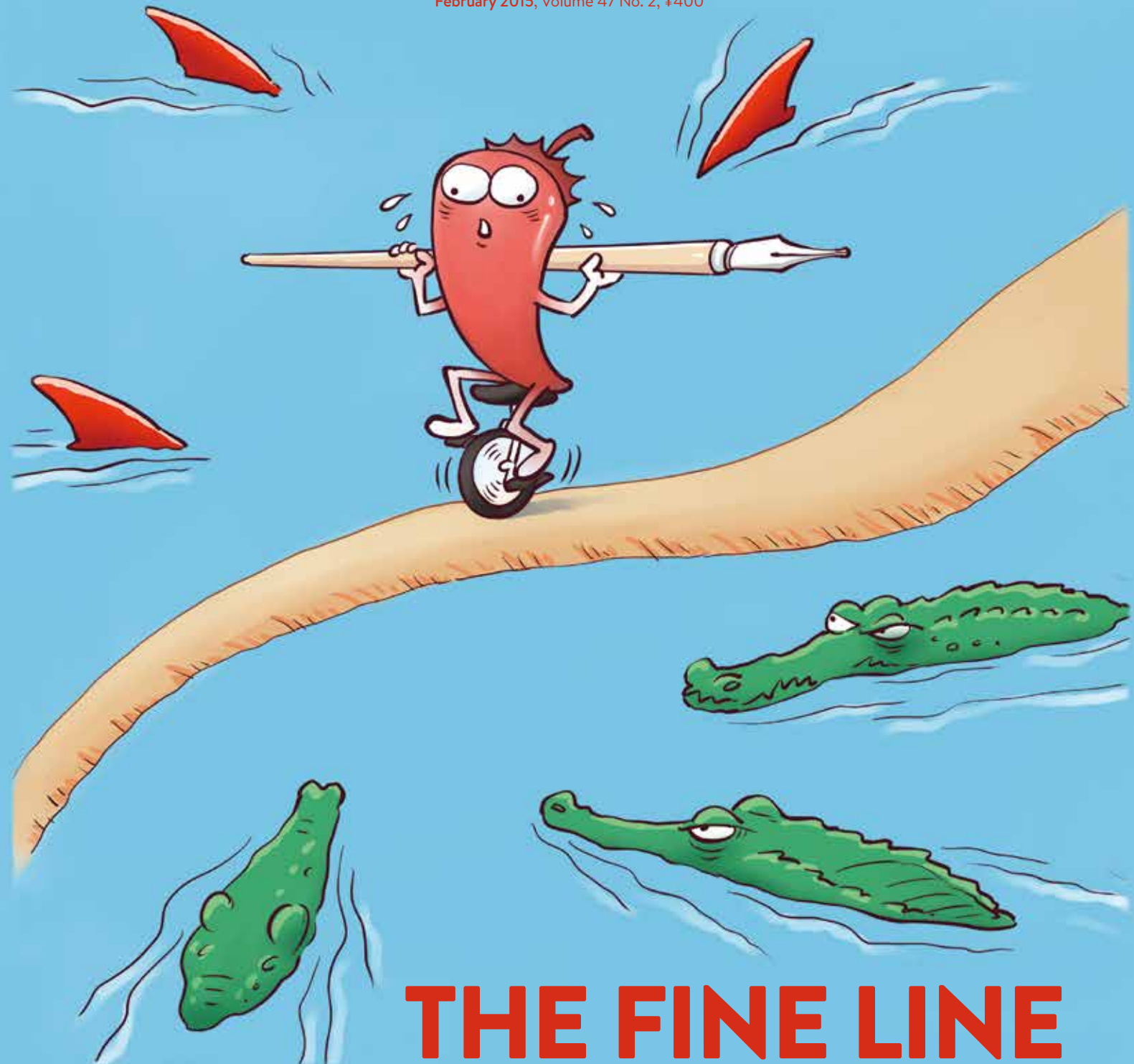




NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

February 2015, Volume 47 No. 2, ¥400



*Wang Liming Lajiao
2015.1.21.*

THE FINE LINE

**Exiled Chinese political cartoonist Wang Liming
on the risks of satirical drawing**

In opposition
Does the DPJ
have a future?

In profile
Le Monde's
Philippe Mesmer

In history
When Marilyn Monroe
visited Japan



> THEME.09
> THE BEARINGS ON THE "BULLET TRAIN"

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PHOTOS: ALEX KERR



From the President

LAST MONTH'S CHARLIE HEBDO slayings and the murder of the Japanese journalist Kenji Goto by Islamic State spotlighted again the increasing deadly risks facing journalists today.

These horrific tragedies, still unfolding, clearly demonstrate the need for greater protection of journalists as the vital messengers of our times. Throughout history, "killing the messenger" has held serious consequences. It was an act of treason to kill a messenger (town crier) in old England. In China during the Warring States period, chivalry and virtue prevented the execution of messengers from an enemy camp.

Media organizations in Japan as well as the government must establish effective safety protocols and protection for reporters – full-time staff and contracted freelancers – on the frontlines or those facing threats at home. The UN General Assembly's proposed new resolution on the safety of journalists (likely to be approved this month) is a stronger step in the right direction, but more needs to be done to combat the killing of journalists with impunity.

The FCCJ will continue to play an

important role in supporting journalists – foreign and Japanese – during story coverage on all fronts. Our remarkable Jan. 22 and 23 urgent press conferences on the Islamic State hostage crisis proved this true. Among the four who spoke was Kenji Goto's mother, Junko Ishido. It was an historical moment as the world watched her tearful plea to Islamic State to save her son's life, and convey the importance of his journalistic work.

After the *Charlie Hebdo* tragedy, the FCCJ collaborated with its sister organization, the FPIJ (Foreign Press in Japan), on Jan. 9 to organize a letter of solidarity in French, English and Japanese. Thanks to FPIJ chair Richard Lloyd Parry (the *Times*) and Regis Arnaud (*Le Figaro*), we were able to gather more than 80 signatures of support in less than five hours. The letter was handed to French Ambassador Thierry Dana that evening during a small ceremony covered by international and Japanese press.

We are also hoping to collaborate with the Japan PEN Club sometime soon on Book Breaks featuring fiction and nonfiction works in Japanese. So far, we've only featured works in English.

Coincidentally, the Club's January Book Break offered prescient historical insights on Prime Minister Abe's recent counter-terrorism diplomacy forays in the Middle East. Author and FCCJ Board Member Michael Penn spoke about his impressive tome, *Japan and the War on Terror*.

Topping off January's intense activity was thankfully lighter fare on the 23rd – our annual Hacks & Flacks New Year Party. Over 250 PR flacks and journalist hacks came to schmooze, exchange meishi, and enjoy the food and drink. Endless thanks to our media-event staff, Chung-san and Saikawa-san, for their herculean efforts to organize the *shinnenkai* along with a non-stop lineup of demanding PAC events.

Lastly, please keep your eyes peeled for FCCJ notices in the coming months about important events you shouldn't miss. This includes the General Membership Meeting (GMM) on Thursday, March 5 – when we will vote on the FY2015-2016 budget.

Wishing you a flu-free February full of Valentine admirers.

– Lucy Birmingham

TALES FROM THE ROUND TABLES



THE GODDESS OF SHIMBUN ALLEY

"TALK OF MARILYN MONROE'S Tokyo honeymoon (see page 14) stirred many a fond memory of older Club Members.

"The truth is, the Imperial Hotel was as close as Marilyn ever got to the FCCJ on her 1954 trip to Tokyo, but compensation of sorts appeared shortly afterwards in the arrival of a radical new magazine from the U.S. that had just launched its first edition with none other than Marilyn on the cover. To the delight of the correspondents in the club, *Playboy* also included the now iconic nude centerfold of a youthful, pre-celebrity Marilyn, bewitchingly posed against a rich, red velvet background.

"The foreign hacks' hearts were set aflutter. INS Tokyo Bureau Manager Marvin Stone enlarged the photo to grace the walls of the Stag Bar, but somehow the costly print came out too big for display within the cozy dimensions of the room. It was only after the move to the Chiyoda Building Annex in 1958 that Marilyn finally made her long awaited Stag Bar debut. A Japanese model was hired to star in a beguiling nude photo – wearing only a fig leaf and

pointing to the 'For Stags Only' entrance of Marilyn's shrine.

"This being the fifties,' recalls Charles Pomeroy, 'women were barred, and no one complained.

"We let the boys be boys,' chimes in Sandra Mori, 'and even the women all thought Marilyn's picture was beautiful.'

"Many meetings of great minds as well as some epic fights unfolded with some regularity before the altar of Shimbun Alley's goddess – not to mention some legendary wild parties. *The New York Times*' A.M. Rosenthal's sayonara in 1963 upon his promotion to editor-in-chief back home was one such memorable occasion. After a well-lubricated dinner, the gents retired to the basement Stag Bar, where Rosenthal started to sing, 'The working class can kiss my ass, I've got the boss' job at last,' and with every chorus, the revelers tossed their drinks at Marilyn. Thanks to their poor aim – either from the effects of too much alcohol or divine intervention – Marilyn emerged unscathed, adding yet another chapter to the FCCJ Goddess Myth.

"Through multiple renovations



... "All the papers had to say/Was that Marilyn was found in the nude"...

and moves, Marilyn continued to smile upon the assembled faithful at Tokyo's illustrious watering hole until well into the 1980s. Though the Joe and Marilyn show was but a flash in history, more than 50 years after her death, rumored sightings of the goddess in FCCJ's underground vaults have still continued. As AP photo editor Sam L. Jones was quoted 30 years after the aforementioned sayonara party, 'If Marilyn Monroe's picture could survive Rosenthal's sayonara party, it could survive anything.' (In fact, the *Number 1 Shimbun* art director was able to unearth the framed photo on an intrepid journey to the underworld of the Yurakucho Denki Bldg., above.)

"With the eternally popular sex symbol having just been named this year's global campaign face for Max Factor, perhaps it is time to bring back the Goddess to Shimbun Alley."

– The Shimbun Alley Whisperers

FROM THE ARCHIVES



THE COMPLEXED AUTHOR

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.

YUKIO MISHIMA WAS BORN Kimitake Hiraoka in 1925; his famous pen name was assigned by teachers when they submitted his early works to literary journals. He was a prolific writer who became focused on traditional Japanese values versus the spiritual emptiness of modern life. His output included 34 novels, roughly 50 plays, at least 35 books of essays, 25 books of short stories, one libretto, and one film script as well as *waka* poetry. His more famous works included *Confessions of a Mask* and the four-volume epic, *The Sea of Fertility (Hojo no Umi)*. He was nominated three

times for the Nobel Prize in Literature, but lost out to Yasunari Kawabata, a result attributed by some to his rightist leanings.

Unfortunately, these leanings and the "spiritual emptiness of modern life" led Mishima into an obsession with physical fitness, the martial arts, the emperor system, and the creation of a right-wing group, *Tate no kai*. Their failed attempt at a coup d'état in November of 1970 at the headquarters of Japan's Self Defense Forces led to his ritual suicide at the age of 45.

The Mishima dinner was only one of many memorable events organized by the Club's "This is Japan" committee. The committee had been active for roughly a decade before I was recruited as a member in 1966 by then-Chairman Bill Lange of Germany's Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA). Until then, he had been a one-man show, as the

inspiration behind many interesting nights that ranged from presentations of Japanese tattoo artists and ninjutsu experts to fashion shows and sumo champions. Only a few of the more notable evenings such as Mishima and the Hanae Mori fashion shows are listed in our history book.

As chairman after Lange left Japan in the late 1960s, I carried on his legacy for several years until my own departure from Japan in the mid-1970s led to its demise. Unfortunately, there seemed little interest in reviving the committee after my return a year or so later.

– Charles Pomeroy



Yukio Mishima, Japan's stand-out writer of his era, appeared at a "This is Japan" evening at the Club on April 18, 1966. Seated next to him is John Roderick, the AP's foremost China Watcher and then president of the FCCJ. Roderick remained active in journalism as an AP special correspondent for over two decades following his retirement in 1984 up until his death on March 11, 2008. A key mover in the creation of *Number 1 Shimbun*, he was the first editor.

The exiled cartoonist

At a time when cartoonists are finding themselves a target of governments and extremists alike, Wang Liming is unabashedly poking the powers-that-be back home in Beijing.

by LUCY BIRMINGHAM

When Chinese cartoonist Wang Liming arrived in Japan last May, he never imagined his first trip abroad would be his last. He's now exiled in Japan, his new home. "I was planning to stay in Japan for about three months to meet with my business partner and explore the country with my fiancée," he says. "But something very strange happened during that time."

After he drew caricatures praising the kindness of the Japanese and the country's pacifism, Wang's Weibo microblogging accounts were terminated along with his Internet business. He was also denounced as a pro-Japan traitor and his life was threatened on a website connected to the official *People's Daily* newspaper. "Now I'll never go back, but will continue my work, feeling safer here."

Wang, 41, first skirted the Chinese government line between cheeky cartoonist and defamatory activist in 2009 when he turned his pen to online political humor. It wasn't until 2011, however, that he drew the obvious ire of authorities. Police in Hunan Province questioned him after he penned a cartoon that read, "One person, one vote to change China." The officers told him there was freedom of speech in China, and they could not stop his work, but it was clear he was attracting some unwanted attention.

Warnings about his cartoons intensified after President Xi Jinping's administration established new rules in 2013 prohibiting criticism of the Chinese communist party. Under-terred, he continued posting his satirical cartoons on sensitive topics including the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong and territorial disputes between China and Japan.

Then late one night in October that year, police in Beijing placed him in custody for almost 24 hours. He was charged with "suspicion of causing a disturbance." Wang had posted a microblog about the lack of food and supplies delivered to the people who were stranded by flooding – and literally starving – in the eastern city of Yuyao. In response to the detention, Wang posted sketches of the small cell where he spent the

night and other images depicting his treatment.

By 2014, his fame as the *Biantai Lajiao* (or "Rebel Pepper") had gained him a million followers, but also made him a potential target for a dangerous smear campaign. "Before coming to Japan I was really debating whether I should continue drawing satirical cartoons. I didn't know what to do," Wang admits. His Chinese business partner based in Japan recommended he stop, but his fiancée encouraged him not to give up. "There are many cartoonists in China but most give up as soon as they're scolded by the authorities or threatened," he says. "I can't imagine my life without drawing political cartoons."

Wang was born in the city of Tangshan in Hebei Province, about 180 km from Beijing. A precocious child, he had a passion for drawing as early as five years old. His parents, now retired teachers, encouraged him. He got his first taste of political satire in the 1980s thanks to the magazine *Irony & Humor*, and admits to being a lifelong fan of Japanese cartoonist Osamu Tezuka, the legendary creator of the manga and anime megahit series, *Tetsuan Atomu*.

When he made his fateful decision to stay in Japan last summer, he was faced with the frightening prospect of deportation if he overstayed his temporary visa. "I showed immigration officials that my life was being threatened in online postings, that it was too dangerous for me to return to China," says Wang. He was hoping they would give him a special exception. But when they told him there was nothing they could do about his visa, he figured that he'd have to go back. But surprisingly enough, it was suggested that he apply for a longer-term, research-type visa. "I'm now a research fellow at Saitama University, thanks to an introduction by a Japanese journalist friend."

Though his name has now been virtually wiped off the face of China-controlled Internet sites and Twitter, he's not holding back on his opinions, thanks to his satirical cartoon wit.

PHOTO: ANDREW POTHECARY

And because his works are no longer influential within China, concern for his family's safety is no longer a large issue.

"I had no intention of becoming an enemy of the state. I started out drawing cartoons for my own interest without realizing they would influence so many people," he says. "But the Chinese communist party has no sense of humor. They pretend they're gods and can do no wrong. They're like extremist Muslims who try to present a noble image."

Wang says the conditions of freedom of speech in China have worsened since he left. "The arrests are different from before," he says. "Before, they would first send people a letter of warning. Now there are no letters. People just disappear."

He cites the well-known case of the poet Wang Zang, that spread like wildfire on Twitter: "He was arrested for his involvement with the Hong Kong protests and then tortured in prison. They made him stand for four days and nights and beat him so badly he had a heart attack. He was only 29 years old."

"Even the Chinese assistant of a foreign journalist covering the Hong Kong protests was arrested," he says, referring to Miao Zhang, who was assisting Angela Köckritz, a correspondent for the German weekly *Die Zeit* last October when she was arrested. She was charged with inciting a public disturbance and remains in prison.

When complimented for his bravery, however, Wang is self-effacing. "If I were really brave I'd go back to China. I'd continue to fight and willingly suffer the consequences," he says. He cites the bravery of his friend, activist artist Ai Weiwei, who remains under house arrest in Beijing with police surveillance cameras mounted around his home and studio.



How we pay. Raising thoughts on the ISIS hostage crisis in Japan and the environmental protection of foreign leaders during APEC in China.

"Actually, I was very frightened," he admits. "I often had nightmares after uploading my political cartoons. I was always afraid of being arrested or attacked."

In Japan he has a newfound freedom. "I don't need to feel frightened here," he says, "even though freedom of speech in Japan is different from Western countries, which are more open. The Japanese are not as outspoken as Westerners." He remains concerned for his safety, but doesn't feel threatened like the cartoonists at the French satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo*. "The Chinese government still isn't as bad as the extremists who killed the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists. The most they did to me was shut down my sites. I'm luckier than many. I'm still alive."

Japan now offers him a new platform for his political cartoons. "I'm hoping to create a series of political comics to help re-educate the many Chinese who have been brainwashed by the communist government, both within and outside the country," he explains. Normally, bypassing

the government censors is a major stumbling block. "Censors can eliminate Internet postings and sites by tracking certain words or names on Google and other search engines. But for cartoons, it's not words that appear but drawings. This way they can't catch me."

Is he concerned about becoming a Japanese propaganda tool against his country? "I found that the extreme leftists and extreme rightists in Japan have something in common. They both hate China and the communists," he says. "If they want to use me and my cartoons, they can. China now belongs to the communists, so if you love China, you must love the communists."

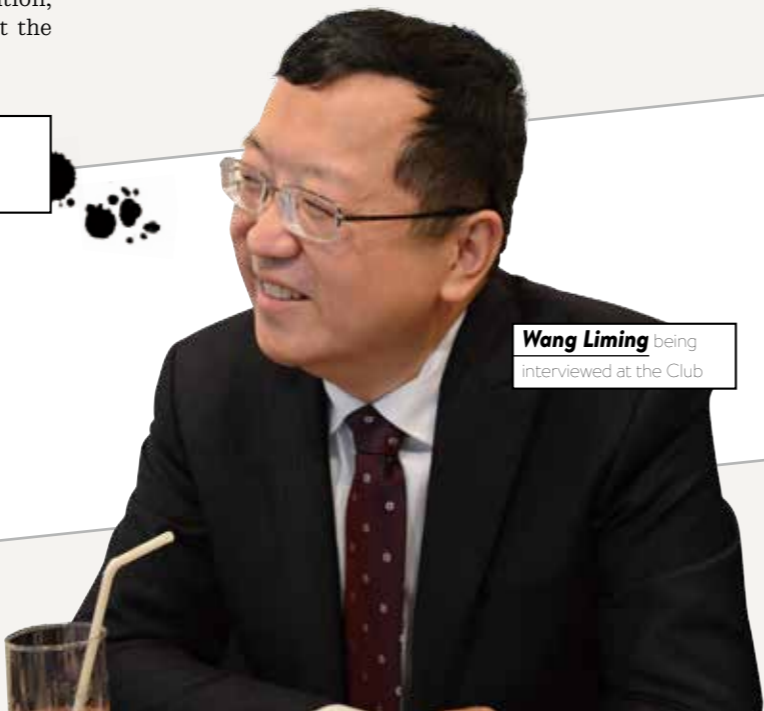
He's also finding commercial success with his work after years of struggling to make ends meet. "I've been collaborating with the journalist Masahiko Katsuya on cartoons for his upcoming book, and also talking with other writers and several publishers about projects."

Though he eventually wants to settle in an English-speaking country, and is now considering drawing cartoons with English

translations, he's not in any hurry. "For now, I'm happy to be in Japan," Wang says. "I know there are plenty of cartoons I can draw about Japanese politics." ●

Lucy Birmingham is a long-time, Tokyo-based journalist, scriptwriter, author and former photojournalist and president of the FCCJ.

Hammered home Wang combined the traditional Chinese character for "country" with the hammer and sickle to illustrate his view that the Chinese communist party hijacks everyone's love for their country.



Wang Liming being interviewed at the Club



The gloves are on As mainland China offers "democracy" to Hong Kong, Taiwan cowers in the background and the caption reads: "Come! Choose one of these. Don't get the wrong one."

"I had no intention of becoming an enemy of the state ... the Chinese communist party has no sense of humor."

Philippe Mesmer

by TYLER ROTHMAR

Born in 1972 in Houilles, a northwestern satellite of Paris, Philippe Mesmer grew up with a love of the sea and of ships, which led him as a young man to join his country's navy.

He spent his days repairing aircraft, feeling all the while that something was missing. "It was so boring that I decided to leave and become a journalist," he says. The only link between the two vocations was an inclination towards "travel and discovery."

After taking a masters degree in journalism from Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Paris in 1999, he worked briefly in internet-based broadcast journalism just as the medium was getting off the ground: "It was too early, I think. The connection was still by phone and it couldn't be viewed properly." After another year working for a publisher in France, he found himself in Japan, due in part, he says, to a woman.

Mesmer celebrated 10 years with France's *Le Monde* newspaper on Jan. 18, has worked with the news magazine *L'Express* for 11 years, and has written three articles in English for the *Guardian*. He covers Japan and the Korean peninsula as a freelancer, and says working alone suits him. "In France, for journalism, the internal politics can be very strong and very boring. Being 10,000 kilometers away from it is . . . enough."

Although he writes about everything from business and politics to technology and sports, he prefers social issues. The ongoing story of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, and the events surrounding Korea's Sewol ferry tragedy, are particularly close to his heart.

"Both are similar in a way," he says. "Fukushima changed Japan in 2011, and I think 2014 will be a very important year in Korea's modern history. In both cases you have the impression that the governments are doing everything they can to forget, and the victims and their families are being misled. I like working on these stories because of their deep social implications. I don't want these people to be forgotten."

Mesmer is a fencer, making him an exemplar of the Japanese four-character idiom "*bun-bu-ryō-do*," or the twin ways of the pen and the sword. He dabbled in Western fencing in his navy days, and began practicing kendo on his wife's suggestion soon after arriving in Japan. He is currently ramping up efforts for a first attempt at the art's fifth-dan examination, and says he practices less for the martial aspect and more for the physical elegance that can be achieved through years of practice.

He also has a passion for the dramatic arts. He is co-founder of the group LiberThéâtre, and has directed three plays, including Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, a work in the absurdist style that is well known in France. He enjoys the absurd because it is "just a small deviation from reality. It's a useful way to slalom through life."

Mesmer feels that a healthy appreciation of

the absurd can help one to cope with and digest senseless tragedies such as Fukushima and the *Sewol*, and the often irrational human response to them. What's more, his background in drama is occasionally useful in his journalistic work.

"It helps when you do interviews," Mesmer says. "You can feel when someone is acting, and you're more sensitive to gesture. Everything is dramatic play, even politics. You can see how people move and speak, how they play with anger. I remember one time I had a problem with a high-ranking official in Korea who didn't like a story I wrote."

He found himself summoned to the man's office in Seoul. Having explained his position, Mesmer watched a performance unfold: "At first he was friendly, and then he became angry, because he had to. It was like a play where you know the script."

This was during the tenure of President Lee Myung-bak, says Mesmer, when the government was pressing its members to react strongly to criticism. He waited for the drama to play out, explained that he would not change the story, and the curtains closed. "It was not a question of fact," he adds, "it was just a question of ideas. He was only playing his role."

Like many around the world, Mesmer was deeply affected by the murder on Jan. 7, 2015, of some of France's best caricature satirists by two gunmen affiliated with a terrorist organization in Yemen. The incident brought issues of free speech to the fore

around the world, and Mesmer wonders about the state of free speech in Japan and Korea.

In France, he says, having a point of view is perhaps the only sacred thing; everything else is open to ridicule and debate. Whereas the country's long intellectual tradition of caricature made for genuine shock on the part of many French people at the violent reactions to the irreverent cartoons of *Charlie Hebdo*, he points out that there would be similar outrage in Japan, minus the violence, if the Emperor were the object of satire.

"Korea is much the same," he says, "and there is a question in both countries regarding freedom of speech. If you read the statement issued by the Korean Presidency, and I think also by the Prime Minister's Office in Japan, they mention terrorism and the need to cooperate etc., but not freedom of speech. That is interesting."

As for Japan's recently enacted state secrets law, Mesmer says he has yet to feel the chill. "I'm sure there will be a problem one day, even if it is not intentional," he says. "Maybe a civil servant will say something to a journalist, who will repeat it without knowing that it has been classified. It could happen."

"This is 100 percent absurd, it's like Kafka," he laughs. When the absurdity of life begins to smack of fiction, this may be the only appropriate response. ●

"The absurd is a useful way to slalom through life"



Tyler Rothmar is a Tokyo-based writer and editor. Follow him on Twitter @TylerRothmar



The empire of signs

Does Japan deserve to be ugly? Alex Kerr injects a little humor in the battle against ubiquitous concrete and destructive public works.

by TIM HORNYAK

Blots on the landscapes: Alex Kerr imagines what the Piazza della Signoria of Florence (left) and the Vatican's St. Peter's Square would look like if they were in Japan.



Only a few years ago, the banks of the Tama River near Futakotamagawa Station were thick with pine and cherry trees. As the sun sank over Mt. Fuji to the west, it was a scene that could have inspired Hiroshige. Today, those trees are all but gone, replaced by an artificial embankment that's part of the new Futakotamagawa Park. It's an unsightly concrete mound – topped, of course, by a Starbucks – with new condo towers next door built by railway conglomerate Tokyu.

This is the sort of development that makes Alex Kerr cringe. The longtime Japan resident and award-winning author is well known for his 2001 book *Dogs and Demons*, which excoriates the destruction of the country's environment and its addiction to covering everything from seashore to mountainside with layers of concrete. He has attacked disastrous public works projects and architectural monstrosities, bemoaning the government's endless attempts to try to build its way out of economic stagnation. In 2015, there's no shortage of targets: construction recently resumed on the ¥450 billion Yamba Dam in the mountains of Gunma Prefecture, a project for a 116-meter-tall structure that began 63 years ago amid public protests.

Some may see him as a modern day Don Quixote tilting at windmills, and he has drawn his share of criticism from some academics for engaging in what they see as Japan bashing. But Kerr is unrepentant. His newest book, *Nippon keikanron (Theory of Japanese Landscape)*, was published in Japanese by Shueisha Shinsho. It begins with an introduction of his mountain farmhouse in the remote Iya Valley of Tokushima Prefecture, which he has used as an example of how Japan's heritage buildings can be successfully restored instead of demolished, before chronicling the country's visual blight: the armored hillsides, cemented riverbeds, trees pruned to skeletons, exposed power lines, ubiquitous billboards and signs that endlessly warn or inform an apparently clueless population. The latter he contrasts with a tiny sign at Oxford's Bailliol College, where he was a Rhodes scholar in the 1970s, asking people to keep off the lawn.

"Signs are one of those things that have made Japan so irredeemably ugly," Kerr laughed during a recent interview

in the FCCJ's Main Bar. He was fresh from a meeting with Japan's first lady, Akie Abe, one of the elites whose ear he's had since he was appointed to a government-backed international tourism advisory committee in 2006. "I have a lot of fun in the book where I count the signs – it's sometimes three of the same sign, all saying the same thing."

Indeed, *Japanese Landscape* favors satire over invective. The penultimate chapter presents a series of photoshopped images of what foreign landmarks would look like if they had the Japanese treatment. Michelangelo's David and Notre Dame in Paris are festooned with hideous signs, a Venetian canal is a five-lane highway, the Hawaiian coastline is a giant concrete wall and St. Peter's Square in Vatican City is a bus parking lot. The book ends with a call for preservation and restoration of Japanese heritage.

"The reason I did these montages is that Japanese don't see these things because they've gained immunity," Kerr says. "If Japanese go abroad and see a bit of the landscape, that's just *gaikoku* (foreign countries). They come back to Japan and the same rules don't apply. But if you apply the Japanese rules to what they've seen abroad, this suddenly brings it home in a way that has never been done before."

Japanese Landscape was based on talks Kerr has been giving for a decade, and he says attendees have repeatedly told him how the proverbial scales fell from their eyes. The response to the book has been as strong. It sold out on Amazon Japan, has gone through a second printing and made the front page of the *Nikkei*. "In the real Japan, most of the tourist spots and historic sites look exactly like these photos," the *Nikkei* noted of the montages, calling for heritage buildings to be repaired and damage to the landscape reversed. It echoes the reaction to *Dogs and Demons*, whose most avid readers, says Kerr, were Ministry of Land bureaucrats.

He has been encouraged by the formation of a group in the Diet looking at clearing some of the spaghetti mess of utility lines that hangs over the cities; posh districts such as Tokyo's Ginza and Marunouchi, deemed important enough to beautify, are rare exceptions. He was also mentioned in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's address to the leg-

islature's 187th session in Sept. 2014. In pushing for more inbound tourism, Abe noted Kerr's comparison of "Japan's landscapes in their original state" in the Iya Valley to the utopian Peach Blossom Spring of Chinese myth. The prime minister's wife, meanwhile, has spoken out publicly against proposals to protect Japan's northern coasts from tsunami with giant seawalls.

"Finally, they're catching on to the fact that this is something that's got to get done," Kerr says, calling for a change in thinking. He cites Grand Central Station in New York as an example of how American thinking evolved decades ago. In the late 1960s, the terminal was threatened with the same fate that befell the ornate old Pennsylvania Station – demolition – until the Supreme Court affirmed its designation as a landmark, protecting it from developers.

... armored hillsides, cemented riverbeds, trees pruned to skeletons, exposed power lines, ubiquitous billboards and signs ...

"I call it graduation. Every developing and developed country has destroyed beautiful city centers and torn down historic buildings and built badly planned public works. And then, when people reach a certain level, they look back and realize what was precious in their heritage. Then they learn the technology of bringing these things into the modern age, a way to keep a beautiful old structure, for example, but make it perfectly livable and workable."

Kerr wants public spending in Japan to change from what he calls "the institutionalization of budgets," the way governments and entities they work with are addicted to building projects because they see no alternative. The central government engaged in record-high spending in the 2014-15 budget, earmarking 5.96 trillion yen for public works, up from 5.28 trillion yen a year earlier. That means more concrete, which is made by dismembering mountains for their

limestone, gravel and crushed rock.

"Let's accept as a given that you don't cut back on public works," he says. "You change the content of it. Instead of building the useless road and using the destructive mountain concrete, what if you buried phone lines, restored old houses, removed out of date or misplanned dams and removed all the other junk that clutters the countryside? You're pouring money toward the people who need it because that's the way the system is, but you could be benefitting the country instead of harming it."

It would be easy to dismiss Kerr as an armchair critic, but he has completed a number of projects to revitalize heritage structures. Aside from his 18th-century farmhouse, dubbed Chiiori, he has worked with various groups and local governments to restore old houses in various parts of the country, especially lesser-known regions that are scenically blessed but economically depressed. One is the remote island of Ojika off Sasebo, Nagasaki, where he has helped restore eight houses that are now available for rent. He has also done projects in Kyoto, Nara, Fukui, Kagawa and Ishikawa. Nearly all the restorations have been supported by

government grants and have the support of local groups such as NPOs.

Ironically, the work has made Kerr himself a public works contractor – but one who restores instead of builds. Bringing in people to visit areas of Japan that are off the map creates a relationship with local municipalities and is a form of sustainable development, he adds. It's slowly having a ripple effect.

"There is really a public groundswell," Kerr says. "There are NPOs and civic groups who are fighting to save something. In the old days, they didn't exist. Now I meet them all the time."

"There might be enough people in this country now starting to say, 'Wait a minute. This isn't what we wanted. This really is a mess.'" ●

Tim Hornyak is Tokyo correspondent for IDG News Service, a global information technology newswire.



Looking to the future

DPJ presidential candidates Goshi Hosono (center), Akira Nagatsuma and eventual winner Katsuya Okada (left) at the Club before the election.

Wandering in the wilderness

Following its recent leadership election, can the DPJ find a way to get the party's mojo back?

by MICHAEL CUCEK

On Jan. 18, the Democratic Party of Japan, a party suffering what might charitably be called “a bit of a rough patch,” selected a new leader. In a sometimes spritely, sometimes sullen race between three men representing three rather different visions of the party’s future, the DPJ ended up choosing a familiar face, 61-year-old former leader Katsuya Okada.

The DPJ had been seeking a way out of the doldrums. After an uneven three years in power, which included managing the response and recovery from the triple disaster of March 11, 2011, the party crashed from 209 seats to 57 in the snap election of Dec. 2012, surrendering control of the government to Shinzo Abe’s resurgent Liberal Democratic Party.

The DPJ’s final humiliation came in Abe’s snap election of last December. They were caught totally unprepared, with no candidates for half of the country’s electoral districts. With herculean last-minute efforts, the party eventually managed to present candidates in 178 of the nation’s 295 electoral districts. The DPJ ended up winning 73 seats, an improvement over its showing in 2012, but far below its target of 100+ and very far from shaking Abe’s grip on power. The party’s leader, Banri Kaieda, furthermore, failed to win either a district or a proportional seat, finally ousting him from the post so many in the party had wanted him to relinquish far earlier.

The party membership was confronted with questions

more fundamental than simply who would fill the post Kaieda had vacated. What kind of party should the DPJ be? Who are its constituents? And what, if any, role does a political opposition play in Japanese politics?

The leadership election and the selection of candidates evolved out of an attempt to find answers for these questions. It also evolved out of the peculiar format of the DPJ’s leadership election. The rigorously organized, hierarchical LDP concentrates most of its leadership voting strength in its Diet members. The DPJ by contrast, has an open system, with

participation by dues-paying members of the general public in the process. The party’s 226,000 registered members indeed provide the largest bloc of points (46.6 percent) in the DPJ’s points-based election system. Members of the Diet (34.9 percent) and DPJ prefectural assembly members (18.5 percent) provide the rest.

Candidates are therefore required to run national campaigns. Diet members are the gatekeepers of the process – one cannot run without the sponsorship of 20 Diet members – but candidates have to be credibly populist.

Goshi Hosono, the young (43), handsome six-term member of the House of Representatives from Shizuoka, presented himself first. He advocated a tougher party stance on defense and security issues, while being less clear on his economic plans. Hosono also promoted himself as the candidate of the party’s future, calling for the party to cut itself off (*ketsubetsu*) from its legacy of failure.

Most controversial of his positions, was, however, his stance toward the revitalization of Japan’s political opposition. Faced with a situation in which the PM and his Cabinet enjoy a broad level of public support, Hosono advocated that the DPJ think about jettisoning a part of its autonomy, and consider working closely with, and possibly merging with, the next largest opposition force, the Japan Innovation Party of Kenji Eda and Osaka mayor Toru Hashimoto.

Hosono could also count on the support of the local assemblymen and women, not a few of whom believed they would be better positioned in their races in the upcoming April local elections if they had Hosono’s handsome face on their posters.

The presence of a candidate from the party’s hardliner wing put pressure on the party’s centrist and left wings to offer their own candidates.

For a brief moment, House of Councillors member Renho, a child of a Taiwanese immigrant and a special target of LDP ire, offered herself as a candidate. The candidacy seemed a smart counter. A former model and newsreader, Renho could certainly hold her own in the looks competition. By selecting her, the DPJ could also improve on its abysmal record of promoting women from its ranks, and challenge the ground seized by Abe on the issue of empowering women. Renho

pulled, however, when it became clear her candidacy would interfere with that of Katsuya Okada, who had already thrown his hat in the ring in the role of the party moderate.

The DPJ’s liberal members, many from the former Socialist Party, felt they had to run their own candidate, mostly for appearances’ sake, and support coalesced around former minister of health, labor and welfare, Akira Nagatsuma. A pensions specialist, he focused his campaign speeches on the increasing economic disparities under neoliberal economic reforms and the erosion of traditional constitutional concepts under the Abe administration’s program of changes to Japan’s security policies.

The press loved having the three candidates seemingly conforming to stereotypes: The Liberal, The Moderate and The Conservative. The candidates, however, were not cardboard cutouts.

Hosono, the “conservative,” expressed extreme reservations about the current government’s enthusiasm for nuclear reactor restarts, unsurprising given that he had been the state minister in charge of dealing with the aftermath of the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station. Nagatsuma, the “liberal,” was more than willing to open the supposed Pandora’s box of constitutional revision, albeit in order to write into the constitution liberal ideas like a right to privacy. And Okada, the “moderate,” showed no moderation as regards to two red-button electoral issues: raising the consumption tax and building a replacement facility for the Futenma Marines Air Station inside Okinawa Prefecture. Okada was vocally in favor of both, claiming that there were no reasonable alternatives.

The three-candidate race was nevertheless a bit of a sham. Okada and Hosono had received the nods in equal proportion from giant industrial unions like UA Zensen, the Electrical Workers Union and the Japan Auto Workers. Nagatsuma was shunned, and had to beg support from the smaller civil servant unions like the Japan Teachers Union – a tough sell given Nagatsuma’s history as a budget cutter.

In the final days it became obvious that Nagatsuma’s candidacy was going nowhere. His mere presence, however, was enough to prevent either Hosono or Okada from finishing with the 50 percent needed to avoid a run-off. Which is why, in the last few days, a dark cynicism enveloped the Hosono camp.

Hosono’s followers knew that in a run-off, in which DPJ Diet members would be the only ones voting, Nagatsuma’s supporters would tilt toward Okada. Even though Hosono was the strongest candidate among the general membership and a big hit with the local assembly members, he could still lose.

In fact, there was a precedent: Shinzo Abe’s election in 2012. In a five-man LDP presidential race, policy wonk Ishiba Shigeru finished first in both the local chapters and total votes. However, in the second-round run-off of just Diet members, Abe’s better personal relations with his Diet peers carried the day.

Hosono’s team was right to worry. He won the first round on Jan. 18, trouncing Okada in the prefectural assembly voting, finishing a close second in supporters’ race and winning among Diet members. The second round vote, however, went to Okada, thanks to his ability to attract the votes of Nagatsuma supporters.

So, despite a less than staggering mandate, Okada has taken the reins. He has moved fast to consolidate his rule, giving rival Hosono the Number Three position of policy chief and Nagatsuma and Renho the party’s two Acting President posts. He has stated that he does not intend to work with the

JIP unless the JIP changes – and JIP founder Hashimoto’s response was that his party will likely find ways to cooperate with the ruling LDP. (There was probably never any real hope for DPJ-JIP cooperation. Hashimoto hates fellow Osakan and former Socialist Party star Kiyomi Tsujimoto, one of Okada’s closest allies and advisors during the campaign.)

Is a brighter future for the DPJ (and by extension Japan’s experiment in actual two-party democracy) even a possibility, given the ideological and personal divisions? It’s hard to be optimistic. The current situation – in which a bloated LDP looms above a collection of pygmy opposition parties – reflects the defects (or perhaps the excellence) of an electoral system geared to delivering victories to LDP candidates. It’s hard to beat a system which Japan’s Supreme Court has declared to be “in a state of unconstitutionality” incompatible with constitutional guarantees of equality before the law.

The results of the last four national elections, however, have pointed out the system’s weak point: voter turnout. In 2009, with nearly 70 percent of the electorate going to the polls, the DPJ scored a huge victory. In 2012, ten million voters abstained from voting, turnout plunged to 59 percent and the LDP waltzed to victory. In 2014, despite a weak economy and unpopular policies, the LDP hung on to power, aided greatly by a historical

low turnout of 52 percent.

For the DPJ and the opposition, therefore, Job #1 is simple: get voters feeling good about voting again. The signs from the DPJ leadership election in this regard were positive. Okada is a notorious stiff (prior to the vote, LDP members confided to the press that they wanted Okada to win because of his history of dull earnestness). But he peppered his final pitch with self-deprecating humor that earned laughs from the room, and with the spunky Renho providing back up, he could get voters smiling, too.

More importantly, Okada also showed signs in his speeches of an understanding of the fundamental advantage opposition parties have over the LDP: a neutrality toward tradition.

Abe and the LDP, for all their talk of reform, are committed to preservation of a certain ineffable Japanese way of doing things. There is a Japanese style of agriculture, there is a Japanese style of capitalism, there is a Japanese style of family relations – that the LDP wants to save.

The historian S. C. M. Paine, looking at the differing fates of 19th-century China and 19th-century Japan, noted that while the reformers of Meiji Japan merely had to concern themselves with saving their nation, Chinese reformers were trying to save an entire civilization. Though Shinzo Abe proudly calls himself a “man of Choshu” and thus an heir to the Meiji reformers, his party and its many special interest friends have until now been much more redolent of the Chinese example – slow to respond unless forced, unwilling to change the status quo, suspicious of the ideas invented elsewhere – wanting to preserve the Japaneseness of Japan.

If Katsuya Okada and the DPJ can project a revitalized Meiji spirit, presenting the voters with a message of change without prejudice, and with national salvation as the only goal, he will have a paradigm to oppose the currently overbearing LDP – and find an answer to the *Tokyo Shimbun*’s question that ran as a headline the day after the Jan. 18 election: “How can they dispel the people’s sense of disappointment?”

Michael Cucek is a Tokyo-based consultant to the financial and diplomatic communities and author of the Shisaku blog on Japanese politics and society.

Legendary baseball player Joe DiMaggio and his stunning new bride, actress Marilyn Monroe, landed at Tokyo's Haneda Airport on Feb. 1, 1954, for what they were told would be a far more muted and civilized public reception than the post-wedding pandemonium that had stalked their every move in the U.S. That prediction, however, was off on a scale of historic proportions. At the first sight of the couple's appearance at the door of the plane, an estimated 3,000 Japanese fans broke through the police security on the runway and stormed the Pan American aircraft.

Not even U.S. Air Force MP reinforcement could quell the riotous mob. Joe and Marilyn fled back inside, and finally made their exit through a rear luggage hatch into a convertible. They put the top up and promptly headed to the Imperial Hotel, skipping the planned Ginza parade route where thousands more awaited their arrival in the deep of winter.

The sight of a decoy motorcade hours later was enough to send the usually polite and orderly Japanese fans on the Ginza marching en angry masse to Hibiya, where they promptly surrounded the hotel and jammed the revolving doors as they fought to enter, their overspill smashing garden ornaments and crashing through the glass walls of the lobby. The illustrious hotel – which had once withstood the upheaval of the Great Kanto Earthquake – was now imploding under the fury of fans scorned.

Panicking hotel management eventually persuaded a frightened Marilyn to make an appearance on the balcony. Waving to the throngs “like I was a dictator or something,” Japan's new goddess threw them a kiss that magically lulled their earlier wrath into a purring retreat, and all soon quietly vanished back into the streets from where they came.

It was but the start of a bizarre honeymoon best remembered around the world as the first lap of the fast track to Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio's dramatic split less than eight months away.

Although Marilyn had already received considerable acclaim for her appearance in movies such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *How To Marry A Millionaire*, as well as her much talked-about, walk-on part in *All About Eve*, Marilyn's monster roles in such successes as *The Seven Year Itch* and *Some Like It Hot* were still ahead of her. Even in America, she was not yet considered a full-fledged superstar. Yet Japan, where her every appearance provoked hysteria, proved otherwise. There was widespread debate in the Japanese media on the Marilyn phenomenon spreading uncontrollably across the country. Columnists worried that the next fashion for Japanese women would be to do away with underwear altogether, or for demure ladies in kimono to start exaggeratedly wagging their behinds. Marilyn was without question the most discussed topic in the nation's media that year.

Joe DiMaggio, who already held a solid position in the celebrity pantheon, had good reason to think he was still the main event. Just three years earlier, he had come to Japan on a sold-out All Star tour with such players as Yogi Berra, Billy Martin, Ferris Fain, and Eddie Lopat. They had been met by thousands of devoted autograph seekers, and he remembered the adulation they had extended to him very well.

Although the honeymoon was the ostensible reason for the

Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio's Tokyo “Honeymoon”

Marilyn Monroe brought Hollywood glamor to post-war Japan, and eclipsed her famous new husband, who didn't take it lightly.



couple to travel together, a cursory look at Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio's itinerary suggests that Joe didn't have much romancing in mind when he signed on. The tour had been arranged by Joe's mentor from his baseball days with the San Francisco Seals, Lefty O'Doul, who was now an advisor to the Yomiuri Giants. It was, in fact, scheduled long before Marilyn had finally accepted Joe's multiple proposals of marriage just a couple of months earlier.

The official host and sponsor of their 'honeymoon' was none other than the Yomiuri Giants and *Yomiuri Shimbun* owner Matsutaro Shoriki, who left little to chance, or heaven forbid, Marilyn's wishes, in exploiting the windfall Hollywood spectacle. Each day was regimented around Joe's visits to baseball camps, coaching and interviews, with a few days thrown in at a luxury resort for golf, another activity that left Marilyn out. Their visits to Osaka, Fukuoka and Hiroshima were all about baseball. Everything was meticulously orchestrated to give the still struggling Giants and Japanese professional baseball a boost in postwar Japan.

Marilyn's usefulness was bountifully evident early on, and Shoriki was delighted. Trouble was, the cameras and the fans loved her just a little too much for Joe's very small comfort zone. Each time Marilyn appeared in the stands to support her husband's high-profile coaching sessions, all thought of baseball quickly left the spectators' minds . . . and too often the players' as well.

Reports of loud arguments in their suite and camouflaged bruises started to circulate almost immediately. Marilyn's

A tumultuous year. Marilyn married Joe DiMaggio in January, honeymooned in Japan – and split from him in October. (A bar in 21st century Japan remembers the era.)

bandaged arm in a splint only fuelled the rumors of a meltdown. Joe sulked publicly, while Marilyn exuded her trademark transcendental sweetness, betraying only the rarest glimpses of boredom as she dutifully accompanied her husband to endless baseball photo ops and receptions.

No wonder then, that Marilyn lunged at the chance to take time out from her honeymoon to entertain the troops in Korea. The idea was first planted before Marilyn had even touched down in Tokyo, and was formalized soon after with the arrival of an official invitation from General John E. Hull, commander of U.S. forces in the Far East. The dates coincided with yet another Central League training camp appearance for Joe. How perfect.

Marilyn did make some effort to engage her husband's support in the new patriotic endeavor, but was rebuffed.

“Go if you want to,” DiMaggio famously suggested. “It's your honeymoon.”

The Marilyn who the Japanese remember from 1954 bore little resemblance to the troubled actress known for chronic tardiness on shoots and her increasingly debilitating fear of standing before the camera, exacerbated by a pill-induced pattern of destructive behavior. Accounts from Japan and Korea marveled at her professionalism and thoughtfulness.

Travelling from camp to camp in Korea, she never asked

for special dressing rooms, often changing at the last minute behind the curtains from flight jacket and boots to show-stopping attire. Hotel staff reported their astonishment that Hollywood's most beautiful star would wash her own lingerie. One Japanese bellboy recounted in an interview that Marilyn was not like the usual foreign visitor at his hotel who leaves a mess. “She is meticulously tidy,” he gushed, “perhaps the tidiest foreign guest we've ever had.”

Her conquest of the U.S. troops in Korea on the whirlwind tour of the frozen fronts created nonstop bedlam – and marked, perhaps, the happiest moments of her career. Performing live concerts, particularly in front of such large, wild audiences, was unfamiliar terrain, but the moment she stepped out for her first song of the tour at a remote mountain tent camp, she was truly in her element.

Cameras on movie sets could trigger hives of anxiety, but Marilyn's legendary hold on men in face-to-face encounters empowered her. The hardy Marines braved the freezing temperatures in hooded parkas and boots to see the woman of their dreams appear before them in a revealing, wisp of a dress with thin spaghetti straps. The boys went wild. Snow was falling on her bare arms, but in facing the 17,000 yelling soldiers, she was to recall years later, for the first time in her life, “I felt . . . no fear of anything. I felt only happy . . . I felt at home.”

To be fair to DiMaggio, not many husbands would have been happy to witness such worshipful fixation bestowed on their wife . . . and he had good reason to believe she reached out for it. To make matters irreversibly worse, the world was not that interested in what Joe was doing for Yomiuri. So it must have been more than a little painful to have your wife then gush upon her return to Tokyo, “It was so wonderful, Joe. You've never heard such cheering.” To which Mr. American Icon could only reply, “Oh yes I have.”

Ultimately, not a whole lot is known of the impressions she actually took home from Japan, but there are mountains of anecdotes in which Marilyn made indelible impressions with small acts of kindness and genuine delight in the encounters with the Japanese people on tour. It was, however, quite the opposite from what witnesses described as the routinely surly behavior of the groom – who obviously felt eclipsed on a trip that was to have showcased his charisma and impressed upon his bride the scope of his international stature.

In reality, Joe and Marilyn's marriage never seems to have enjoyed a good stretch, and the disastrous Tokyo honeymoon was but a start to an intense and mercifully short chapter of her life. It's well known that DiMaggio was to carry a torch for Marilyn right until her untimely death . . . and beyond.

What was called a “nine month misunderstanding” reached its cataclysmic finale shortly after their return from Tokyo, when Marilyn's infamous white skirt billowed high above her head during the filming of *The Seven Year Itch*. The incident, unfolding as it did in front of thousands of New Yorkers eager to catch a glimpse of Marilyn, raised Joe's obsessively jealous behavior to new heights and the ensuing violence appeared to have accelerated the inevitable breakup.

Weeks later, Marilyn sued for divorce on grounds of mental cruelty. It was an ending all but impossible to imagine a few months earlier, when their ecstatic smiles at the start of their Tokyo honeymoon touched off the most frenzied mob adulation Haneda had ever witnessed. ●

Mary Corbett is a writer and documentary producer based in Tokyo.

In a difficult press conference at the FCCJ, the mother of Islamic State hostage Kenji Goto pleaded for mercy and his return. Nine days later, they murdered him.

Junko Ishido's tearful appeal



Junko Ishido at the Club

by JULIAN RYALL

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, JUNKO Ishido did extremely well.

Greeted at an FCCJ press conference by a blizzard of camera flashes, a phalanx of TV crews and questions that, while delivered gently, were still focused on the impending execution of her son by extremists from the Islamic State, she remained largely composed.

The tears came, but that was inevitable given that Ishido was speaking just four hours before the expiry of the 72-hour deadline set by Islamic State for the Japanese government to pay a ransom of \$200 million in return for

region, saying, "Kenji has always been fascinated by the people of Islam and its culture and he has visited your country many times. He bears no hatred toward the people of the Islamic faith.

"My son is very kind and has worked hard for many years to create a better world and to help children," she said. "If he is released, then I am certain he will continue to do more good deeds around the world."

Ishido said her son had travelled to Syria in an effort to negotiate the release of Yukawa, a friend who had

It took a lot of courage – in difficult circumstances and in the full glare of the media – in order to plead for her son's life

the freedom of Kenji Goto, her son, and Haruna Yukawa. That deadline passed shortly before 3 pm on Jan. 23, with no news from either the group holding the two men or the Japanese government as to their fate.

Around 31 hours later, a picture with an accompanying soundtrack of 47-year-old Goto reading a statement was released on the Internet. And while it brought a degree of hope for Ishido, it brought a tragic conclusion to the crisis for the family of Yukawa. The still image showed Goto holding a photo of his friend's decapitated body. On Jan. 25, the government confirmed that it believed that Yukawa had been murdered.

Unfortunately, Ishido's pleas for her son's release fell on deaf ears. Islamic State announced his killing on Feb.1. At the press conference, Ishido had pointed out her son's affinity for the

been captured by Islamic State fighters in August of last year.

"Kenji was always filled with great kindness towards others and a desire to see justice done, and that is why he still went to try to release his friend," she added.

"I can only pray, as a mother, for his release. If I could offer my life, I would plead that my son be released. It would be a small sacrifice on my part."

In response to many of the questions that were put to her, 76-year-old Ishido tended to go off on tangents about nuclear energy and world peace, but Justin McCurry, who chaired the event, said that was understandable given the pressure that she was under.

"She was pretty nervous in the anteroom before we came out for the press conference. I'm aware that some people who were there thought that

she wandered too far off topic, but it took a lot of courage for her to come to the Club at all – at short notice, in difficult circumstances and in the full glare of the media – in order to plead for her son's life," he said.

She also stated that she was under enormous pressure from friends and family not to go ahead with the press conference, taking phone calls from concerned relatives until shortly before she took to the stage urging her to cancel the event.

"My sense during and immediately after the conference was that she had shown extraordinary courage and resilience in what are, in truth, awful circumstances, in order to get her message out," McCurry said. "And we can only hope that it was seen by her son's captors and that they act on her request."

Repeatedly, Ishido insisted that her son "is not an enemy of Islamic State." Deeply upset, she at one point offered the hostage-takers her own life in return for that of her son, adding that she had been "weeping for three days" since the video was released and chastising her son for leaving for Syria when his wife had only given birth to their child two weeks previously.

"I wondered how Kenji could have left his family behind like that, but he was determined to save his friend," she said. "That's just the kind of person that he is."

Ishido also made a plea to the Japanese government to intervene to save her son.

"The time left for my son is very short," she said. "I ask that the Japanese government do everything that it can to help him come home."

She expressed her appreciation for the "great kindness" she had received from people in Japan and apologized profusely for "the tremendous inconveniences and trouble that my son has caused."

After his murder, AP reported her response, including the simple: "Please forgive me for not finding any words."

All Club Members – including those who knew Goto personally – only share her wish that his return had been possible. ●

Julian Ryall is the Japan correspondent for the Daily Telegraph.



Emcee John R. Harris schmoozes the crowd. Below, Club Vice-President Michael Penn serves guests; Telegraph correspondent Julian Ryall gets to grips with meishi etiquette.

Below, the Club provided a buffet and drinks; Kato Kichibe Shoten provided saké.



HACKS & FLACKS

Hacks-n-Flacks, the Club's annual New Year's party that unites journalism and PR in a boozy schmoozathon, drew a capacity crowd of 260 on Jan. 23. Reminding our PR pals that supporting the FCCJ is good business, emcee John R. Harris recommended three ways to do just that: 1) become an Associate Member; 2) hold PR events at FCCJ (where prices are a fraction of hotels); and – most important! – 3) advertise in No.1 *Shimbun*. Guests sipped sake and whiskey donated by Kato Kichibe Shoten and Suntory and scarfed sushi from Masukomi Sushi.

(Photos by Takashi Aoyama)



Club President Lucy Birmingham, Richard Lloyd Parry and Ambassador Thierry Dana; Richard talks to the press after the presentation

CHARLIE HEBDO

ON JAN. 9, A GROUP of journalists gathered at the French Embassy residence to submit a letter of condolence to the ambassador following the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* magazine. The letter was signed by over 80 people, gathered in just a few hours by the letter's organizers, London *Times* Asia editor Richard Lloyd Parry and *Le Figaro's* Regis Arnaud. In Japanese, English and French, the letter read:

We, the undersigned, Japanese and foreign journalists working in Japan, condemn unreservedly the murderous attack on the offices of the French magazine, Charlie Hebdo, in Paris on Wednesday.

Japan, which has also suffered extremist violence, understands well the shock and pain inflicted by such acts. We regard it as the right and duty of all journalists to report, to challenge and, on occasion, to ridicule individuals and institutions, including religions, without fear of retribution. We offer our sincere condolences to the families of those who died in the attack; and we declare solidarity with our brave French colleagues as they continue to do their jobs in the face of violence and intimidation.

(Photos by Takashi Aoyama)

Flowers by Toshiki Sawada



FCCJ EXHIBITION

TOSHIKI SAWADA (1959-2010) was an illustrator and picture-book writer active in a wide range of fields, including not only books, but advertising, painting and more. The collection shown at the Club consists largely of paintings of flowers dating from the beginning of his career (1985 to 1990).

Oil crayons, colored pencils, watercolor, acrylic paint, colored paper etc. are used to produce these brightly colored flower pictures. He also worked freely in a variety of techniques, including silkscreen and paper-making, to produce works in “molded washi paper.”

In addition to the works in the Main Bar, an exhibition of his silkscreen pictures is on display in the Masukomi Sushi restaurant. ①

Toshiki Sawada was born in Aomori Prefecture. He worked at the K2 Design Company before going freelance. Awards include the Japan Picture Book Award and its Readers' Prize award. He died in 2010 of acute myelogenous leukemia.

HEARD AT THE CLUB

“Journalists shouldn’t rely on Wikipedia. I have lots of enemies in Japan, and they always try to change the information on my page.”

Shuji Nakamura, Nobel Prize in Physics winner, 2014, at the FCCJ on Jan. 16



JOIN THE MOVIE COMMITTEE ...

... at 6:30 pm on Mon., Feb. 23 for a sneak preview screening of *The Curtain Rises*, the cinematic debut of Japan’s most popular girl group, Momoiro Clover Z (“Momoclo” for short), who will all be on hand for the Q&A. Adapted from the bestselling YA novel of the same name by renowned avant garde theater director Oriza Hirata, *The Curtain Rises* features a rare comingling of tried and tested talent from screen, stage and song. The director, Katsuyuki Motohiro of *Bayside Shakedown* (Odoru Daisosasen) series fame, worked from a script by Kohei Kiyasu, screenwriter



of the 2013 Japan Academy Prize-winning *The Kirishima Thing*, another story about the importance of clubs to high school social hierarchy. The film also stars 2014 Berlin Silver Bear-winning actress Haru Kuroki as the girls’ inspiring, feminist teacher. (Japan, 2015; 119 min; in Japanese with English subtitles; Courtesy of T-Joy.)

— Karen Severns

RED CROSS



Gi!nz: left to right: Masaji Matsuyama, Yoshimasa Hayashi, Yasukazu Hamada

FCCJ president Lucy Birmingham giving a Y266,900 donation to Red Cross Director General Mr. Hiroshi Narita from the Gi!nz (ギインズ) Band charity concert held on Nov. 6, 2014. The four Gi!nz Band rock n’ rollers are LDP lawmakers of the National Diet, and include Yoshimasa Hayashi (band leader; guitar), Yasukazu Hamada (singer), Masaji Matsuyama (guitar) and Hachiro Okonogi (singer).



REGULAR MEMBERS

MASAKO NAGATO was promoted to foreign editor of the *Sankei Shimbun* in 2014 after serving five years as deputy foreign news editor mainly focusing on the U.S. She joined *Sankei* in 1988, and worked as a staff writer for cultural news, city news and international news before being appointed as New York bureau chief in July 2004. In New York she covered international affairs, mainly focusing on the United Nations and U.S. internal politics.



WILLIAM A. RIPLEY is an award-winning correspondent for CNN based at the network’s Tokyo bureau. A journalist with 15 years of experience, Ripley is responsible for covering major news stories from Japan and across the Asia Pacific region. Ripley studied journalism at the University of Missouri and started his career in that state before working for television stations in Texas and Colorado prior to joining CNN. He has won four Regional Edward R. Murrow awards and a Heartland Regional Emmy award. He was honored by the Texas Association of Broadcasters with the Steve Pieringer award for outstanding valor in news coverage, which is given to journalists who exhibit bravery by going above and beyond the call of duty.



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Kai Lip Ang, Brunei Energy Service Company
Hiroshi Seki, Idemitsukosan Co., Ltd.

Etsuji Imamura, I-Max Corporation
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University of Hawaii Press

Kyodo Tsushin news yotei 2015

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The forbidden worlds of Haruki Murakami
Matthew Carl Strecher.
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