known to Club members and friends as “Drini,” is one.

Drini was born in Sri Lanka to a mixed Tamil-Sinhala family

One of her first assignments was to help cover the visit of an American naval vessel anchored in Colombo. Focusing on defense-related issues eventually broadened her interests, as she learned about the suffering of women and children in conflict situations. It was a time when the ethnic division in Sri Lanka was widening, dragging the country eventually into a long civil war.

Covering the many issues at such an intense time period taught her to practice a kind of journalism that was completely new not only for her, but also for many of her colleagues in the profession. Her days at the *Ceylon Observer* gave her the

## For women who ventured into the world of journalism, the assignment was to the lifestyle pages . . . she refused, saying that she intended to write on politics

with a deep history in the legal profession, and a number of famous lawyers in her extended family lineage. As Drini was sent to study law at the university, it was taken for granted that she, too, would end up being a lawyer. But she had another desire that she kept to herself.

“I wanted to be a journalist, so I escaped,” says Drini. “I decided to take time off and go to Japan for higher studies.” Japan at the time was already gaining media attention throughout the world for its rapid economic progress and also for the generous assistance Tokyo was extending to the developing world. She thought that knowledge of Japan would provide her with a better chance of finding a job in the media. And on return, she found a position as an apprentice reporter for the *Ceylon Observer*, the oldest surviving English-language daily in South Asia.

It was a time when newspaper reporting was the exclusive domain of chain-smoking men working in smoky newsrooms over the non-stop clacking of manual typewriter keys. For women who ventured into the world of journalism in those days, the preferred assignment was to the lifestyle pages, focusing on fashion, celebrities and new trends. But when Drini was asked by the editor to follow the traditional path she refused, saying that she intended to write on politics, the economy and other mainstream issues.

Her wish was reluctantly granted and she was given access to the newsroom. But in the exclusive male-dominated surroundings, Drini’s appearance was something that many of her senior colleagues thought would be a brief one. She was not taken seriously, including by the editor who assigned her, along with a senior reporter, to cover defense-related issues. She believes the editor probably wanted to show the young female aspirant the rough and tough world of journalism – and to test her resolve.

But Drini enjoyed the work of assisting the senior journalist, the first crack in opening the door to the unknown world of her dreams.



confidence and the early experience that serves her well now. “I was there for four-and-a-half years,” she says. “Towards the end I covered parliamentary debates on the Sri Lankan conflict and was able to develop various political contacts, which is essential in our profession. It was really a good foundation and it formed my ideas about journalism.”

The civil war was intensifying when she received an invitation to a media fellowship in Japan. After completing the program, she was accepted as a staff writer for the *Japan Times*. She later joined Kyodo News, where she covered various issues including Japanese politics. She considers her time in the

English-language Japanese media as a period of great experience that helped her formulate the ideas of what she intended to do in journalism in days ahead. She left the profession for a while to give birth to her second child, but returned to journalism as the Japan correspondent for Inter Press Service (IPS), a specialized news organization focusing on development issues and developing countries. During her stay at IPS, she received a Neiman Fellowship at Harvard University, in which she specialized in ethnicity.

Her long association with development issues led her to return to Sri Lanka in 2007, where she worked for the next three years for

Panos – a UK-based media training organization – training young journalists there and in Bangladesh. She returned to Japan in 2010, resuming her work as IPS correspondent. Her long career with IPS came to an end recently as she joined University World News.

After a career spanning three decades in Sri Lanka and Japan, Drini intends to put her valuable expertise to work for the benefit of both the countries. She sums up her next steps: “I have an assignment to write a book about diversity in Japan. And, with the war now over in Sri Lanka, my dream is to become a bridge between Japan and South Asia, bringing

good things about Asia to Japan and telling people back at home about the good things that are happening in Japan.”

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







The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand

## Surviving the winds of wars in southeast Asia

by DOMINIC FAULDER

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand's informal origins date from the mid-1950s, when a group of correspondents and media types gathered at Mizu's Kitchen on Patpong Road. There were airlines, trading companies, restaurants and other businesses in the vicinity then, a far cry from today's moth-eaten nightlife haunts. Mizu's, however, survives to this day, its tablecloths stiffened by the sizzling juices of countless Sarika steaks.

The history of the Club is the sum of its members – a long list of characters who have played fascinating parts, large and small, in the reporting of Southeast Asia. The FCCT's principal founder, Jorge Orgibet, had rolled up in Thailand with the U.S. Office of War Information at the end of World War II and set up the U.S. Information Service office. A journeyman journalist and public relations man who in 1953 served as the first bureau chief for AP, Orgibet never left. He expired at the Bangkok Nursing Home in 1986.

Alex Wu, a Chinese-language editor with USIS, and Prasong Wittaya of United Press, who served several terms as the Club's president, also played key roles.

There was Alexander MacDonald, the station chief after the war of the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA. MacDonald founded the *Bangkok Post* in 1946, but was chased out of Thailand by 1955 before the FCCT really got going. Darrel Berrigan, the founder of a competing English-language newspaper in the late 1950s, the *Bangkok World*, played a bigger role. Berrigan also had a wartime intelligence background and was well connected in influential Thai circles, having worked with the Free Thai movement, Thailand's wartime anti-Japanese *maquis*. Berrigan filed for U.S. papers, including *The New York Times*, and was president in 1957. He was murdered in October, 1965, apparently the victim of a homosexual tryst that went wrong.

The Oriental, a historic riverside hotel, was a place that everybody passed through – Somerset Maugham, Eleanor Roosevelt, Gore Vidal, Jackie Kennedy, James Michener, Grace Kelly, Peter Ustinov, and half the world's royalty. In the 1970s, it also provided the FCCT with its most glamorous setting, and its location helped make it part of the city's expatriate hub.

In their polyester safari suits, the mostly undistinguished correspondents of the day basked in the hotel's reflected glory. After all, except for the occasional half-baked military coup or unexplained killing, including that of King Ananda Mahidol in 1946, Thailand itself seldom amounted to much of a story.

On one celebrated occasion in 1971, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman was addressing the Club when a call came through informing him that Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, the prime minister, had just staged a coup against his own government. Thanat announced the putsch and continued urbanely, unaware that his was one of the guillotined cabinet heads.

Bangkok remained a media backwater throughout the growing U.S. military presence from the late 1950s and into the core Vietnam War years; Hong Kong played a much bigger supporting role for international media operating in Indochina. This all changed, however, in mid-1975 – when Phnom Penh, Saigon and Vientiane fell to communist forces in quick succession. Many evacuated bureaus were transplanted to Bangkok, which became the watchtower for Indochina and closeted Burma, playing much the same role as Hong Kong did for China-watchers after the communist takeover in 1949.

Ironically, it was the end of the Vietnam War that really filled the Club with war correspondents, giving it a new edge and confirming it as the largest press club in Southeast Asia, which it remains. After the Khmer Rouge wiped out his Phnom Penh bureau, Denis Gray began the longest stint ever as an AP bureau chief in Bangkok, running well over 30 years. Gray, who now lives in northern Thailand's Chiang Mai, served as Club president on a three occasions and, as all presidents do, doubled his day job with no added pay.

The legendary Australian cameraman Neil Davis was one of the great Indochina correspondents to take up residence in Bangkok, and was president in 1981. Immensely popular and widely respected, Davis and his soundman, American Bill Latch, were killed by wild gunfire from tanks during an attempted coup in September 1985.

No one was ever charged in their killings, and there was

NICK NOSTITZ

### Making news

Then education minister Chaturon Chaisaeng at the FCCT.

international outrage that something so minor should have claimed their lives. The Club was split as never before – or since – over how to respond to the tragedy, the 30th anniversary of which will be marked later this year.

Surviving friends of Davis and Latch include Indochina veterans Derek Williams of AsiaWorks and formerly CBS, and James Pringle, formerly with Reuters and *Newsweek*. Another close friend, John McBeth of the old *Far Eastern Economic Review* visits the Club whenever he is in town from Bali, where he retired with his wife Yuli Ismartono of Jakarta's *Tempo* and another old FCCT president.

### The Itinerant Club is on the Road Again

After *The Oriental*, the FCCT sought a roof of its own, moving through a succession of premises, mostly hotels, that all had drawbacks. In 1981, the Club was located in *The Oriental Plaza*, a charming Thai “colonial” building resting on traditional solid teak piles. It was near *The Oriental* and the Chao Phraya river once more – but this time without a view. Located far from any news bureaus, the Club was on the wrong side of Bangkok's diabolical traffic, and attendance suffered.

In 1984, the FCCT relocated to an eyrie atop *The Dusit Thani*, one of Bangkok's leading hotels, with a breathtaking city view across Lumpini Park. Unfortunately, many correspondents were loath to traipse through a five-star hotel lobby to reach the Club, particularly with so many other more diverting watering holes available.

During the giddy, greedy 1990s, the hotel's management imagined it could use the clubhouse, a firetrap with access only by a single wooden staircase, more lucratively as a function room. The Club balked at paying higher rates and moved out. If the old clubhouse, which had hosted Robin Williams, Khieu Samphan, William Golding and the Dalai Lama, is haunted by any of the great personalities who visited, only the janitors of the storeroom it has become would know.

In 1995, the Club moved for a while down to the bottom of Silom Road, the supposed Wall Street of Bangkok, to the Jewelry Trade Center, which developers hoped to establish as a media building. This did not happen, and once again the location near the river dented patronage badly.

### Staying Relevant while Treading Carefully

In 1997, the Thai economy crashed and over 50 financial companies were put out of business permanently by fierce IMF rescue strictures. With the country in hock, rents in prime locations also crashed. The Maneeya Center near the Rajaprasong Intersection, home to the famous Erawan Shrine and the longest traffic light in the world, suddenly found itself with acres of empty floorspace.

The FCCT moved into a penthouse floor with access from a corridor already filling up with foreign media offices. The Maneeya today houses AsiaWorks, the BBC, ABC, ITN Channel 4, NBC, InFocus, Al Jazeera and the *Financial Times*, among others. This guarantees the FCCT constant journalist traffic, imbuing it with the feel of a genuine press club. It has a good bar and decent enough kitchen but makes no pretensions to emulating the grandeur of its counterparts in Hong Kong or Tokyo – nor the fakeness of the “FCC” in Cambodia, a bar and restaurant with one of the best views in Asia but no hacks.

The FCCT's membership hovers around the 800 mark, about a tenth of who are correspondents, an endangered species these days. Apart from those working for wire services, the number of fully employed and decently remunerated

correspondents can be counted on two hands. But Thailand also has a large journalist community composed of freelancers and others working for local media organizations. When combined, the professional component of the Club's membership is almost one-fourth – probably higher than in most press clubs. But it has been declining. Between 2007 and 2011, the combined total fell most dramatically from 233 to 184, though it has leveled out; the Club's overall membership actually rose in 2014.

The Club supports an annual photo contest, has photo-journalism exhibitions each month and runs a number of regional media education funds. It continues to support the publication and distribution of highly regarded journalism manuals in the regional vernaculars. It is heavily used for book launches and press conferences. Monday nights are film nights when the FCCT shows mostly foreign films that would not normally find a screen in Bangkok. Organized by Indian journalist Lekha Shankar, the evenings are particularly popular in the diplomatic community, and often double as embassy nights.

The FCCT has welcomed most Thai prime ministers since the late 1970s to give high-profile keynote addresses. The Club's flagship event, however, has long been its Wednesday night programs when panelists set forth on issues of topical interest. As anyone who was watched Bangkok's parliament in session will know, debating seldom amounts to much, and this shortcoming has contributed to the exceptionally vicious and polarized national politics seen over the past decade.

So the FCCT has always had a useful role to play as a forum. Sadly, with street politics at times literally right on its doorstep, it has in recent years sometimes been hard to guarantee the safety of speakers. The Club is routinely accused of being red by those on the yellow side, and yellow by those on the red side, so it must be doing something right.

The FCCT regularly speaks out on press and freedom of speech issues. This can make life uncomfortable under a prickly regime in a culture unable to differentiate critique from criticism. Indeed, Thailand has been marching backwards through all the freedom indexes lately. The Club has done what it can to help correspondents and journalists who fall foul of Thailand's defamation laws, but a number have nevertheless been forced out of the country. The oppressive local legal restraints include the infamous law of *lèse-majesté*. It is intended to protect the monarchy from hurt, but survives in a uniquely extreme form that perversely has done much damage to the institution.

*Lèse-majesté*, defamation and libel continue to be punished as criminal offences. In 2009, a vexatious complaint of *lèse-majesté* was lodged against the entire 13-member board at a local police station, but went nowhere. The FCCT's current president, BBC correspondent Jonathan Head, has in the past been the target of *lèse-majesté* complaints, though thousands of such complaints have been made against ordinary Thais with much more serious consequences.

Soon after the May 22 coup last year, ousted education minister Chaturon Chaisaeng requested a press conference at the FCCT to surrender himself to military authorities. He was arrested by helmeted soldiers in a media blaze soon after concluding his talk. Three weeks later, deputy army spokesman Colonel Weerachon Sukhondhapatipak was sitting in the exact same place explaining the military's perspective.

The FCCT wouldn't have it any other way. ●

Author, editor and journalist **Dominic Faulder** was a special correspondent with *Asiaweek* until its closure after 9/11, and was FCCT president in 1990 and 1991.



Two decades after a religious cult released sarin in the Tokyo subway, one of the victims is still searching for answers.



## Remembering the subway horror

by JULIAN RYALL

TWENTY YEARS IS A long time. But to documentary filmmaker Atsushi Sakahara, the morning commute he took on March 20, 1995, will stay with him forever.

"I remember getting in the third door from the front of the first carriage after the train pulled in at Roppongi Station," Sakahara told a press conference at the FCCJ on the eve of the 20th anniversary. "I was holding a newspaper and I saw a free seat and I moved towards it, but I saw a folded newspaper on the floor leaking a clear liquid. I nearly stepped on it. I sensed concern in the other passengers and I turned around and went the other way down the carriage."

Not sitting down probably saved Sakahara's life. "I remember very clearly that I was reading an article about the arrest the evening before of a senior member of the Aum Shinrikyo cult when my eyes began to feel strange," he said. "I could not focus."

Unable to shake his sense of unease, 48-year-old Sakahara opened the connecting door to the next carriage and stepped through. A couple of people followed him, including a pregnant woman. "I heard someone behind me say a man in the other carriage had lost consciousness and I looked through the window at him," he said. "As we came into Kamiyacho Station, some of the passengers carried him and another man off the train. I

heard that one of them later died."

As it has done every year since the attack, Japan marked the anniversary of the day on which domestic terrorists in the guise of a religious group launched a series of coordinated attacks that shook the nation's sense of security.

Thirteen commuters and station workers died after members of the cult calmly pierced sachets of sarin gas with the sharpened tips of umbrellas. A further 6,000 people required hospital treatment for the effects of the gas, devised by the Nazis during World War II.

The attacks were, however, the final throes of an organization that had for more than two decades been convincing the young and the gullible that its leader, the half-blind former yoga instructor Shoko Asahara, was a reincarnated god.

It wasn't their first criminal act. Asahara's followers had previously abducted and murdered a lawyer fighting the cult through the courts, along with his wife and their infant son. And they had plans for more: the cult had purchased assault rifles and a Russian helicopter and was allegedly attempting to obtain the components for a nuclear weapon, while its chemists began manufacturing sarin and VX gas in 1993.

Eight people died in an attack in June 1994 targeted at the judges hearing a case against Aum in the city of Matsumoto. When the cult realized in early 1995 that a raid on its headquarters was imminent, it went on the offensive. The subway sarin attack was reportedly designed to destabilize

the government and cause sufficient chaos to enable Asahara to seize power.

Survivors reacted in different ways, says Sakahara. He resigned from his job at an advertising agency and moved to the U.S., where he completed an MA and produced a documentary, titled "Bean Cake," that won a Palm d'Or at Cannes in 2001.

But he was unable to escape his past even after moving halfway across the world. He met a Japanese woman and planned marriage upon their return to Japan. Just days before the ceremony, she revealed that she had been a member of Aum Shinrikyo whilst at university. The marriage went ahead, but they were divorced within 18 months.

Today, he is close to completing a new documentary movie that focuses on Hiroshi Araki, the head of public relations for Aleph, a splinter group that emerged after the cult was aggressively targeted by the authorities but still swears allegiance to Asahara. Sakahara has been given rare access to the interior of one of the facilities still used by followers of Aleph.

A brief clip from the film, titled *A Picture*, showed members of the cult sitting on tatami mats and praying before an image of Asahara - who is on death row along with 11 other members of Aum after being convicted of a raft of crimes. Sakahara says he is motivated by the desire to foster understanding of the victims of Aum's attacks, who he believes have been marginalized and forgotten by a society that prefers not to think of the events of 20 years ago.

Equally, he believes followers of the cult that carried out the attack were victims. "Who listens to them," he said, "carefully and without prejudice? How much do people really know about what happened?"

Members who cling to Aleph are "weak humans," he added with a shrug. "They are in a kind of loop where they think or pretend that they are doing something good. That is why I embarked on this endeavor, this documentary."

"People ask me if I am some sort of fan of Aum and my response is 'of course not,'" he said. "My message is that I want to believe in fellow humans. Even if people kill each other in the name of religion, in the name of a country or a race, I still want to believe in the goodness of humans." ●

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

### FCCJ EXHIBITION

## Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts: Selection from the Young Portfolio Acquisitions



Above, Mariko Sakaguchi, *One Hundred Views of Bathing* (2010)

Left, Ryo Kameyama, *Katanga Province in the Congo: The Aftermath of War Surrender, Mai Mai local militia* (2006)

Below, Takuma Imamura, *From Rikuzentakata: Yuki Araki (10) who wants to become a professional baseball player or run a bar* (2012)

KIYOSATO MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS (K'MoPA) opened in Yamanashi Prefecture in 1995 and has since focused much of its activity on its project, "Photographs by the Next Generation: Young Portfolio."

This is a cultural program aimed at helping the youth of the world through photography, to present young people with a challenge, to pass on the fundamentals of photography itself and to open up a future for young people and photography.

The Museum invites young people (up to the age of 35) to submit works. It acquires and exhibits the best - presenting young people's talent and true worth to the world.

Over the last 20 years, it has received a total of 112,259 works by 9,466 people from 74 countries, with 5,460 works acquired for the collection. This FCCJ exhibition consists of photos from some of the Japanese photographers among the selected.

All the works acquired can be viewed on the Museum's website: [www.kmopa.com](http://www.kmopa.com). ●

*Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts is supported by a grant from the Shinnyo-en Foundation.*





HEARD AT THE CLUB

*“I plan on doing this as long as people continue to enjoy what I’m doing. When things settle down, I’ll probably end up entertaining kids in Funabashi kindergartens or nursery schools. Pusha!!!”*

*Funabashi city’s unofficial superstar mascot character Funassyi on his future in show business  
March 5 at the FCCJ*

REMEMBERING ROBERT



British journalist Robert Whyman, who died tragically in the Asian tsunami of 2004, was a Tokyo correspondent of the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times*, and author of an acclaimed biography of Soviet master spy Richard Sorge. Each year a dinner is held in London in his memory. This year’s brought together four Tokyo colleagues of Whyman – Bill Emmott and Hugh Sandeman (both ex-Tokyo correspondents of the *Economist*), William Horsley (ex-BBC) and Peter McGill (ex-the *Observer*) – as well as *Mainichi Shimbun* European bureau chief Takayasu Ogura, Japan fund manager and writer Peter Tasker, author Justin Wintle, and head of the Commonwealth Journalists Association Rita Payne. Clockwise from left are Wintle, Sandeman, Ogura, McGill, Horsley, Tasker, Emmott and Payne.

– Peter McGill

JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE . . .



. . . for two documentary screenings with Q&A sessions in April: On Tues., April 14, we sneak preview *Walking with My Mother*, a searing exploration of family, loss and finding hope. One of the most talked-about films at the 2014 Tokyo International Film Festival, it offers an unflinching portrait of 78-year-old Suchie Sakaguchi, as she tries to cope with the loss of her daughter and the fast-dwindling health of her husband. An undeniably disturbing film shot by Suchie’s director son over a four-year period, it amply earns its happy ending.

On Wed., April 22, we are hosting a special screening of the sumptuously photographed documentary *KanZeOn*, coinciding with the April launch of the Japan Sound Portrait, a project to create a crowd-sourced “sound map” of Japan to share with the world as the Tokyo 2020 Olympics approach. The UK-Japan film envelops viewers in the sights and sounds of Japan, moving evocatively from forest to temple to mountaintop, celebrating the deep resonance of sound within Japanese cultural identity – its songs, stories, rituals, performances, faiths and traditions – and exploring the mysterious bonds between the ancient and modern, between the spiritual and sensory.

– Karen Severns



REGULAR MEMBERS

**ERICH BONNERT** is a freelance business and technology journalist from Germany. After several years in editorial positions at a computer magazine in Stuttgart, he became a freelance reporter in 1996 and moved to the U.S. He reported from Silicon Valley as a correspondent and columnist for the German business weekly *Wirtschaftswoche* until 2002. He continued to write for tech and business publications such as *Heise* in Germany, *Cash* in Switzerland and *Monitor* in Austria. Erich has been working in Japan since 2014. His work has appeared in *Technology Review* and *VDI Nachrichten*, among others. He lives in Tokyo with his wife and daughter.

**TSURUO MOCHIZUKI** has been the deputy managing director of NHK World since June 2014. After entering NHK in April 1983, he has held posts as a business and economic news correspondent, a Washington-based economic correspondent, and bureau chief of NHK’s Seoul office from May 2000. He became the international news editor in Tokyo in 2004. He was head of the general bureau for Asia, based in Bangkok, and the head of the general bureau for America, based in New York, prior to his present posting.

**GAKU SHIBATA** is an international news editor at the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. He joined the paper after graduating with an economics degree from Keio University in 1987, and worked as a staff writer for political news, as a correspondent based in Okinawa and Washington, and as an editorial writer. He was the Washington bureau chief and general American bureau chief from 2011 to 2013.

PROFESSIONAL/JOURNALIST

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**Kosei Kobayashi**, *Sekai Bunka Publishing, Inc.*  
**Kaoru Nagai**, *ALC Press Inc.*  
**Kota Otani**, *LINE Corporation*

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**Kamal Attanayaka**, *M.K. Trading Company*  
**Warren A. Stanislaus**, *Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation*

**Hiroshi Kimura**, *L&J Law Office*  
**Shigeru Makino**, *Fairness Law Office*  
**Akio Matsubara**, *Toyoda Gosei Co., Ltd.*  
**Hajime Takatsuji**, *Yamadaya Manjyu*

REINSTATEMENT (ASSOCIATE)

**David G. Fisher**  
**Rike Wootten**, *Gotairku Partners*  
**Yaeko Sagawa**, *Sakura Golf Co., Ltd.*



Sayonara, Bulle:

**Kriminalroman**  
**Carsten Germis**  
*Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag*  
Gift from Carsten Germis

Mezameyo! Nippon:

**Rengokoku sensho shikan no jubaku kara no dakkyaku**  
**Henry S. Stokes; Takahiko Ueda; Hiroyuki Fujita (ed. and trans.)**  
*Nisshin Hodo*  
Gift from Hiroyuki Fujita

Chugoku kyosanto:

**Shihaishatachi no himitsu no sekai**  
**Richard McGregor; Masayo Kotani (trans.)**  
*Soshisha*  
Gift from Richard McGregor

The Republic of China

**yearbook 2014**  
**Department of Information Services, Executive Yuan (comp.)**  
*The Executive Yuan*  
Gift from The Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (Japan)

Quiet Deterrence: Building

**Japan’s New National Security Strategy**  
**Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation**  
*Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation*  
Gift from Koichi Ishiyama

Samurai Revolution: The

**Dawn of Modern Japan Seen Through the Eyes of the Shogun’s Last Samurai**  
**Romulus Hillsborough**  
*Tuttle Publishing*

Tobi: joku suhyakumetoru o

**kakeru shokunin no himitsu**  
**Hiroaki Tago**  
*Sosensha*

Minshuto seiken shippai no

**kensho: Nihon seiji wa nani o ikasu ka**  
**Nihon Saiken Initiative**  
*Chuo Koron Shinsha*

The Book of Yokai

**Michael Dylan Foster**  
*University of California Press*

**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.

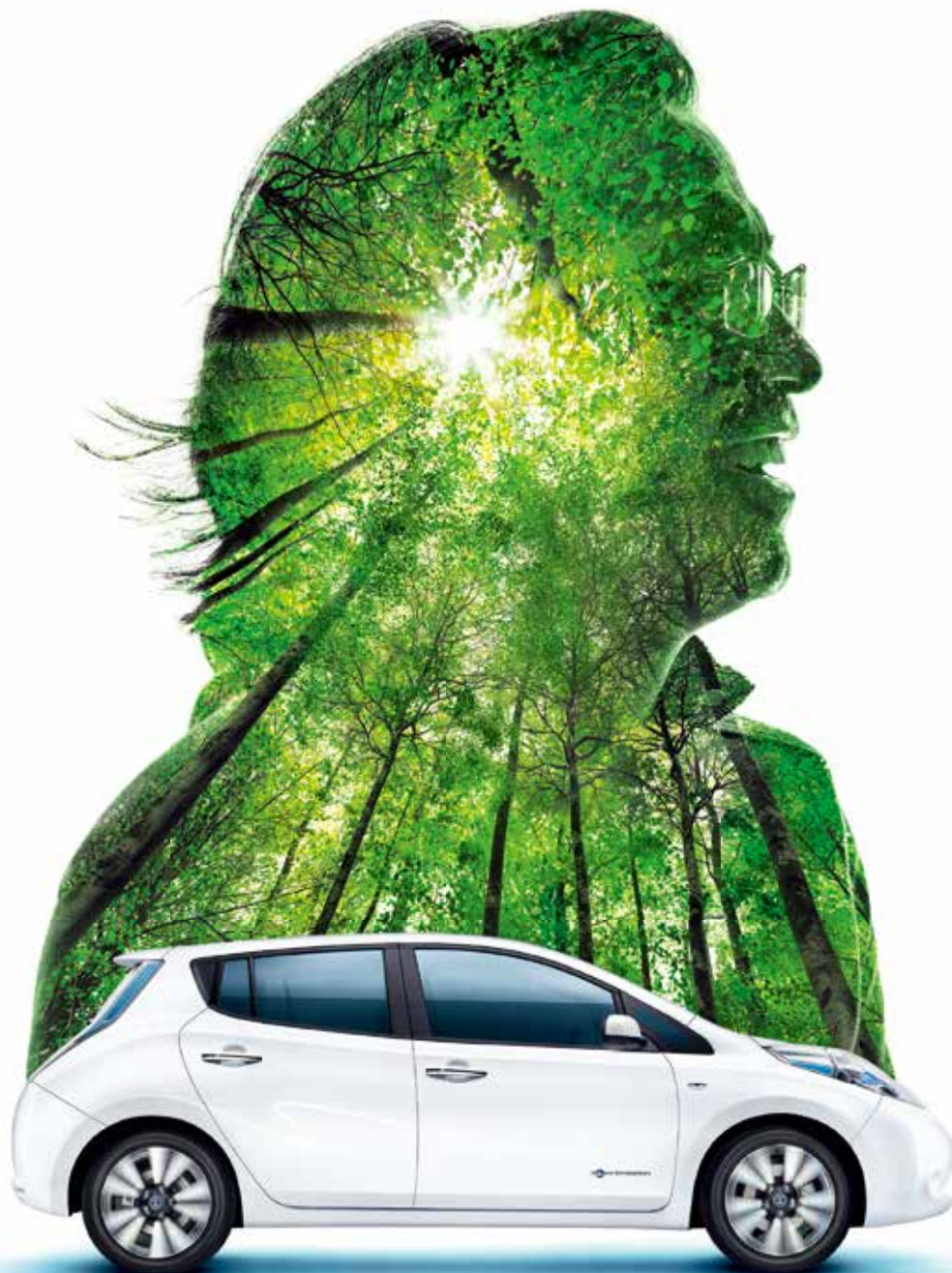
For those already in on the secret, the application form is available on the FCCJ website or from the 19F Club office.





Innovation  
that excites

# WHAT IF YOU COULD ELECTRIFY YOUR DRIVE? NISSAN LEAF



**"I WANT TO SUSTAIN BOTH  
NATURE AND MY JOY OF DRIVING."**

Wasei H, Japan, LEAF Owner