

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

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THE SILENT SCREAM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
LIU XIA, WIFE OF
IMPRISONED
NOBEL PEACE
PRIZE WINNER,
LIU XIAOBO



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Constitutional reform: journalism in danger?
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January 2013



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Heard at the Club

“Our strategy is to involve as many women as we can to create an unprecedented solidarity.”



Kyoko Takada,
Intellectual property expert and member
of the All Japan Obachan Party,
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President's message



AT THE APRIL 9 MEETING OF THE FCCJ BOARD, MATERIALS in support of the Club's application for Koeki Shadan Hojin (public-interest non-profit corporation) status will be presented. Presuming Board approval, we will then formally apply to the Cabinet Office for this status. If all goes well, we will reincorporate as a "public-interest incorporated association" on April 1, 2014.

Under new legislation governing non-profit organizations, the FCCJ has until Nov. 30 to apply for either *ippan* (general) or *koeki* (public-interest) status. To qualify for *koeki*, we must demonstrate that more than 50 percent of Club expenditures go toward activities in the public interest. Three years ago, we believed it was impossible to clear this hurdle as the vast majority of our spending was on food & beverage (F&B) operations. So the initial plan was to seek *ippan* status and consider upgrading later.

After much discussion, though, a different consensus emerged among members of the Board and the committee tasked with the matter. If the Japan National Press Club (our domestic counterpart) has *koeki* status, the FCCJ should have no less. For the long-term sustainability of the Club's core journalistic mission, it is imperative to secure legal recognition that our activities are not simply in the interest of foreign news organizations, they are directly in the public interest. Particularly because we are a "foreign" club, it is important to be recognized as a pillar of Japan's civil society.

The need to align FCCJ operations with *koeki* requirements steered our resolve to tackle the other long-term threat to the Club's future: chronic mismanagement and losses in F&B. Effectively, this meant we had to move two mountains. This has required years of intense effort carefully divided between two groups, the original Shadan Hojin Panel under co-chairs Kaz Abiko and Yoshisuke Iinuma, and the Koeki Committee led by Yoshio Murakami.

The Shadan Hojin Panel has overseen the work of revising our Articles of Association, bylaws, management and budgeting procedures, etc. in order to comply with the new legislation. Essentially, the tasks involved would have been the same for *koeki* or *ippan* status.

Working in close liaison, the Koeki Committee was responsible for realigning Club operations to meet *koeki* status requirements. This involved overseeing F&B outsourcing and related labor issues; liaising with the government to make sure we could clear the hurdle; and securing approval from the Membership through a series of general meetings and the referendum completed in December.

Movement of the first mountain was completed last September with the outsourcing of F&B. Not only has this ended years of red ink, it has paved the way to applying for *koeki* status. The approval of revised Articles with a super-majority in the referendum essentially moved the second mountain in December. Approving and submitting the application represents the final step.

All of this has been a truly colossal task, and all of us owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those who have served on the two groups.

On the Shadan Hojin Panel: Kazuo Abiko, Yoshisuke Iinuma, Jonathan Soble, Tadanori Sano, Masanori Sasaki (consultant). On the closely related Bylaw Revision Committee: Bob Neff, Monzurul Huq, Joan Anderson and Kurt Sieber.

On the Koeki Committee: Yoshio Murakami (chair), Masaaki Fukunaga, Kunio Hamada (former Supreme Court judge), Suvendrini Kakuchi, Shuichi Sasaki (an accountant with deep relevant experience), Jonathan Soble and Rike Wootten, plus "extended members" Kazutoshi Kakuyama (our lawyer) and Larry Cisar. Last but certainly not least, thanks to Messrs. Nakamura, Ogawa, Hirado and Iwamura of the FCCJ staff.

The devoted efforts of all these people represent a historic contribution to the long-term health of the FCCJ.

– Georges Baumgartner



Ichiro Fujisaki, the former Japanese ambassador to the United States spoke at a professional luncheon on March 13. Fujisaki held the post for four years, before returning to Japan, where he is now professor and chairman of Sophia University's International Strategies Dept.

Join the Movie Committee . . .



... at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 24, for Junichi Inoue's *A Woman and War (Senso to Hitori no Onna)*, with a Q&A featuring the director and his two stars, Masatoshi Nagase and Noriko Eguchi. This extraordinary first feature by Inoue, a longtime Koji Wakamatsu colleague, is based on the 1946 novella by Ango Sakaguchi. The film tackles the irrationality and eroticism of war without a false moment, focusing on the intertwined lives of a novelist without hope, a former prostitute without feeling and a wounded soldier haunted by the sins he committed in China. Terming it "politically and sexually risqué," critic Tom Mes says, "This independently produced scorcher hits the screen like a bomb blast of fresh, honest air. . . . Wakamatsu's fighting spirit lives on despite his recent untimely passing." The director was inspired to tackle the story because "The Japanese people are particularly forgetful. That forgetfulness allows them to ignore inconvenient historical facts and their WWII crimes. Surely, such forgetfulness has led to Japan's shaky relations in Asia now."

– Karen Severns

(Japan, 2012; 98 min.; in Japanese with English subtitles. Warning: Adult content and violence. Courtesy of Dog Sugar.)



Steve McClure enters the online world of otaku, where he considers raising an army of his own children

DESPITE WHAT SOME people say, there'll always be a market for stories about quirky and wacky stuff in Japan.

One reason is the quasi-racist Orientalism that sees Japan as an exotic playground populated by odd and occasionally endearing people who are always good for a laugh (except for when they lose their sense of place and do sneaky things like attacking Pearl Harbor).

But you can't deny that Japan comes out with some pretty weird shit. Ample proof of that is afforded by the many English-language otaku blogs and websites that populate cyberia. There's no sense of sneering superciliousness here – just nerdy enthusiasm for cool and (often) offbeat products and services.

The highly informative and frequently updated *Akihabara News* website, for example, recently shared the earth-shattering news that a battery-operated "mop ball" is now on the market – at last! The mop ball rolls around by itself on the floor, picking up dust along the way. It's apparently a big hit with cats and dogs. But, as one poster to the site notes, "guess it will have some problems with them corners."

The video-game industry can always be relied on to score high on the weird-o-meter. An excellent online source of up-to-date info on Japanese game news is *Japanator*, which bills itself as "the otaku's companion." Romantically challenged otaku will presumably welcome a *Japanator* news item noting that this summer will see the release of a sequel to the role-playing video game "Conception: Please Give Birth to my Child!" In the original game, "you [the main character] went around romancing the female characters in the hopes that they'd have your children. These children then become a part of your party, fighting in battles alongside you."

To quote Dave Barry, I swear I am not



making this up – in fact I can't conceive of such a game. And was it mere coincidence that when I clicked on the *Japanator* site, there was a banner ad at the top of the page titled "Dating, Love and Marriage – Date Japanese Ladies?" Do these poor unsuspecting females

know that otaku who are fantasizing about spreading their seed to create their own kiddie army want to date them?

One of the best otaku websites is the truly outstanding *Culture Japan* site. It's a well-designed, well-written and newsy one-stop source of info on all things otaku. *Culture Japan* is put together by Tokyo resident Danny Choo, who "runs a media production company called Mirai Inc who's [sic] main focus is to share Japanese culture with the world through web, TV, mobile, print, products and conferences." The company even has a flagship mascot anime character, Mirai Suenaga, a high-school girl with a de rigueur gravity-defying bustline.

Otakudom's underlying Lolita fixation rises to the fore on the vaguely creepy *Random Fantasy* blog, which has a soft-porn section for the poor geeks unable to find true love through that "Dating, Love and Marriage" ad.

The list of otaku websites and blogs is endless. It includes hardcore, deeply obsessive blogs like the wonderfully named *Organization Anti-Social Geniuses* and the serious-but-fun *Manga Therapy* ("a blog/site that takes a look into the psychological aspects of Japanese manga characters, past and present"), as well as lighter fare such as *Japanese Trademark Database*.

The *Japan Blog Directory* is a good place to begin your exploration of the online otaku world. But be warned: your life may never be the same. ①

Steve McClure publishes the online music-industry newsletter *McClureMusic.com*. He has lived in Tokyo since 1985.



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





FCCJ EXHIBITION

The silent strength of Liu Xia

Liu Xia is best known to the world as the wife of Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, and as the victim of a protracted siege of extra-legal house arrest that has been imposed upon her by the Chinese authorities ever since Liu was named for the prize. Less well known is that she is a major Chinese artistic figure in her own right. Born in Beijing in 1959, Liu Xia developed her talents as an artist and writer. In the relatively liberal 1980s she was an active member of the lively modernist literary and art scene that flourished in Beijing. It was then that she fell in love with the controversial young college professor and public intellectual Liu Xiaobo. Liu Xiaobo moved into Liu Xia's apartment, owned by her one-time employer, the Beijing tax office.

The two are very different in personality. Liu Xia once told a Western journalist, "I am not politically involved. I behave as if I live in a different world. We discuss politics as little as possible at home. My husband knows that it doesn't interest me." Cui Weiping in her essay for exhibition catalogue describes her unwillingness to get involved in the public drama of Tiananmen in 1989. Yet she stood by Liu Xiaobo during his imprisonment after Tiananmen in 1989-91 and again during a period of so-called house arrest which he suffered at an unknown location in Beijing in 1995-1996. When he was committed for a term of labor reeducation in 1996, Liu Xia applied to the camp authorities for permission to marry him.

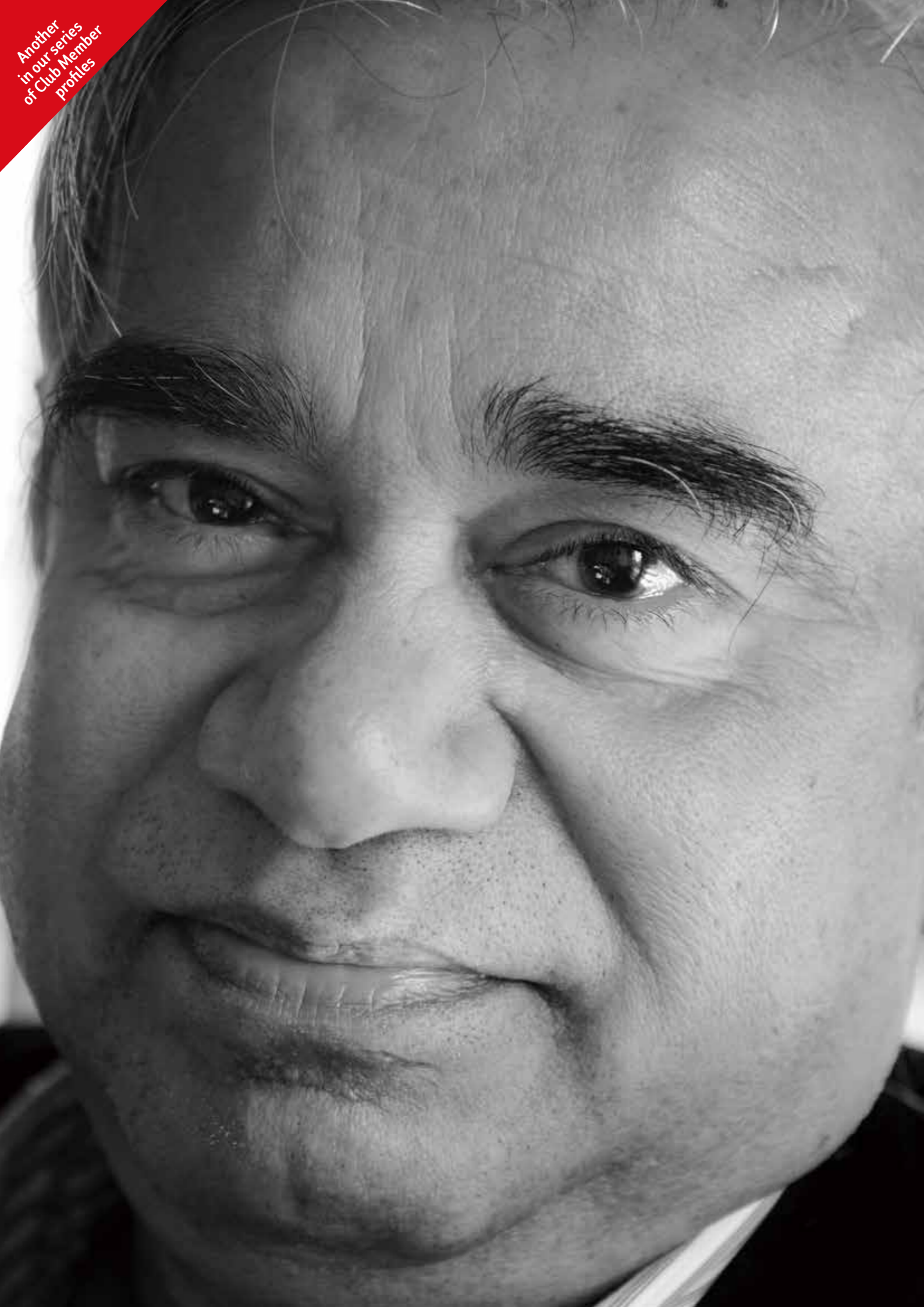
Her association with Liu Xiaobo has cost Liu Xia her right to display and publish her creative work. Her work has been banned in China since 1989, even though she was not a participant in Tiananmen and did not sign Charter '08, the liberal manifesto that triggered Liu Xiaobo's latest and longest prison sentence, an 11-year sentence imposed in December 2009.

Guy Sorman has obtained the remarkable photos in this exhibition, which were created by Liu Xia during the time of Liu Xiaobo's labor reeducation in 1996-1999, and her consent to exhibit them. These strangely disturbing and moving photographs reveal profound truths about today's China, not only in their content and style, but also in the history of their creation, suppression, and now, their exhibition abroad. ❶

— Andrew J. Nathan, Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science, Columbia University.

From the exhibition catalogue





Another in our series of Club Member profiles

Monzurul Huq of *Prothom Alo*

by Gavin Blair

Monzurul Huq was an 18-year-old high school student when he underwent his baptism of fire into journalism: reporting from the frontline of the 1971 war of independence in his native Bangladesh for an independently produced newsletter.

Having caught the media bug, Huq found himself selected in 1972 by the new Bangladeshi government for a place to study what would become his lifetime trade, at Moscow State University. "The Soviet Union was the first country to offer scholarships to the new nation," recalls Huq.

While Soviet-era Russia might not seem like the obvious place to learn the craft of speaking truth to power, Huq main-

writing for a local newspaper. "At the time, journalism in developing countries was not very well rewarded," he says. So he had to supplement his income with other work, including working with the United Nations Information Center in Bangladesh.

However, under the regime that had been installed following a military coup in 1975, Huq says those who had been in Soviet Russia were "regarded with suspicion," and he began to think about working abroad.

In 1990, the BBC offered Huq a full-time position in London, working with their Bengali-language service on its World Service radio network. During his four and a half years there, Huq took an MA in Japa-

was just starting to take off; so they agreed and I came to Japan in 1994."

Four years later, the editor of that newspaper left to start his own publication, *Prothom Alo*, and invited some of the journalists working for him to join the new venture. Huq took what he describes as "a gamble" and remains Tokyo and East Asia correspondent for the paper to this day, as well as a contributor to its English-language sister, the *Daily Star*.

While the late development of the media in Bangladesh was a challenge early in his career, it has proved a boon in recent years as the online revolution has yet to wreak the havoc it has brought to many of the world's newspapers.

'FOR THE ORAL EXAMS . . . IF YOU STARTED OFF WITH SOME LENIN, IT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER WHAT YOU SAID AFTERWARDS, YOU WOULD PASS'

tains that the journalistic skills he acquired on the courses, all conducted in Russian, have stood him in good stead during his career.

"Of course there were some ideological classes as part of the curriculum, which many of the foreigners took very lightly," he says. "For the oral exams, everybody tried to learn some Lenin quotes. If you started off with some Lenin, it didn't really matter what you said afterwards, you would pass."

"But the mechanics of journalism that we learned were the same; it was how you used it afterwards."

Huq completed his degree, went on to take a post-graduate course in journalism and then began a PhD. But Moscow was also where he was to meet his future wife, a Japanese exchange student. It was an encounter that would eventually lead him to Tokyo.

He first traveled to Japan in 1979, via the Trans-Siberian railway and then by ship to Yokohama. On meeting his soon-to-be father-in-law, he was given a stark choice.

"He told me he wasn't giving his daughter away to a student, so I had to start working. It was either the PhD or my wife."

So he left Moscow soon after, and went back to Bangladesh, where he began



nese Studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, a course that includes among its alumni FCCJ stalwart Justin McCurry and former Club vice-president Jonathan Watts.

His wife pushed him to look for work in Japan, and he found the opportunity to work with NHK in Tokyo on its Bengali-language radio broadcasts (something he still does, once a week).

"It wasn't full-time work so I contacted the leading Bangladeshi newspaper at the time to see if I could go to Japan as their correspondent. Journalism in Bangladesh

Gavin Blair began his writing career a decade ago and currently covers Japanese business, society and culture for publications in America, Asia and Europe.

Prothom Alo is now Bangladesh's leading daily with a circulation of over half a million, and still growing, way ahead of its nearest rival, according to Huq. "Internet penetration is only around five percent in Bangladesh, so people still depend on newspapers, and each copy is read by up to ten people. Then there are about a million Bangladeshi expats, many of whom who read the web edition."

Since the mid-nineties Huq has also witnessed change in Japan – some bad, some largely neutral and some good – from the post-bubble economic decline, to the shift in the numbers of foreign correspondents from Europe and the U.S. to Asia, as well as an opening up of Japanese politics and business.

"Compared to when I first came here, more people will talk to you, and more people speak English. It makes the work of journalism easier."

Huq has become the go-to man in Bangladesh for information about Japan, and is often approached by other publications, which see him as an expert on the country, a title he rejects.

"I don't think as journalists we should be thought of as experts; our job is to collect the opinions of experts." ❶



Ports, profit and pornography

by Geoff Tudor,
illustration by Andrew Pothecar

It's a little known fact that the first recorded direct shipment of Japanese goods to England included a collection of erotic pictures, or *shunga*.

Carrying the lascivious library, together with more staid lacquerware, tasteful folding screens and the shogun's gifts for King James I, was the good ship *Clove* of the East India Company, which arrived home in late 1614 after being dispatched to Japan in April 1611.

JAPAN AND BRITAIN MARK
400 YEARS SINCE THEIR FIRST
OFFICIAL CONTACT WITH FESTIVALS,
TEA CEREMONIES... AND SHUNGA

The erotic exports – the personal collection of the *Clove*'s skipper, Captain John Saris – were unfortunately impounded by the outraged governors of the highly respected East India Company, and publicly burned. This historic event in Japan-England relations, however, will be commemorated later this year with a public exhibition of the venerable British Museum's own collection of *shunga*, which has survived intact behind closed doors, waiting for the appropriate moment to go on display. After four centuries, it seems, the time has come.

That exhibition is just a small part of a year-long program of cultural, musical and historical events that is taking place in both countries in 2013, commemorating 400 years of Japan-British relations.

After a more than two-year voyage via the Cape of Good Hope, Madagascar, Yemen, Ceylon and points in Indonesia, the *Clove* arrived at Hirado, Nagasaki Prefecture, on June 11, 1613 – the first English vessel to reach Japan. Aboard the ship was a group of merchants from the East India Company – led by the hot-headed Saris – seeking riches in the fabled Orient, especially Japan.

Their arrival was a pleasant surprise but not entirely unexpected. William Adams, an Englishman who had arrived in Japan in 1600 as the pilot of a Dutch ship and settled here, had sent a series of letters to England and the East India Company, recommending they start trading. Some of his letters, carried by Dutch merchants who had established a trading post in Hirado in 1609, made it to London.

By this time, Adams had become established in Japan as a vassal of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the dynasty that bore his name until the 19th Century. Thanks to

Adams' position in the pro-foreign trade shogun's favor, Saris and his merchants were offered the rights to set up a trading post at Uraga, close to the entrance of Tokyo Bay and the huge and expanding market of Edo, now Tokyo.

To Adams' disgust, Saris rejected the offer, instead deciding that Hirado – with its proximity to China and the silk and silver trade – was a better bet. So a great opportunity was lost.

Who knows what could have been the outcome? Perhaps by now the Japanese might be playing cricket instead of baseball, or eating more roast beef.

The story of William Adams, known in Japan as *Miura Anjin* or the "Pilot of Miura," after the small peninsula south of Tokyo, is very well known in Japan. (It was also the basis of the popular novel and TV Series *Shogun*, by author James Clavell.) Because of his historical significance, the Japanese team organizing the commemoration of the *Clove*'s arrival decided to focus on Adams' role in the Japan-Britain story, so the key events in Japan this year will take place in cities associated with Adams.

The first of these is Usuki, in Oita prefecture, where he landed in Japan in April 1600 on the stricken Dutch ship, *De Liefde*. The other three cities in the Adams connection are: Ito, in Shizuoka, where Adams built ships for the shogun on the seashore; Hirado, where he frequently visited Dutch and English merchants; and Yokosuka, where he had a small estate in the village of Hemi that was awarded to him by the shogun.

Adams also had a house in Edo in a district once called "Anjin-cho," now known as Muromachi, on the other side of the street from Mitsukoshi's flagship store in Nihonbashi.

On April 8, Hemi will hold the William

Helpless in Hirado

AFTER THE *CLOVE*'S HISTORIC 17TH-CENTURY journey, the English opened their shop in Hirado, far from the mighty market of Edo. The group of squabbling English merchants were led by a kindly but ineffectual chief merchant, one Richard Cocks, who managed their commercial affairs with supreme incompetence but his amorous affairs with great enthusiasm. Their attempts to succeed in the Japanese market failed. The trading post eventually went bankrupt and the unhappy band left the country in 1623, so far we know without any *shunga*.

Geoff Tudor writes for *Orient Aviation*, Hong Kong. He is the Assistant Editor of the *Number 1 Shimbun*.

Adams Cherry Blossom party in a grove where a memorial stands to Adams and his Japanese wife. In Hirado, on May 25, there will be an "Adams Summit," with addresses by mayors of the four Japanese cities linked to the Englishman, followed the next day by a solemn memorial tea ceremony before what is thought to be his grave.

This is of special significance, as the tea ceremony will be performed by Akira Matsura, the direct descendant of the *daimyo* who welcomed the English to Hirado back in 1613. Matsura-dono will be repeating this unique performance in Gillingham, Kent, in September, the birthplace of William Adams.

August 8-10 the 67th William Adams Festival will take place in Ito, on the Izu Peninsula. It was here that he built Western-style ocean-going ships, including one – the *San Bonaventure* – that sailed to Acapulco. The festival is marked with many events, including a Shizuoka Police Band performance, a procession through the hot-spring resort city featuring cabaret dancers from local hotels, historical figures in costume and usually some hapless Englishman, dressed as Adams, sitting on a truck with a model galleon. It is, altogether, a memorable and colorful event, topped off with a spectacular fireworks display.

In the UK, an impressive array of cultural events under the umbrella theme of "Japan400" is also taking place throughout the year, not only in London but in regional cities like Liverpool, which will hold a Japan Day.

In Kent, Adam's home county, an exhibition of treasures from the Matsura *daimyo* family collection will be displayed at the Maidstone Art museum. Gillingham, also in Kent, will host the William Adams Festival in September, an annual event which last year drew a crowd of 10,000.

Back in London, letters and documents from the East India Company archives related to Japan go on display in the British Library in August. Part of the Tokugawa shogun's present to King James I, was two sets of samurai armor. These still exist in the collection of the Royal Armouries in the Tower of London and will be featured in a conference presentation in September.

In October, what the organizers are claiming to be the British Museum's most ambitious exhibition of Japanese art in a decade will open, under the theme, *Sex and Humor in Japanese Art, 1600-1900*. Will Saris' ghost be lurking in the shadows, hoping for a peep?

The closing ceremony for the Japan400 events in the UK will take place on December 20, 400 years to the day that the very first art auction in British history – the cargo of lacquer from the *Clove* – was held. ●

1613: The first British ship sails into Hirado's harbor

Life is short: Japan's top 10 truncated cabinet careers

by Angela Erika Kubo

IN WHICH WE HONOR JAPANESE POLITICIANS' RECORD-SETTING EFFORTS IN TRIPPING OVER THEIR OWN FEET

The life expectancy of Japanese prime ministers is notoriously short. At least nine prime ministers have come and gone since 2000, and the question usually asked when the newly elected leader enters office is not "what will he do?" but "will he last long enough to at least get something done?"

Well, it's been four months since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has taken office, and while he seems fairly well entrenched in his position, the same can't be said for his Cabinet.

When Takeshi Tokuda, a ranking member of his Cabinet, abruptly resigned in February, a mere 40 days after his appointment, the Kyodo News report stated proudly, "Tokuda is the first parliamentary secretary in the Cabinet established by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe following the general election in December to resign."

While everyone appreciates being the first at something in their lives, we wondered if the 41-year-old politician really had something to crow about. We don't know which is more impressive: that he was able to find a reason to strike his name from the Cabinet list so quickly; or that he accepted the post in the first place, given that he was either trying to keep an "inappropriate sexual relationship with an unnamed woman" quiet, according to a government spokesman; or the details of a 2004 rape from going public, according to *The Sankei Shimbun*.

But exactly how does his 40-day career as parliamentary secretary for the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism rate on the longevity scale of cabinet big shots?

We found that, while his claim to be first may be justified in the Abe Cabinet, his amateurish effort doesn't even make the top 10 in the historical list of short-lived ministers.

Herewith, a look at the best of their class – the Top 10 list of short-lived ministers, and a rundown of their impressive feats.

10 KEISHU TANAKA

Year: 2012
Position: Minister of Justice

The Story: Appointed as Minister of Justice in a cabinet reshuffle by Yoshihiko Noda, Tanaka was soon accused of rubbing shoulders with the yakuza and of receiving donations from foreign nationals, a crime under Japanese law. Although he was required to explain himself to a house panel, he was unable to appear, he said, due to a busy schedule, before checking into a hospital the next day. Although he had told the press at one time that he would quit his post due to the scandal, he later resigned citing "health reasons."

Time in office: 23 days

9 TOKUO YAMASHITA

Year: 1989
Position: Chief Cabinet Secretary

The Story: Prime Minister Sosuke Uno was forced to resign in 1989 after just two months due to a sex scandal. The outrage that drove him from office was not caused by the immorality of having an extramarital affair, however, but rather the irresponsibility of being too stingy to properly pay his mistress. After a devastating Upper House defeat, his successor, Toshiki Kaifu, was determined to show the public a "clean," "responsible" government. Unfortunately, he made the mistake of appointing Yamashita as Chief Cabinet Secretary. Barely two weeks after the Kaifu government was formed, Yamashita was revealed to have had an extramarital affair with a bar hostess that started in 1984, and was forced to resign. Thinking of damage control, Kaifu appointed a woman, Mayumi Moriyama, to take over Yamashita's job.

Time in office: 16 days

8 IHEI OCHI

Year: 1997
Position: Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The Story: Ochi had served his time as a Minister of Construction under PM Takeshita in 1987 and Minister of Transportation under PM Kiichi Miyazawa in

1992. But the third time was not a charm. After assuming the post of Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries under PM Ryutaro Hashimoto in September, 1997, his health took a turn for the worse and he resigned soon after. He passed away three years later of heart failure.

(Last) Time in office: 15 days

7 KOKO SATO

Year: 1997
Position: Head of the Management and Coordination Agency

The Story: With the socialist PM Tomiichi Murayama out of power and the LDP back in government, Ryutaro Hashimoto wanted to ensure that the LDP stayed in power. Of course, appointing a convicted felon to be head of the ministry in charge of governmental reform in a cabinet reshuffle wouldn't seem to be the right way to go about it. Although Hashimoto and Sato insisted that the past should be forgotten, an angry public remembered full well that Sato had been convicted of taking bribes during the Lockheed Scandal 20 years earlier and forced his resignation. Not one to go without the last word, Sato told the media: "I will live freely under the blue sky from tomorrow."

Time in office: 12 days

6 SHIGETO NAGANO

Year: 1994
Position: Minister of Justice

The Story: Just moments after his government was inaugurated, PM Tsutomu Hata, who was a veteran in foreign policy, chose ultra-nationalist Shigeto Nagano to be justice minister. Nagano, a former general, went on to claim that that the 1937 Rape of Nanking never took place, and that Japan's mission in Asia was one of "liberation," undermining Hata's efforts when he was foreign minister to repair Japan's ties with the rest of Asia. The proof that Nagano cited for his claim was his arrival in Nanking "shortly after" the Japanese army had taken the city. However, he failed to mention that his first visit to Nanking was actually in August, 1931.

Time in office: 11 days



It's a familiar scene: Japan's prime ministers often say, "You're fired!" soon after saying, "You're hired," to their cabinet appointee

5 YOSHIO HACHIRO

Year: 2011
Position: Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry

The Story: Hachiro obviously has never come across the piece of advice about learning from your mistakes. Shortly after becoming minister, he visited the evacuated areas around the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant and described the area as a "dead town," a comment highly insensitive, considering that the disaster had happened only months before. He apologized for the comment, and seemed to have defused the situation. Later he made the mistake of wiping his sleeve and telling a journalist: "I'll put radioactive materials on you." The joke went flat, and although Hachiro defended himself, insisting he had no recollection of the incident, the damage was done and so was Hachiro.

Time in office: 10 days

4 RYU MATSUMOTO

Year: 2011
Position: Minister for Reconstruction

The Story: Tasked with making sure that the Tohoku region recovers from the March 11 earthquake, Matsumoto, like our previous offender on the list, Hachiro, was also guilty of making mistake after mistake. After making remarks that were deemed offensive to the governors of the region affected badly by the March 11 tsunami, Matsumoto turned to the reporters present, told them

that his comments were "off the record," and threatened that he would ruin the companies of any of the journalists who reported his remarks. Unfortunately for him, the reporters ignored his threats and his comments were broadcast on TV, as well as becoming a huge hit on YouTube and other video-sharing websites. Later, when asked for an explanation for his actions he blamed it on his B blood type – thought by some to cause abrasive personalities – and his home prefecture, Fukuoka, where the people are apparently known for their frankness.

Time in office: 9 days

3 TAKEHIKO ENDO

Year: 2007
Position: Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The Story: Four ministers had to resign in PM Shinzo Abe's first year, leading to a loss in the Upper House elections, and forcing Abe to choose his ministers carefully in order to restore confidence in the government. In particular, care had to be taken when choosing the next agriculture minister, as the previous two had been caught in corruption scandals. After a screening process, Abe chose political veteran Takehiko Endo. What Abe didn't know was that Endo was the head of a farming group that had padded its numbers in order to get extra government assistance. Endo became the fifth minister to resign in the same year, setting a record as the second-fastest exit from cabinet.

Time in office: 8 days

2 NARIAKI NAKAYAMA

Year: 2008
Position: Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

The Story: Like Taro Aso, the PM at the time, Nakayama was prone to gaffes. A known revisionist and a supporter of censoring Japan's wartime atrocities in textbooks, the former education minister called the Japanese teacher's union a "cancer" and vowed to destroy it upon assuming office. It didn't help his case when he also told reporters that Japan was an ethnically homogeneous country and that Japanese people "do not

like or desire foreigners." Not a particularly wise statement for someone in charge of a ministry encouraging the very foreigners you're offending to take a vacation to Japan. Nakayama was gone before he had a chance to remove his foot from his mouth.

Time in office: 5 days

1 TAKASHI HASEGAWA

Year: 1988
Position: Minister of Justice

The Story: In 1988 the Recruit Scandal erupted, forcing many prominent politicians to resign and later leading to the LDP's brief loss of power. In an attempt to salvage the LDP's image, PM Noboru Takeshita needed someone "clean," someone capable enough to lead the investigation of the scandal. The man he picked for the job was Hasegawa, an anti-corruption politician who claimed to have "no connections" to Recruit when he assumed office. In what was little more than the blink of an eye, it was revealed that he had been receiving donations from the company for the past 12 years. And with that, Takashi Hasegawa departed the cabinet and entered the history books as the man with the shortest cabinet career. His record is all the more remarkable given the high level of the competition, and will very likely never be broken.

Time in office: 4 days. ①

Angela Erika Kubo is a senior at Sophia University's Faculty of Liberal Arts



▶ A COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS BELIEVES EXECUTIONS WILL RISE WITH THE LDP BACK IN POWER

Death row

by Julian Ryall

If he is sufficiently sound of mind, Shoko Asahara has cause to be very concerned. The figurehead of his own homemade religion, Aum Shinrikyo, Asahara has been convicted of 13 charges, including murder and masterminding the release of sarin gas on the Tokyo subway system back in 1995 as part of a plot to overthrow the government. He is now incarcerated in a solitary confinement cell.

And because he's not a very sympathetic figure to the Japanese public, that makes him a prime target for the next execution order to be signed by Justice Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki, according to Yoshihiro Yasuda, a lawyer who represented Asahara and a member of Forum 90, a group demanding the abolition of the death penalty in Japan.

"There has been a movement in the media calling for Asahara to be executed as soon as possible," Yasuda told a press conference at the FCCJ on March 15. "I believe there is a great risk that Mr. Tanigaki will respond to that by implementing the death penalty."

"Many people say that his political status will rise if he goes ahead and signs the execution order," Yasuda added. "I feel very strongly that ordering the death penalty for political gain should never happen."

Yasuda was appearing alongside Hideki Wakabayashi, secretary general of Amnesty International Japan, to announce a campaign appealing to the government to halt capital punishment. The campaign comes just weeks after the execution of three death-row inmates for crimes that the gov-

ernment described as "extremely brutal."

Kaoru Kobayashi, 44, was hanged after being convicted of kidnapping and killing an elementary schoolgirl in 2004. Masahiro Kanagawa, aged 29, had been found guilty of a series of random killings in 2008, while 62-year-old Keiko Kano was executed for the murder of a bar owner in Nagoya in March 2002.

Speaking at a press conference after the executions were carried out, the justice minister explained the reason why he had signed the approval orders for the first executions since the Liberal Democratic Party was voted back into power in December. "All these cases involved atrocious crimes that stole precious lives for selfish reasons," Tanigaki said.

The LDP's "bold approach" to the death penalty is at odds with global trends, said Yasuda, with the number of countries that retain the punishment shrinking to just 20. Of the member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the G-8, only Japan and the United States still have the death penalty on their statute books.

Wakabayashi pointed out that retaining the death penalty makes a mockery of Japan's ratification of numerous international treaties on human and civil rights, while adding that the government's frequently repeated claim that the death penalty "reflects the will of the people" is substantially flawed.

"The surveys that they use to determine support for the death penalty are filled with leading questions, so they do not

Hideki Wakabayashi of Amnesty International (left) and lawyer Yoshihiro Yasuda

genuinely reflect the will of the people," he said. "The surveys might show that 86 percent of people say they support the death penalty, but it is clear that figure is very inflated."

Wakabayashi believes the true figure for people who support the death penalty in Japan is less than 50 percent.

Yasuda expressed particular concern over a number of cases in which the death penalty has been handed down to a defendant in spite of evidence that a miscarriage of justice has taken place.

He cited the Hakamada Case, which involved the June 1966 murder of a senior official of a miso production company in Shizuoka Prefecture and three of his relatives. After 23 days of near-constant interrogation, Iwao Hakamada "confessed." Despite withdrawing his confession in court and telling the judge he was given no food or water, beaten and kicked and only allowed to briefly speak with his three lawyers on three brief occasions, he was sentenced to death.

Now 77, Hakamada has been incarcerated for 46 years and is suffering a condition that experts describe as "prison psychosis."

Despite repeated setbacks in his legal team's quest for a retrial, a motion to re-examine the case is under way. The appeal has been bolstered by prosecutors finally admitting that audio tapes of the interrogation do exist, while there are also suggestions that police fabricated evidence involving bloodstains on clothing Hakamada was allegedly wearing during the attacks.

"Despite repeated calls for a new trial and DNA tests that show Hakamada is probably not guilty, we are still waiting for a new trial to be set," Yasuda said.

But the lawyer believes it is Asahara who is at greatest risk of becoming Mr. Tanigaki's next victim. And while he accepts that Asahara was responsible for the atrocious acts carried out in the name of Aum Shinrikyo, he also believes that he is in no fit state to stand trial, let alone be executed.

"When I last met him, many years ago now, I could tell that he was not in a fit mental state, and a number of psychiatrists have agreed with that assessment," Yasuda said. "Despite this, the authorities insisted that he was fit to stand trial."

"Actually, since June 2006, no one has been able to meet him, either his family or legal team, so we do not even know if he is alive or dead." ①

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

▶ A GROUP OF DETERMINED WOMEN ARE BRINGING A LIGHT POLITICAL TOUCH TO GRAPPLING WITH JAPAN'S GENDER BIAS

Leaders in leopard skin

by Suvendrini Kakuchi



Japan's newest political movement's members tend to giggle a lot, chat incessantly on the internet and see no reason for hiding their preference for leopardskin print clothes. They proudly call themselves the All Japan Obachan Party, or AJOP, and although they're headquartered in Osaka (hence an Osaka *obasan* leopardskin trademark), they represent more than 2000 women around Japan. And they're growing.

At a recent press luncheon at the FCCJ, AJOP Vice President Hiroko Inokuma belied the frivolous image with a serious message. "We're aiming to increase bonding among women as the first step to getting more women involved in our movement to change Japan's dismal record on gender equality."

"The important point," she continued, "is that through chatting about issues that concern women we are providing a space for a vast number of reluctant females to voice individual opinions and in so doing change their circumstances."

Inokuma, a prolific freelance journalist who has covered women's issues for several decades as the single mother of four children, knows what she is talking about. So do her colleagues, Dr. Tomoko Saotome, a well-known Tokyo obstetrician and Kyoko Takada, an intellectual property expert, both of whom accompanied her to speak to the foreign press.

Referring to the latest blow – Japan being relegated to the 110th spot in economic equality by the World Economic Forum – they declared their determination to get things changed, albeit, in a different way.

Indeed, just six months after its launch, the party is making important inroads; networking on Facebook has seen the mushrooming of small AJOP groups from Hokkaido to Kyushu.

The secret, says Takada, is our "message of fun."

A key platform of their movement, according to Takada, has been to move away from the "exclusive" image that has characterized Japan's foremost feminist organizations.

Led largely by western educated women, these groups have worked hard at raising the profile of sexual discrimination in the country and denting some traditional male dominance in the country. Still, points out the AJOP, the feminist fight tends to leave out the majority of Japanese

women, particularly those living in rural areas, who have not been able to keep up the pace for various personal reasons.

Said Takada, "Instead, we want to appeal to ordinary women by giving them a voice. Our strategy is to involve as many women as we can to create an unprecedented solidarity. Only then can we have a true grassroots movement that will become a mass force for a fair and gender-equal society in Japan."

The first symbolic action was the selection of the word *obachan*, a bold decision in a country where the term is pregnant with negative connotations, signifying middle-aged women who are resigned to being blatantly sidelined by their younger and more glamorous counterparts. Former Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara created a scandal in 2003 when was sued by a group of women for referring to "obachan" as "baba" (old hags), and said "old women who live after they lose their reproductive function are useless and committing a sin."

The AJOP is meeting the negative factors head on: "We believe the original meaning of *obachan* in Japan signaled a kind and warm woman who worked for the bet-

terment of her family and society," said Takada. "So taking up this challenge is important."

Eight issues make up the platform of the budding feminist movement – including protecting workers' rights and a commitment to politics as a way to change the future of the nation. But forming their own political party or affiliating themselves with any established organizations are not options at the moment.

Saotome, an obstetrician, explained the group's thinking: that current politics rarely touch women's issues as they should, which has led to disappointment with the lack of change brought by the few female politicians in power. The preferred stance at the moment is to support gender equality policies irrespective of political party while focusing on increasing their members.

The AJOP's administration is also striving to be flexible and transparent – the president is Dr. Mayumi Taniguchi, an associate professor at Osaka University, who prefers to call herself the "acting head." This humble leadership style, which pays respect to the movement's founders, is badly needed to go up against the male-dominated inflexible and narrow management systems in Japan that have stifled fresh thinking and created a deep-rooted gender bias in society.

Sachiyo Izawa, a soft-spoken nurse who joined the AJOP Tokyo group recently, attended the FCCJ lunch, and she explained her attraction to the vision of the movement and its easy approach to changing gender discrimination. "Being a nurse and a married woman in a male-led society is not easy. But I joined because I am so frustrated with the system. Besides, my husband is supportive," she said.

It is far too early to predict the future of the AJOP and its inroads into the political arena. But there is no denying the movement has a chance to raise its profile given its unusual approach to one of Japan's most vexing problems: how to level the playing field for women, in business, in academia, in raising children and in society as a whole.

Osaka, which seems to have emerged as a breeding ground for reformist political movements, could be soon leading the feminist movement if the "Obachans" can make their leopardskin-patterned message a popular one. ①

Suvendrini Kakuchi is a Sri Lankan reporter for Inter Press Service, and a regular commentator for Japanese publications and television.



Dr. Tomoko Saotome, Hiroko Inokuma, Kyoko Takada and Sachiyo Izawa at the Club

LEGAL EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT CHANGES PLANNED BY THE LDP WILL SERIOUSLY IMPACT HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN JAPAN

An attack on working journalists?

by Julian Ryall



Yoichi Kitamura, Lawrence Repeta and Masako Kamiya

The Liberal Democratic Party's plans to revise the Constitution pose a serious threat to the ability of journalists to perform their jobs and, consequently, to the concepts of free speech and a free and fair media, according to Yoichi Kitamura, representative director of the Japan Civil Liberties Union.

Kitamura appeared at the FCCJ on Feb. 21 with two law professors to consider the implications of the radical changes that are being planned for a Constitution that was promulgated in November 1946

concerning individuals."

"This is phrased in order to impose another duty on the people, and it raises the question of whether the true intent is to use this as the basis for more government regulation of the mass media and other writers," Kitamura said.

"The LDP is trying to introduce catch-all prohibitions against collecting information," he added. "When it applies to 'no person,' that means all of us. Anyone. If it is strictly applied, all our information-gathering activities will be severely

'THE LDP IS PURPOSELY HOSTILE TO UNIVERSAL AND HISTORIC HUMAN RIGHTS.'

and has not been changed since.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made it clear that he intends to right a wrong the LDP believes was imposed on Japan by the Allies in the aftermath of World War II by revamping the nation's basic law. And with a large majority in the lower house of the Diet since December's general election and the party likely to build on the number of seats it holds in the upper house in the election for that chamber in the summer, he will be in a strong position to do precisely that.

While there is widespread concern at the erosion of human rights, the vagueness of provisions on public order and the insistence that the people "respect" the Constitution, the flag and the national anthem, the potential impact on the media also caught the attention of journalists attending the event.

Kitamura, a media law expert, flagged the planned new Article 19-2, which states, "No person shall improperly acquire, possess or use information

restricted. I'm afraid that all activities by freelance writers and smaller media outlets could come to a halt."

Kitamura pointed out that the right to privacy has not been clearly established under Japanese law, but added, "The LDP is purposely hostile to universal and historic human rights, including free speech and the freedom of the press."

Lawrence Repeta, a professor in Meiji University's Faculty of Law, warned that the LDP's proposals will impact many aspects of life in Japan and the nation's relationships with the rest of the world. "If this plan is adopted, Japan will be turning its back on the global movement toward expanded human rights protection and government accountability," he said.

Article 97, which guarantees the fundamental human rights of all citizens, would be removed entirely, he points out. "That is a very broad statement on human rights and the LDP simply wants to delete it," he said. "We can find no statement to support that decision in the explanatory leaflet."

Instead, the people would be duty-bound to demonstrate "respect for the national flag and national anthem" in the new Constitution.

There would also be a requirement to "never violate public order or the public interest." Although legal experts say there is no definition of just what the public interest might be, this could provide police and the judicial authorities with wide-ranging but undefined new powers.

"My guess is that their view of Japan is that it should be more like the prewar Japan of the early 1930s," said Masako Kamiya, a law professor at Gakushuin University.

"I believe there are a number of LDP members who share the view that it was not such a bad time, that there were some good things in that era," she added. "Society was harmonized, young people behaved themselves and respected their elders, and order was kept, as defined by the government and authorities.

"The contents of this proposal, unfortunately, include changes that seem to ignore the choices that our forebears made," she said.

Of major concern to members of the Japan Civil Liberties Union is the apparently deliberate decision to move in a direction that is contrary to the more accepted global attitude towards human rights.

Explaining its rationale on the party website, the LDP said that "in preparing the present draft, first we thoroughly reviewed phrasing that sounds like a translation and provisions that seem to be based on the natural rights theory.

"Rights are gradually formulated through the history, tradition and culture of each community," it states. "Therefore, we believe that the provisions concerning human rights should reflect the history, culture and tradition of Japan.

"The current Constitution includes some provisions based on the Western theory of natural rights. We believe these provisions should be revised."

Professor Repeta says there is good reason to be worried. "It is very clear from this document that [the LDP's] world vision is detached from the more common understanding of fundamental human rights," he said.

"We are entering a period in which the world is more awake to the concept of human rights, but the LDP seems to be saying that they do not want to be a part of that," he said. "Overall, this is more about government power over the people and reduced protection for individual rights."

Kitamura summed it up rather succinctly: "Sounds like xenophobia to me." ❶

Kang autopsy released

by Simon Scott

A TWO-YEAR-OLD SEARCH FOR ANSWERS PROVES FRUSTRATING FOR A FAMILY DEALING WITH RELUCTANT AUTHORITIES



The mysterious death of Hoon "Scott" Kang... The family of Hoon "Scott" Kang, a 19-year-old Korean-American tourist, has finally obtained a copy of his autopsy report from the office of the Tokyo public prosecutor.



THE POLICE THEORY IS THAT SCOTT'S DEATH WAS SIMPLY A RESULT OF A SUICIDE ATTEMPT... The police theory is that Scott's death was simply a result of a suicide attempt.

After two long years of relentlessly pressuring the Japanese authorities to release key documentation and evidence relating to the death of their son, the family of Korean-American tourist Hoon "Scott" Kang finally managed to obtain a copy of his autopsy report from the office of the Tokyo public prosecutor.

Kang, who worked as an English teacher in South Korea, died while holidaying in Tokyo in the summer of 2010 after sustaining severe head injuries in a building in Kabukicho. (A story about the strange circumstances of his death, and the unhappiness of his family with the police investigation appeared in the March, 2011 issue of Number 1 Shimbun.)

The 19-year-old was found lying unconscious in a pool of his own blood in the early hours of Aug. 26, in the stairwell of a highrise of small hostess bars and clubs near Shinjuku City Hall. He remained in a coma for five days before dying of his injuries on Aug. 30.

Scott's father, Sung Kang, requested a copy of his son's autopsy when he met with Shinjuku Police in late 2010. Yet it wasn't until late 2012, after retaining a Japanese lawyer, that they were finally able to obtain a copy of the autopsy.

The family remains disappointed and angry because the information is far from complete. "It leaves off crime scene pho-

The report on Kang's death as it was featured in our March 2011 issue

tos, autopsy photos, the video of Scott being assaulted in the elevator and the outdoor security video footage," says family spokesman Ray Wozniak.

Wozniak says the family had planned to have the autopsy independently analyzed by a local medical examiner in the United States, but without the photos it is proving very difficult for a third party to make a judgment about how Scott died.

The Kang family believes some of the conclusions reached by the doctor who performed the autopsy, Koichi Uemura of Tokyo Medical and Dental University, are not sound.

The autopsy report states: "The cause of death is believed to be swelling of the brain due to fracture of the cranium and acute subdural hematoma caused by a blow to the left-rear of the head. "The fractures to the cranium are thought to be injuries sustained by a blow from a blunt object with a broad surface."

The Kang family dispute Uemura's conclusion, which supports the police position that his death was accidental. Says Wozniak, "It is apparent to anyone with a grasp of science that a hole knocked in Scott's head with such force as to drive the bone fragment up into his skull resulted

from a blow with a pointed instrument.

Yet without further evidence, such as the autopsy photos, it is difficult for the Kang family to prove these suspicions.

Dr. Hiroto Iwase, an independent forensic pathologist from Chiba University School of Medicine, who carried out an independent analysis of the autopsy report after it was released to the family, was unable to draw any clear conclusions about how Scott died from the autopsy report alone, other than that he died from "blunt force trauma."

"With regards to the manner of death - suicide, accident or homicide - I don't know, says Iwase. "Or whether his death was related to a crime or not." He adds that, in his opinion, there is nothing specific about Scott's injuries that point to a clear cause of death.

But he acknowledges that the refusal of the Japanese authorities to release the photos places significant limitations on his ability to carry out an independent analysis.

According to Iwase, this reluctance on the part of the authorities to fully disclose autopsy information to the next-of-kin of the deceased is common practice in Japan, though it goes against international norms, especially in cases such as Kang's, where the official cause of death has been determined to be an accident.

"The police refusing to release the autopsy in the case of criminal investigations is normal in most countries," he says. "But when a crime hasn't occurred, the autopsy is usually released fairly promptly. Not in Japan."

In fact, the two-year period which the Kang family has had to wait before getting access to their son's autopsy report is actually not long by Japanese standards. Many families are forced to wait much longer and in many cases the authorities outright refuse to release the autopsy.

"It is common in Japan for the authorities to wait years and years before releasing an autopsy, if they do at all," Iwase says. He believes the autopsy issue is symptomatic of a wider problem in Japanese police culture that he calls "overly secretive. The police don't want the public to know the manner in which they carry out investigations."

The Shinjuku Police Department and Professor Koichi Uemura, who performed the autopsy on Hoon Kang, declined to comment for this story. ❶

Simon Scott is a freelance journalist and Japan correspondent for the New Zealand Herald. He contributes to The Sunday Age, The Japan Times, the Korea JoongAng Daily and others. He thanks James Benson for translating the autopsy report.

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SUN XIAOZHENG graduated from Shanghai International Studies University in 2009 and joined the Xinhua News Agency in Beijing. She wrote news stories about China in English for two years before she came to Tokyo in July 2011. She is now working as a journalist at Xinhua News Agency's Tokyo Bureau.

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Depression in Japan

Kitanaka, Junko
Princeton University Press

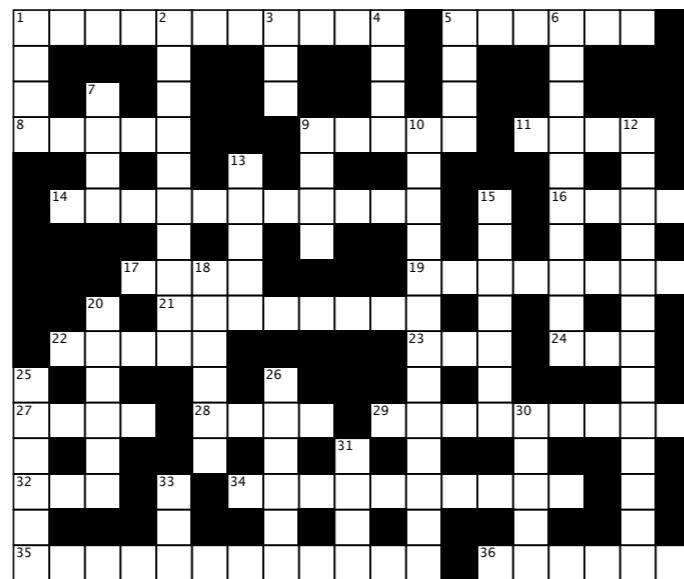
Killing Lincoln

O'Reilly, Bill
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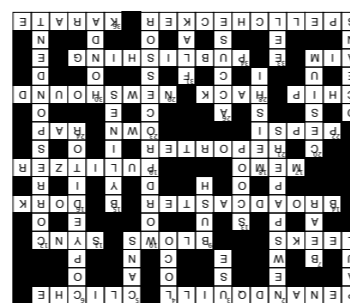
1. Fine dining here to write home about (3-3-5)
5. Byword (6)
8. Welsh sources of information? (5)
9. A whale does it; so does a referee (5)
11. Concurrent (4)
14. Media fat fisherman? (11)
16. Nerd (4)
17. Note (4)
19. It's prized in US (8)
21. Scribbler (8)
22. Sugared water (5)
23. Possess (3)
24. Sing, sort of (3)
27. Fat French fry (4)
28. What you are! (4)
29. Canine journo (9)
32. Target (3)
34. Disseminating (10)
35. A writer's best friend (5-7)
36. Empty handed defense (6)



DOWN

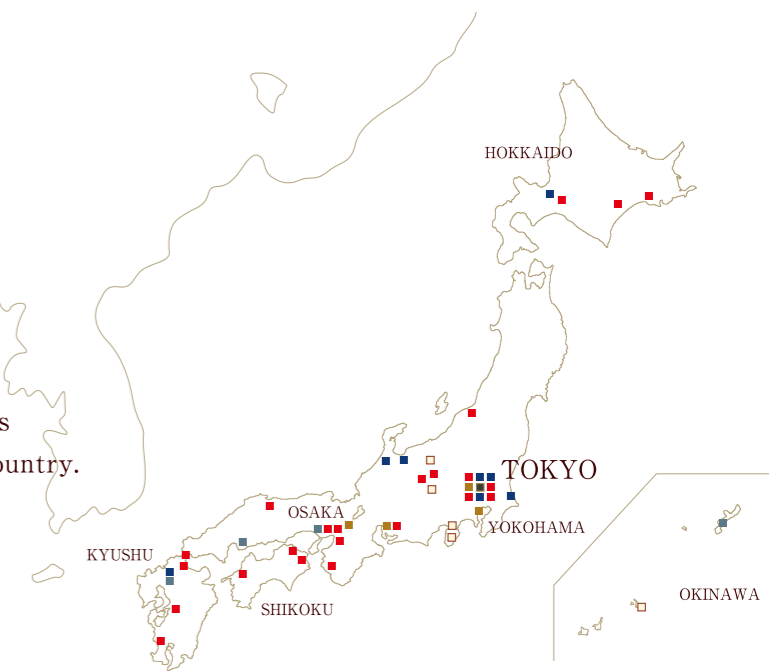
1. Sainly letter writer of good news (4)
2. On the endangered list (9)
3. Employ (3)
4. Nutty (4)
5. US for UK tins (4)
6. Often hated, occasionally praised (4-6)
7. Naked animal? (4)
9. He's still blamed for everything (4)
10. Makes alphabet soup, maybe (4-8)
12. Letter writer or you? (13)
13. Exclusive ice cream portion makes news (5)
15. Do you still count them? (2-5)
18. Essential Japanese card (6)

20. Common element in Tohoku, alas (6)
25. Earth has 5, not 11, Danny (6)
26. Claim (6)
30. A driven KK (5)
31. Heated criticism (4)
33. Slippery summer dish here (3)



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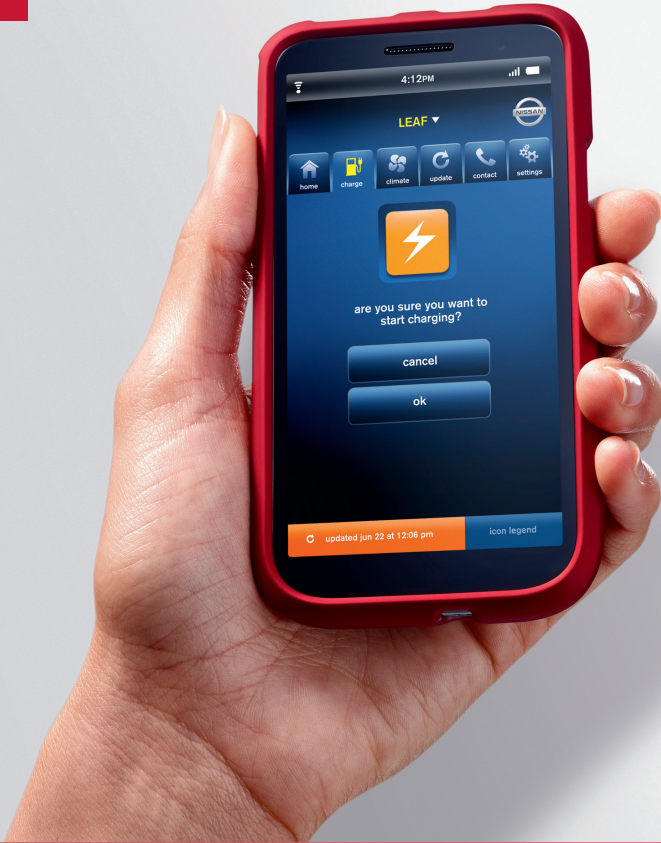




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