

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

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THE

Former commission chairman
Kiyoshi Kurokawa reflects on the
year following the Diet report on
the Fukushima nuclear accident



POWER

Sports writer
Fred Varcoe
analyzes Tokyo's
Olympic victory



GAMES

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Can it perform as well with the nuclear challenge?

+ David McNeill profiled Losing our hearts to Tony Bennett Film festival round up



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Heard at the Club

“All war is insane.”

Tony Bennett,
singer,
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Cover photo of Fukushima Daiichi: AP Photo/Toshifumi Kitamura

From the President



THE WEEKS HAVE BEEN SPEEDING BY, THANKFULLY WITH October's cooler days and a whiff of fall in the air. On top of the agenda is our new membership campaign launched Oct. 1. We're offering enticing deals in the Regular, Journalist/Writer and Associate membership categories for a limited time only. New Regular and Journalist/Writer memberships will receive credit on their joining fees. New Associate members will receive a generous ¥100,000 credit. Sponsors (FCCJ members who introduce a new member) will receive a dining certificate worth ¥10,000 and ¥20,000 respectively. The campaign is a great opportunity to promote our many excellent services, including our new website!

Oct. 15 marks the launch of the renewed website, at www.fccj.or.jp. Our hardworking website team, Greg Starr (Editor-in-chief) and Said Karlsson (Multi-media Editor) in collaboration with Next, Inc. have created a highly accessible site with a new design and simplified interface. It offers multi-media functions such as live streaming and connectability to social media. It also has a responsive design for smart phones and tablets. The front page highlights more of the Club's facilities and events beyond PAC, such as dining, the library, film screenings and entertainment so viewers can get a better sense of what's going on at the Club. It includes a "Dispatches" blog that showcases the work of Club members through links to their articles. The website team says that the site is set up for further development and they are open to ideas and comments.

We're uploading videos from most of our press events onto YouTube to broaden the knowledge of the clubs activities. We also plan to use YouTube as the host for our live streaming service, but in order to do so we need 100 subscribers. It's super easy to become one. Just visit the FCCJchannel page at www.youtube.com/FCCJchannel and click the "subscribe"-button.

The number of live streaming viewers has steadily increased, along with our announcements and visual/sound quality. The PAC presser on Sept. 24 with Gregory Jaczko received 80 viewers from around the globe, the largest number so far. During his talk, the controversial former chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission stressed the importance of getting the public involved in government plans to restart Japan's nuclear reactors. An impactful public voice is always needed. This reminded me of the Club's vital role as platform for freedom of speech. Our live streaming service and social media connections will significantly strengthen this platform and our public reach.

Interestingly, the Freedom of the Press Committee is taking on this issue in a unique way. With the coordinated help of FCCJ staff, it is now building a Journalist Information Service to better inform our members about media events. To quote chairman Michael Penn, "The service is now being fashioned to ensure that the FCCJ becomes a crucial artery by which foreign journalists can gain the information they need to do their jobs more effectively."

We are planning to increase our member services. One example is a quarterly buffet dinner for new members to meet the president, board of directors and selected journalists and associate members. This could also be an excellent networking opportunity. A monthly meet for new and old members in the Main Bar is another option. Please let me know your ideas.

On Sept. 18, I was delighted to meet the 15 student members attending the DeRoy Memorial Scholarship Committee workshop with keynote speaker Mr. Jogin Bae, counselor for political affairs at the Korean Embassy in Tokyo. The Scholarship Fund's annual fundraising dinner will be held on Friday, Dec. 6, so please attend if you can. It's for an honorable cause and promises to be an enjoyable evening. (For inquiries please contact the front desk.)

Attracting students and young people to the Club is a major goal not only to revitalize our membership but as part of our upcoming *koeki* (public service) status. On this front, we're excited to announce that our collaboration with Tokyu/IRS and JTB has already borne fruit – we've booked a high school tour and journalist talk for February next year. High school and college tours normally take up to two years to arrange, but interest in the FCCJ has been way beyond expectations. Indeed, the Club has so much to offer.
– Lucy Birmingham



BLESSED IN BANGKOK

Gwen Robinson on why the Thai capital is the best location for an Asian-based correspondent

THE TRAFFIC STILL SUCKS. THE NAMES ARE AS unpronounceable – and unspellable – as ever. The opium warlords have long died out and the spooks have moved on to more conspiratorial pastures. Even the old guerrilla conflicts across Thailand's borders have for the most part calmed down, while the nasty regimes – notably the one in Myanmar – have metamorphized into beacons of democratic reform: well, at least, most of them are trying to.

But Thailand – and more specifically, Bangkok – remains an ideal base for Asia correspondents, as I realized when I returned to live here in late 2011 after 22 years away.

As a story in its own right, Thailand is not the center of intrigue and danger it was in the swashbuckling 1980s: your heart sinks when an editor wants an analysis of Thai politics or farmer protests over the Thai rice subsidy scheme. How to make it interesting when even explaining the rice scheme, or the clash between yellow and red shirts and the military over the Thai constitution, takes hundreds of words? And natural disasters are huge but grim stories to cover, as many Bangkok-based correspondents found from the 2007 Southeast Asian tsunami.

Beyond Thai politics and natural disasters, the big stories for a Bangkok-based correspondent are different now – it's all about "ASEAN connectivity," China's strategic moves, the opening of Myanmar and rising economic activity in Thailand, Vietnam and neighboring countries.

Back in the late 1980s, life was somewhat wilder. Journalists sneaked across borders to cover guerrilla conflict in Cambodia, ethnic Karen fighters in

Myanmar or opium wars in the northwest. Vast refugee camps sprawled along both borders. Everyone was on "coup watch" and Myanmar monitoring in Bangkok, and the nightclubs of Patpong seethed with shady characters and correspondents (frequently one and the same) exchanging information and making contacts.

Wong's, off Sathorn Road, the legendary all-night dive that drew journalists far and wide in the Vietnam War era, is still going. But like the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, now housed in comfortably tatty premises on top of the Maneeya Center after downgrading from the Dusit Thani hotel, it's not what it used to be.

Even so, the old club – just like Wong's – can still draw a crowd on a Friday night, or for the occasional press event and the FCCT annual ball.

Among other compelling reasons to choose Bangkok:

1) Logistics: The city is still an Asian hub, having cleverly capitalized on the rise of no-frills travel to establish a two-airport dynamic that herds all the budget airlines into the old Don Muang terminal. You can fly Yangon-Bangkok return for as little as 4,000 baht (about \$130), and it takes just 55 minutes. New intriguing routes include Bangkok to Mae Sot and onwards to the old colonial port town of Mawlamyine in eastern Myanmar, until July only reachable by road from Yangon.

2) Costs: Unlike some places where correspondents still convince editors they're in hardship posts while laughing into their mojitos, Bangkok's attractions are a relatively cheap and pleasant base are no secret. Prices have risen for many key things. But it's worth noting you can still get a bowl of noodles for \$1, a Thai massage for \$10 and that property rentals are still amazing value compared to the eye-watering prices in Hong Kong, Singapore and even Yangon.

A large, two-bedroom apartment in central Bangkok can be had for as little as \$700 to \$1,000 per month.

3) Lifestyle: The "yuppification" of Bangkok is transforming the city into a consumer paradise. The gleaming shopping malls, like Central World and the fast-rising Central Embassy and Emporium II, are worthy of Singapore or even Tokyo. Thai food, if you're a fan, is unbeatable whether it's a simple bowl of spicy noodles or sumptuous multi-course meals. In the 1980s, the range of other cuisines was limited although surprisingly good. But Bangkok has now become a gastro-mecca with outstanding Japanese, French, Middle Eastern and Italian restaurants – crowned by my favorite, Appia, a rustic Roman trattoria on Soi Sukhumvit 31.

For war correspondents of yesteryear, the color and danger are still there, in pockets: a vicious secessionist conflict in the south and occasional clashes between red and yellow shirts and the military. Fighting continues in northern Myanmar between Kachin ethnic rebels and the military, while security concerns continue over Thai-Cambodian territorial disagreements.

These days, though, many of us are chasing bankers and businessmen rather than coup plotters and CIA agents. Our thrills are often reduced to hair-raising dashes through Bangkok traffic on motorbike taxis or covering an angry farmers' protest over rubber or rice prices. Maybe it's a sign of the times but that seems to be enough danger for many of us Bangkok hacks. **1**

Gwen Robinson was until June the *Financial Times* regional correspondent based in Bangkok. She is now senior fellow at the Institute for Security and International Studies at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok and an occasional contributor to the *FT*, *Nikkei Asian Review* and other publications.

Invite a friend to Join the Club

Earn ¥10,000 to ¥20,000 worth of Dining Certificates by introducing a friend or colleague who becomes a Member of the FCCJ.

For details on our new membership campaign* go to our website at: fccj.ne.jp

* Valid Oct. 1 thru Dec. 31, 2013

Join the Movie Committee ...



... at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, Nov. 6 for a cocktail party and screening of *Tatsumi*, Eric Khoo's extraordinary documentary tribute to *gekiga* innovator Yoshihiro Tatsumi. The director and his subject, as well as actor Tetsuya Bessho, who voiced many of the "characters" in the film, will join us for cocktails and stay for the Q&A after the screening. The film brings Tatsumi's compelling journey to animated life. Tatsumi channeled postwar despair into a more realistic type of manga, pioneering *gekiga* (lit. "dramatic pictures") and capturing the mood of the times in their real-life subject matter – dark, adult, as twisted as they were touching, and usually, unforgettable. – **Karen Severns**

(Singapore, 2011, 98 min. in Japanese with English subtitles.)



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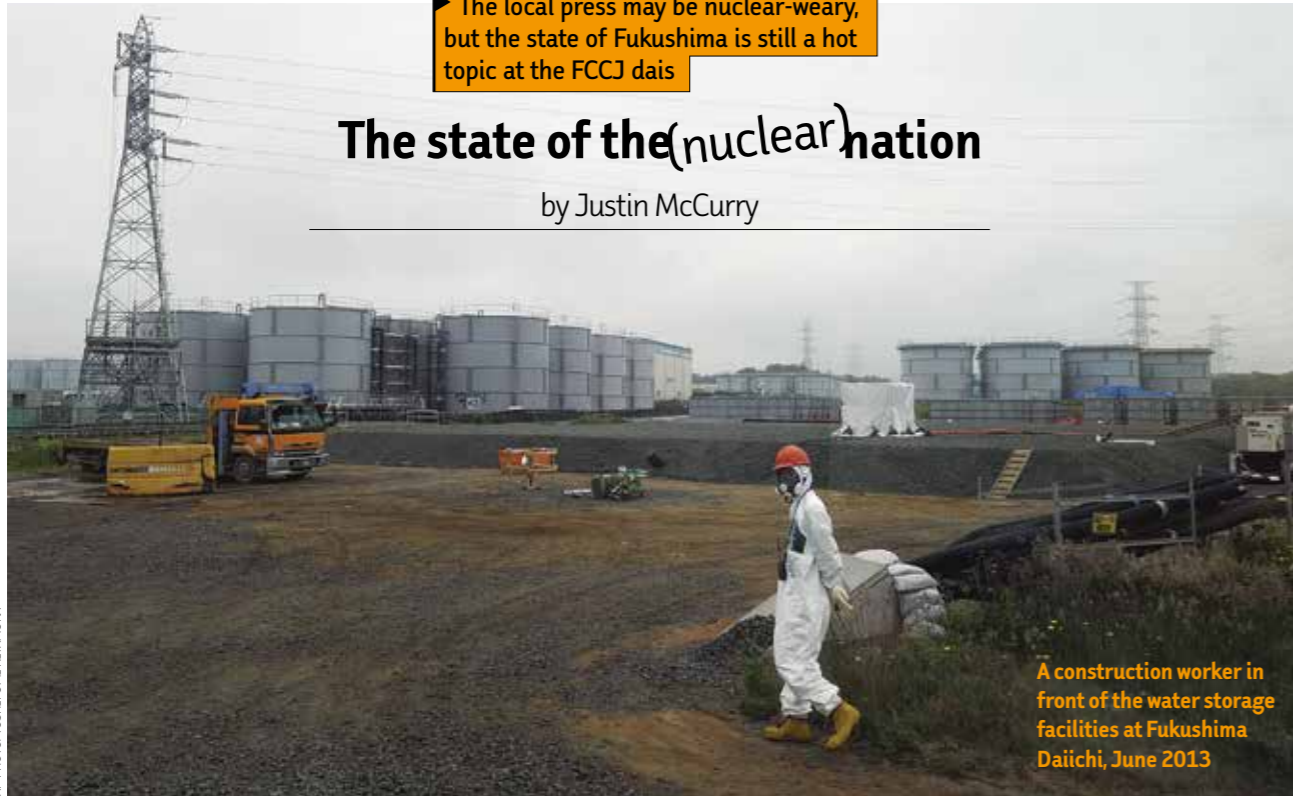
For those already in on the secret, the application form is available on the FCCJ website or from the 19F Club office.



The local press may be nuclear-weary, but the state of Fukushima is still a hot topic at the FCCJ dais

The state of the (nuclear) nation

by Justin McCurry



A construction worker in front of the water storage facilities at Fukushima Daiichi, June 2013

AP PHOTO/TOSHIHIKI KITAHARA

Two-and-a-half years after it suffered a triple meltdown, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is again making international headlines.

For the many FCCJ correspondents who have covered the Fukushima crisis, the belated admission in August by the plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco), that as much as 300 tons of groundwater was seeping from the plant into the Pacific Ocean every day evoked memories of the utility's secretive, haphazard response in the immediate aftermath of the March 2011 disaster.

Then came the revelation that some of the 1,000 or so hastily constructed tanks storing contaminated water at the site had sprung leaks, sending radiation levels soaring in the immediate vicinity.

Those affected by the world's worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl in 1986, meanwhile, could only watch on in horror.

Plans to resume trial catches of a small number of marine species along the Fukushima coast were put on hold for a month – although they resumed days before the No. 1 Shimbun went to press – as slim hopes that the worst of the crisis had passed turned to anger and consternation. With the focus on Tepco's incompetence, for a while it seemed that the 160,000 people evacuated from their homes more than two years ago had ceased to exist.

The water leaks are a definite setback to

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as he seeks the early restart of more than a dozen reactors – a move he claims is essential if Japan's fledgling economic recovery is to stay the course. Then the September closure of Oi nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture, Japan's last working reactor, left the country without nuclear power for only the second time in more than 40 years.

Abe and other supporters of nuclear restarts accept that none of the country's 50 working reactors will go back online before the end of the year. While local approval is not a legal requirement for putting reactors back online, utilities are aware that they stand little chance of resuming nuclear energy production at safety-approved reactors without the support of nearby communities.

In August and September, the FCCJ hosted a number of key figures involved in the debates over the environmental crisis unfolding at Fukushima Daiichi, the plant's long-term future, and the push to restart nuclear reactors in other parts of the country.

THE NRA'S SHUNICHI TANAKA

One speaker who will help determine the future of Japan's energy nuclear industry is Shunichi Tanaka, chairman of the country's Nuclear Regulation Authority. In an address at the Club in early September, Tanaka said he was "aware" of the anxiety the Fukushima nuclear accident had caused in the

international community, and agreed with critics that Tepco had failed to properly monitor leaky storage tanks.

Tanaka, who has pulled few punches in his criticism of Tepco, played down the dangers the recent radiation spikes – which were the highest since March 2011 – posed to the health of plant workers and the surrounding environment. He insisted, too, that any decision to release contaminated water into the ocean would be taken only after it had been treated to reduce radioactivity to internationally accepted levels.

His chief criticism of Tepco on this occasion was that its ill-considered description of radiation releases over the summer had caused unnecessary alarm overseas. "What Tepco is talking about is the level of contamination," Tanaka said. "So to describe it with the unit 'millisieverts per hour' is scientifically unacceptable. It's like describing how much something weighs by using centimetres."

He said Tepco should have used the unit becquerel, which signifies the radioactivity levels in the water itself rather than the potential human exposure levels. "I have come to think they need to be spoon-fed," Tanaka said of the embattled utility. "It is regrettable that Tepco has caused confusion and fear in the international community by spreading misleading information."

Several months of mishaps at Fukushima Daiichi have added to concern that

Tepco is unable to handle the water crisis, as well as an unprecedented decommissioning process that is expected to last at least four decades.

PM Abe, among others, believes that Tepco should be more willing to accept outside help. Critics of the utility have doubts that a spirit of openness will turn the decommissioning operation into a genuinely international affair, but recent reports suggest that the utility – now resigned to more government interference in its operations – may have to swallow its pride and accept help from France and Russia, among others.

JACZKO AND TSUTSUI STATE THEIR CASE

According to Gregory Jaczko, former head of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Tepco and Japan's nuclear regulation authorities might have prevented the water crisis from spiraling out of control had they acted more quickly after consulting their counterparts in the U.S. in the immediate aftermath of the accident.

Jaczko, who spoke at the FCCJ in late September, said that U.S. and Japanese officials were aware very early on that leaks would pose a risk after huge quantities of water were used to cool molten fuel. "It's been known for a long time that this would be an issue," he said. "My biggest surprise is to some extent how it's been allowed to deteriorate... and how it's almost become a surprise again that there are contamination problems, that there is leakage out into the sea."

Jaczko, who resigned from the NRC last year, described the situation at Fukushima Daiichi as an "ongoing challenge rather than a crisis" but added that those challenges, including the safe storage of contaminated water, were "unprecedented."

"The contamination at Fukushima is very different from radiological events that have happened before," he said. "Recriticality does not appear to be a concern, but the need to continually provide cooling water is in itself creating an environmental problem. There is no solution that will make this go away tomorrow. Water will have to be pumped into the

reactors for years, until it is possible to cool them with air."

On the future of nuclear power in Japan, Jaczko was unequivocal, if ambitious. "We need to think about safety in a completely new way, so that it can't lead to evacuations or land contamination. It is time to completely remove the possibility of accidents with a complete rethink of nuclear technology and the reactors themselves. One hundred years from now, I would like to see a Japan that doesn't have to deal with nuclear risks."

His co-speaker, Tetsuro Tsutsui, a member of the Citizens' Commission on Nuclear Energy's sub-committee on Nuclear Regulation, had some practical advice for Tepco.

Citing concern over the cost and feasibility of building an "ice wall" around the Fukushima reactors, Tsutsui, a former mechanical engineer and construction manager at petrochemical plants, suggested building an underground barrier in the hills behind Fukushima Daiichi to prevent groundwater from reaching the reactors below. The removal of spent fuel and toxic water should proceed as planned, he added.

"Then we propose that the water-cooling of the damaged reactor cores should continue until the decay heat is reduced sufficiently for natural air circulation." The reactors, he said, should then be encased in a concrete sarcophagus, Chernobyl style.

Said Tsutsui, "Our solution relies on proven, conventional methods that can be implemented faster and with fewer obstacles" than the time-consuming and potentially dangerous plan to remove molten fuel preferred by Tepco and the Japanese government.

NIIGATA'S IZUMIDA DOES A U-TURN AS TOKAIMURA'S MURAKAMI STANDS FIRM

After limping through the most ignominious few months since the triple meltdown, Tepco has been given cause for guarded optimism from an unlikely source. In late September, the governor of Niigata, Hirohiko Izumida, a fierce critic of the utility, approved the firm's plan to seek safety approval ahead of the possible restart of two reactors at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, the world's biggest nuclear power plant.

Izumida, who had slammed Tepco during an appearance at the FCCJ in late August, said this week: "Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant may be halted but it is a living facility, and safety must be ensured at the plant." He vowed to withhold judgement on restarting the plant. But approval would be a significant step forward for Tepco, as restarting all seven Kashiwazaki-Kariwa reactors would allow it to make huge savings on fossil fuels every month.

But other local leaders remain steadfast in their opposition to all nuclear restarts, a stance consistently supported by a slight majority in public opinion polls. Among them is Tatsuya Murakami, the recently retired mayor of Tokaimura, whose uranium processing plant was the scene of a criticality accident in September 1999 in which two workers died and hundreds of residents were exposed to radiation.

Of the village's 20 assembly members, eight are opposed to the restart of the Tokai No. 2 nuclear power plant, 10 want it restarted, and two have yet to decide, Murakami said during a speech at the FCCJ. "According to an Ibaraki University study, just over 50 percent of Tokaimura residents do not want the plant to be restarted," he said, adding that the village had not conducted its own survey.

Murakami, who retired as mayor in late September, is clear about his stance. The threat of accidents and terrorist attacks means the safety of nuclear power plants can never be guaranteed, he said. "My point is that nuclear power plants themselves are dangerous. If a missile were to be aimed at one, we could do nothing about it, and there is no discussion in Japan right now about how you could stop a terrorist attack – not that I think it possible to do so."

"My point is that, because nuclear plants are inherently dangerous, and because there is nothing you can do to protect them if someone is determined to harm them, we have to get rid of them," he stated. "By having nuclear power plants, you put yourself in a very dangerous situation."

Murakami blasted Abe's recent overseas missions to sell Japanese nuclear technology as "unethical" and "shameful," given that there is still disagreement over the cause and effect of the Fukushima accident. "Many Fukushima residents are still displaced, and we don't know what's going to happen to Fukushima in the future," he said. "I don't think Japan is qualified to export nuclear power infrastructure. Such exports are unethical, and the government should stop this shameful behaviour."

When nuclear accidents occurred at Three Mile Island in 1979, and in Chernobyl in 1986, "we were told such accidents would never happen in Japan," Murakami said. "I think it showed our overconfidence and egotism." ❶

Justin McCurry is the Japan and Korea correspondent for the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers in London and Japan correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*. He also writes for the *Lancet* medical journal and reports for France 24 TV.



Shunichi Tanaka of the Nuclear Regulation Authority speaking at the Club

The leader of an effort to bring accountability to the Fukushima nuclear accident looks back at the effects of the historic report

Can a 4kg, 1400-page report change a country?

by Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa

On July 6, 2012, I was to appear before a crowd of journalists at the FCCJ to announce the delivery to Japan's National Diet of the report by the Diet's own Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission (NAIIC). I was tired but pleased. It was the first such commission in the history of democratic Japan, and the completion of the report – a short six months after receiving our mandate – was the result of sometimes frantic but always incredible efforts made by my assembled team of experts.

Although the reaction of the Diet legislators was (not unexpectedly) rather cool when I had handed over the report the previous day, my team was extremely proud of the depth of the report. I was looking forward to the press conference because the commission had received a

lot of attention from the global media. We had been surprised by the number of journalists that attended the many commission hearings and press briefings (which vindicated our decision to avoid the normal Japanese “press club” system, and to include simultaneous interpreting).

'ACCOUNTABILITY' HAS MORE WEIGHT THAN THE WORD 'RESPONSIBILITY' – EXCEPT IN JAPAN, IT SEEMS.

At the press conference, much was made by some journalists of the differences in the global version as opposed to the Japanese version, especially the statement about the accident being an incident “made in Japan” – my attribution of the causes of the accident to some of the conventions of Japanese culture. But those who read the Japanese version carefully, I believe, found the same conclusions and the same nuance.

Thanks to the global media, and the world-wide public interest in the shocking accident, our commission's report turned out to be highly valued overseas. Not only was the media coverage extensive, but the scientific community took notice. I (as leader of the team) was awarded the AAAS Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. I also humbly accepted being called one of the “100 Global Thinkers” by Foreign Policy magazine.

But while accolades are always appreciated, they were not the intention behind our report. We believed that exposing loose governance and lack of vigilance by the Japanese authorities and Tepco would galvanize the various arms of the nuclear “village” in Japan to rethink their way of operating. We also believed that it would help gain trust from the rest of the world by showing Japan's determination to deal with the disaster.

Unfortunately, although the report has now been in the hands of the Diet, the press and the general public for some 14 months, I'm afraid that it's hard to be optimistic. Most of the Japanese public doesn't understand the importance of checks and balances in a democratic government with three branches. So there's little public pressure on the government for prompt action.

That leaves the government free to move at its own sluggish pace, even in moments of crisis. The commission didn't receive our mandate until nine months after the accident. Then after our delivery six months later, it took another nine months for the first response to the seven recommendations that we made. Just half of one recommendation –

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to set up a Diet committee to supervise nuclear regulation – was adopted by the lower house. On April 8, 2013, and nine of our ten commissioners appeared at eight hours of hearings held by the newly created Special Committee for Investigation of Nuclear Power Issues. With the LDP in power now, we understand that acceptance of our recommendations has become even more political.

And that's pretty much been it so far. There was no response at all by Tepco or anyone else in the nuclear industry despite all of our detailed critical analysis of their actions leading up to and following the accident. In other words, the problems we highlighted in the report have yet to even be acknowledged, much less dealt with.

I had hoped that what made our commission such a success – the commitment to openness, transparency and global awareness – might have some affect on the way the nuclear elite did business. But it is now impossible to believe that the situation is getting any better, and the state of the Fukushima Nuclear Plant is a case in point. The briefings on the situation by Tepco are indecipherable. They don't even try to make themselves understood, by either the Japanese public or the international community. Their statements always seem to imply that they think this is all someone else's problem that landed on their plate purely by accident.

The information from the central government is also opaque, as are their plans for future handling of the crisis. It's fine for our prime minister to extol the safety of the country in front of the world, but we would hope he could back up his claims with scientific proof.

Curiously, the Japanese media has also lost its courage, with less and less critical coverage. (*Tokyo Shimbun* has been a rare exception, with fair and timely reporting on relevant issues.) This has left the people of the nation without a voice. Even if a journalist has information of critical importance, he rarely divulges it for fear of endangering his job or position. This deception is counter-productive and will only lead to a loss of faith from the international community. I wish the Japanese press would pressure the government and Tepco the same way that the foreign press tries to do.

IN THE MIDST of these immovable barriers of the present system that seem to heighten the difficulties faced in this nuclear disaster, I still find moments of hope, and several came directly as a result of the NAIIC commission.

They came from people who have

gone through a dramatic change in their careers after participating in work at the NAIIC. One of them is Tsuyoshi Shiina, who went on to become a Diet member, and is a member of the Diet committee on nuclear oversight mentioned above. Another is Satoshi Ishibashi, a senior team manager who launched a project with a team of dedicated young people called, “The Simplest Explanation of the National Diet of Japan Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission.” It's a website that intends to make all the complicated scientific discoveries made by the commission understandable to the general public. It's an excellent resource, and has recently added a series of videos that illustrates the findings in a very visual, simple way. It's only in Japanese, but an English version is now being produced.

Yurina Aikawa is another of our team who actually left behind a budding career in order to join NAIIC. She had been working at one of Japan's major papers, doing research on the nuclear accident, before she came to us. After the commission was dissolved, I asked her about her plans; she told me that she was going to continue her research on the victims of the disaster on her own. I had been surprised at her leaving her newspaper career to join us, and I was even more moved with this decision.

In August, the results of her research were published in a report – titled *Hinan Jakusha* (“The vulnerable evacuees”) – that documents the experiences of many victims whose fates are out of their control. It is an excellent, powerful book and I was pleased to be able to write a comment for it.

Individuals like Shiina, Ishibashi and Aikawa are helping to make sure that the nuclear accident and its victims remain on the nation's agenda. Given the recent political and social climate, this is not easy to do. But as much as I hail their efforts, they do not in any way excuse the continued floundering by everyone involved in the governmental and industrial efforts since this crisis began.

At a lecture at the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) earlier this year, I pointed out how the meaning of the word “accountability” has been lost in its translation to Japanese. I explained that in Japanese, accountability is translated as “the responsibility to explain,” rather than the true meaning, which is “the responsibility to carry out the duty one has been given.” “Accountability,” in fact, has more weight than the word “responsibility” – except in Japan, it

seems. But that has to end. We need to hold those responsible to account.

In the NAIIC report, accountability makes up a large part of our recommendations, though they are largely, and unfortunately, ignored. And since I believe that our recommendations would go a long way in not only helping us get beyond the present situation but would actually help us learn from it, I'm going to repeat them.

What we still need is an independent international committee, committed to scientific principles and transparency, that will come up with solutions to the problem and make proposals to the government, which in turn will make decisions and execute these solutions. We need a plan of action that deals with the mid- and long-term plans of the Fukushima disaster, and we need it to be shared with the world.

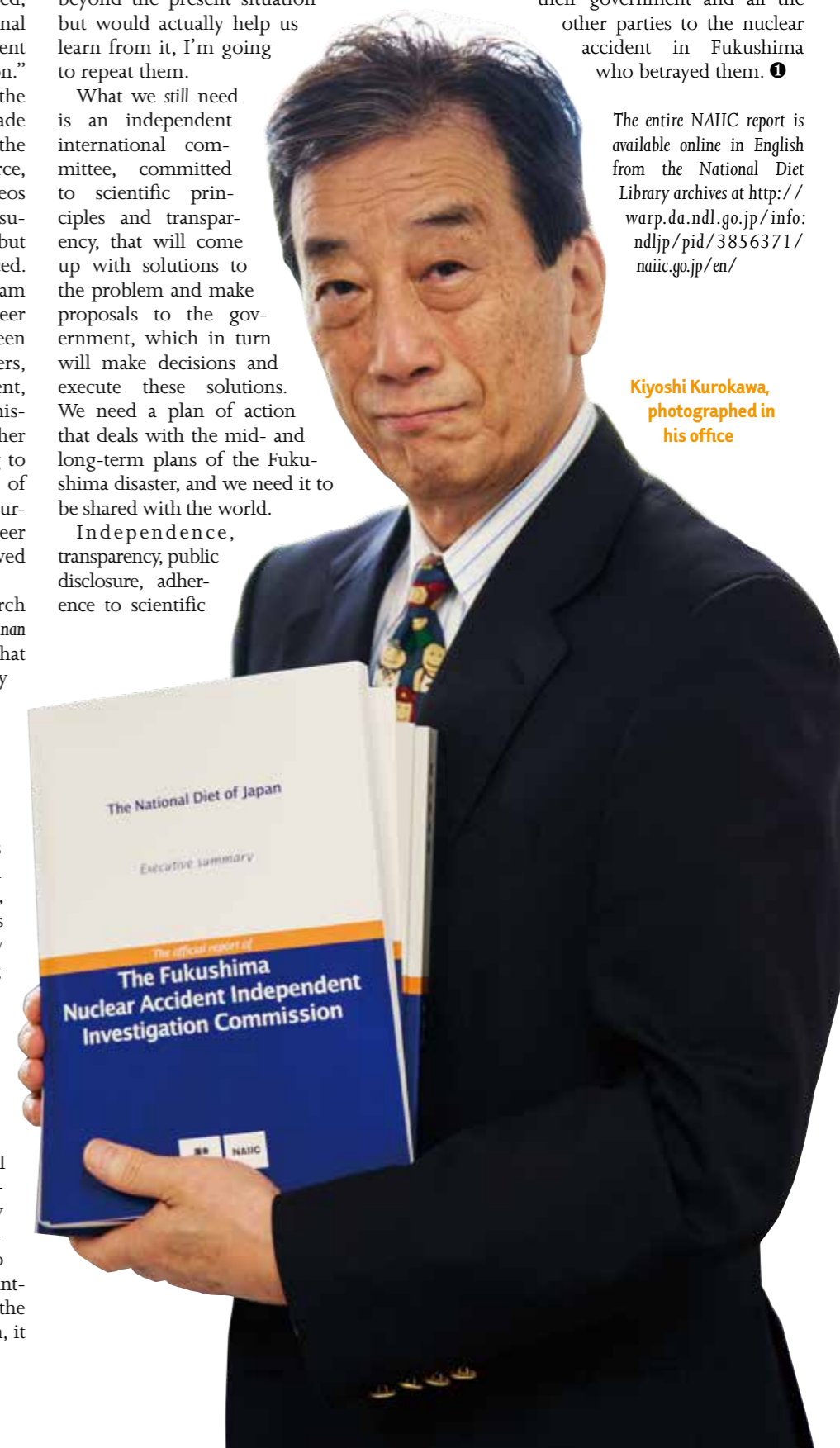
Independence, transparency, public disclosure, adherence to scientific

principles and an international approach are a must as a first step towards the recovery of trust in this globalized age.

It is because of these factors that NAIIC was so highly respected and earned the trust of the global community. There is an urgent need for the public to understand this – and to demand the same from their government and all the other parties to the nuclear accident in Fukushima who betrayed them. ❶

The entire NAIIC report is available online in English from the National Diet Library archives at <http://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/3856371/naaic.go.jp/en/>

Kiyoshi Kurokawa, photographed in his office





The load of the rings

by Fred Varcoe

In the days following Tokyo's successful bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games, media reports in Japan reminded people here of the cost of the March 11, 2011, earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. Over 16,000 people died with more than 2,000 still missing, presumed dead. The dead won't benefit from the Olympics, but the living are still struggling to benefit from the world's generosity following the disaster. Nearly 300,000 people in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures are still living in temporary housing. At this rate, the Olympic athletes will have accommodation before the disaster-affected homeless of Tohoku.

But while the shadow of Fukushima hung over the vote, it has to be remembered that it was a vote on Tokyo – not Fukushima and not Japan. The Olympic Games are awarded to a city, not an area or a country, so the response from Tsunekazu Takeda, the head of Tokyo's Olympic bid, made sense: "Radiation levels in Tokyo are still the same as in London, New York and Paris."

Having won the Games, Tokyo can now, hopefully, detach itself from the worries of Fukushima. Winning the Games is a cause for celebration, for both Japan and Tokyo. Japan's and Tokyo's history with the event has had its ups and downs.

Tokyo was first awarded the 1940 Summer Olympic Games but that was derailed by World War II. You might wonder what the International Olympic Committee was thinking awarding successive Games (Berlin hosted in 1936) to two belligerent, war-mongering states.

The IOC remembered Tokyo – and curiously forgot all about the war – when it awarded the city the 1964 Games (Tokyo also bid for the 1960 Games, which went to Rome instead). And while some might have wanted to punish Japan for its conduct pre-1945 – notably China and the two Koreas, who were still politically alienated from Japan – the 1964 Olympics served as a symbolic reintegration of Japan into the civilized world. And the country responded with a dynamic, high-tech celebration and a completely restructured city. Though North Korea boycotted, Japan's only hint of politicking came when the Olympic Flame was lit by runner Yoshinori Sakai, who was born in Hiroshima the day the Americans wiped it out with an atomic bomb.

Fred Varcoe is a freelance writer based in Chiba and has written about sports for *The Japan Times*, the *Japan Football Association*, *UPI*, *Reuters*, *dpa*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Sky Sports News*, *Golf International*, *Volleyball World*, the *International Volleyball Federation*, *Time Out* and others.

Japan got another Olympics eight years later when Sapporo hosted the Winter Games, and the country hosted the Winter Games again in 1998 in Nagano. With the 2020 Games, Japan will have hosted four Olympic Games, third overall and second-most – behind the United States – in the postwar era.

While the Winter Games carry a certain amount of prestige, Japan has been chasing the Summer Games for some time. Nagoya was stunned when it lost out to Seoul for the 1988 Games as the IOC opted to send the event to a country ruled by murderous dictator Chun Doo Hwan just a year after he had ordered the slaughter of hundreds, maybe thousands, of civilians in the southern city of Kwangju.

Of course, the selection of the host city has often been troubled by the exchange of favors and cash. A number of Olympic host cities (Salt Lake City, anyone?) have been accused of excessive "generosity" – including Nagano whose records mysteriously went up in flames. In recent years, the IOC has cleaned up its act by making changes to the bidding process, allowing its voters to concentrate on the merits of the bidding cities rather than the perks of their positions.

For the 2016 summer games, the Japan Olympic Committee decided to

go with Tokyo rather than Fukuoka. Tokyo responded with an impressive, beautiful bid that earned the top rating from the IOC after the initial evaluation of the bidding cities. Tokyo's advantages were clearly superior to those of its rivals (Rio de Janeiro, Madrid and Chicago), claiming it could provide "the most compact and efficient Olympic Games ever." But when the votes came in, Tokyo was third in the first two rounds and was eliminated behind Rio and Madrid; the latter in turn was trumped by the allure of Brazil and the attraction of seeing the Games in South America for the first time.

So what changed for this year's selection process? Bids from Rome, Baku and Doha were eliminated early on, leaving Tokyo, Madrid and Istanbul. All three had been persistent in their attempts to host. (Madrid had actually won the first vote for 2016.)

All had their own major attractions. Madrid presented a very economical

to the vote, in addition to the civil war in neighboring Syria.

Fukushima definitely spread a cloud of doubt over Japan but, unlike the crises in Spain and Turkey, the problem hasn't yet directly affected the bidding city. And Tokyo did an admirable job of learning from previous mistakes.

Bids need an emotional tone, and faces that click with the IOC delegates. The bid for 2016 was seen as spectacular from a technological point of view, drab from an emotional one. The push by then PM Yuko Hatoyama and then-governor Shintaro Ishihara were limp at best; the message seemed to be nothing more than "We build good cars."

Ishihara's successor as governor, Naoki Inose, wasn't a great improvement and made a couple of serious gaffes earlier this year, but he didn't carry Ishihara's baggage. And, surprisingly, even Abe came over as a likeable chap in his presentation – made in much better English than Hatoyama's.

As Abe shut the door on the horrors of

IF TOKYO WANTS TO LIVE UP TO ITS PROMISES IN 2020, IT NEED LOOK NO FURTHER THAN 1964.

bid and was attractively placed globally for the important broadcasting zones of Europe and the Americas. Istanbul had similar momentum to Rio in that the Games could be held in a new area, a different (Muslim) culture and in a city that straddles Europe and Asia. Tokyo, meanwhile, had the money, the technology and the best layout for the Games. They all had something going for them.

But the news over the past year hit them all hard. The economic crisis really started to bite in Spain, which saw unemployment reach 25 percent. And some saw Madrid's \$2 billion budget – half that of Tokyo's – as a sign of weakness. Olympic budgets invariably double, so there were also worries about whether Madrid would be able to keep up the payments. Spain probably led in the affordability stakes with Prince Felipe and Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr., the erudite son of the former head of the IOC. But it was obvious that Madrid's presentable façade hid a weak foundation.

Istanbul's budget was a whopping \$19 billion, which instantly raised red flags. Imagine that doubling. Voters also worried about the infrastructure, as everything would have to be built. Still, that may not have proved fatal until a wave of riots hit the city in the months leading up

Fukushima with his glib pronouncement "there's nothing to see there," paralympic athlete Mami Sato, also speaking in understandable English, opened the door to the emotions of the earthquake and tsunami, recounting how she spent six days wondering if her family in Miyagi were dead or alive. Sato emphasized how Japanese athletes had embodied the Olympic spirit with countless visits to those affected by the disaster – and *voilà!* . . . Tokyo's bid had its emotional connection. Following a good speech in English by Olympic fencing medallist Yuki Ota, Tokyo got two delightful speeches in French from HIIH Princess Takamado and former news presenter Christel Takigawa.

In the end, the mere possibility of disaster/Armageddon trumped the ongoing problems elsewhere. Madrid lost the runoff from the first round after tying with Istanbul; Tokyo overwhelmed Istanbul in the final, 60 to 36 (and embarrassing the editors of this magazine, who seemed to believe – in last June's issue – that the spectre of Inose and Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto would sink the Tokyo bid).

For further reasons for Tokyo's win, insiders point as well to a well-oiled PR campaign that launched its candidature in London, riding the coattails of a country still buzzing from its own wildly successful Olympics. It

also campaigned strongly on the domestic front after the IOC had taken a dim view of support figures for 2016 that showed less than half of Tokyo's population supported the bid. Of course, half of 35 million is still rather a lot, but the perception was negative and had to be put right. One of the major breakthroughs was the post-London Olympics parade of medallists through Ginza, which attracted half a million people and put the feel-good factor back into Tokyo. An IOC poll saw public support at 70 percent at the beginning of this year and a government poll saw that figure rise to 92 percent 10 days before the vote.

So what does it mean for Tokyo and Japan?

From a sporting point of view, the Olympics represent the ultimate goal for many athletes and a home Olympics focuses and intensifies their aim. The host country usually increases the number of athletes and the number of medals. In the 2012 games, for example, Britain fielded 541 athletes for 65 medals and 29 golds, whereas in 2008, it won 19 golds and 47 medals overall with 313 athletes.

But there are other very visible results, like the transformation that Tokyo underwent prior to the 1964 games. The Olympics provided the impetus to get things done as Tokyo placed priority on improving infrastructure that would assist the Games, including "road, harbour, waterworks development on a considerable scale over a significant area of the city and its environs." Tokyo venues such as the National Stadium (soon to be rebuilt), Komazawa Sports Park and Yoyogi Gymnasium are still being used today.

If Tokyo wants to live up to its promises in 2020, it need look no further than 1964. Avery Brundage, the president of the IOC in 1964, was fulsome in his praise: "No country has ever been so thoroughly converted to the Olympic movement. . . . Every difficulty had been anticipated and the result was as near perfection as possible. Even the most callous journalists were impressed, to the extent that one veteran reporter named them the "Happy" Games. This common interest served to submerge political, economic and social differences and to provide an objective shared by all the people of Japan. . . . The success of this enterprise provided a tremendous stimulus to the morale of the entire country."

Tokyo has just taken the first step. It has a lot of promises to live up to, but it also has a past to learn from. Perhaps it will lead to regeneration on a broader scale. As Olympic host and capital city, it has a responsibility to do things right. What could possibly go wrong? 🗨



Another
in our series
of Club Member
profiles

David McNeill

by Lucy Alexander

Dr. David McNeill is a very post-modern political journalist. A super-stringer for multiple media outlets, he also teaches undergraduates about the politics of the media. McNeill is a professional deconstructor of his own profession. Only he wouldn't call journalism a profession – to him it is “a trade.” If it is possible to be a consummate professional at a trade, then McNeill is one.

He traces his interest in journalism to a move from his hometown of Dublin to Clones, on the border with Northern

Irish arts degree. He chose an Asian Studies component and became fascinated by Japan, visiting Tokyo in 1993. “I thought it was a sociological miracle. You have probably the world's biggest group of commuters, most of them men, in crowded trains. Put that together on a Friday night with overwork and alcohol... If that were in Ireland they'd kill each other.”

McNeill returned to the UK to complete a PhD, and in 1995 took a job teaching media and politics at Liverpool John Moores University. After five years, frus-

triple disaster, co-authored with FCCJ president Lucy Birmingham.

McNeill considers this alarming range of responsibilities a necessary strategy in a freelance market that is “badly paid, and getting worse.” Over time, he has become resigned to the Western appetite for Japanese “color stories.” Fabricated tales of schoolgirl eyeball-licking are part of a well-established trend, he says, recalling a 2007 story about “Japanese women buying lambs thinking they were poodles.” (“Ewe've been conned,” was the headline in *The Sun*.)

He points out that the Japanese press is just as guilty, citing an old story in *Josie Seven* magazine which stated that Princess Masako “was fleeing Japan with her daughter to claim refugee status in Europe, aided by her old professor in Oxford who was sponsoring her under UN legislation against cruel and unusual punishment.” McNeill rang the professor, who had been quoted in the article: “she knew absolutely nothing about it.” When he got hold of the journalist who wrote the article, “he said, ‘Oh, that was a made-up story.’ He wasn't embarrassed about it.”

McNeill, who now has a two-year-old son, has decided he is working too hard. “Apart from just not being fair on your partner, I resent the time I'm not with my son.” Life in Japan is unlikely to be a permanent arrangement, he says. “But then Japan is full of *gaijin* who say they're not going to be here forever.”

To McNeill, journalism is “the greatest job, but one of the worst paid.” He believes “we are seeing a historic realignment of the old order, and nobody knows what's going to come next. Maybe it will coalesce into something that pays a living wage, but for now it's really hard to see that happening.”

Despite this pessimism, he is passionate about the intrinsic moral value of political reporting, a lesson learned long ago on the Ulster border. What truly matters, he says, is “a passion for what it means to be a journalist, to get a story out and tell people about something like Fukushima, to believe you can make a difference and change things” **1**

'WE ARE SEEING A HISTORIC REALIGNMENT OF THE OLD ORDER, AND NOBODY KNOWS WHAT'S GOING TO COME NEXT.'

Ireland, when he was 15. “Clones is the kind of place that politicizes you,” he says. It was 1981, the year of the hunger strikes, when 10 republican paramilitary prisoners in Belfast starved themselves to death, making global headlines. McNeill, 48, recalls “the shock of seeing boys my age arguing politics with priests during catechism classes. That was unheard of.”

The result was a political awakening. “This was around the time that [Margaret] Thatcher came to power, and there was a ‘shoot to kill’ policy. All those things were very important for learning how to question the world around us. That was a big reason why I went into journalism.”

McNeill duly applied to study journalism after leaving school, but failed to get a place because, he says, the college didn't agree with his political opinions. “I found out because the interview board all ate at my aunt's restaurant,” he said. “That's Ireland for you.”

After a brief period training to be a chef (“I got kicked out”), McNeill returned home and worked in a sausage factory. He ran a mobile disco in the evenings with his best friend, who, in 1987, decided to emigrate to the United States, “a very common story in Ireland in the Eighties.” He said, “I had to choose whether or not to stay in this factory and marry a local girl. I said no.”

McNeill won a place as a mature student at the University of Ulster, studying a lib-

trated by academic life, he moved to Tokyo and decided to try his hand at journalism.

He got a job copy-editing for the *Nikkei*, his first and last experience on a newspaper staff payroll. “I swear it was like a living death. Going to work on the train every day in total silence, going into an office where no joking was allowed, then doing it all over again in the evening. I gave it up as soon as I could.”

In 2003, McNeill began stringing for the *Independent* and *Irish Times* newspapers, and has since added *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The Economist* to his portfolio, supplemented by scriptwriting for *NHK World* and university teaching – “Sophia in the autumn and Hosei in the spring”.

Then there's the book, *Strong in the Rain*, published in 2012, an acclaimed collection of survivor stories from the 2011



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

ANDREW POTHECARY

It's the season for film lovers, with much more on offer than the usual multiplex fare

Fall colors: Peak viewing at Japan's international film festivals

by Karen Severns

Here's a figure that may not have snuck up on you: There are almost 3,000 active film festivals in the world, and at least 120 of them take place in Japan.

Festivals have always bridged the paradoxical position of cinema as both art form and product to be sold, playing host to screenings, panels and parties that promote sales as well as launching careers. But in these fraught times for film viewing, festivals are more vital than ever to the livelihoods of everyone in the industry – a tight-knit global community of filmmakers, distributors, programmers and critics who rely on festivals to reach and read their initial audiences.

The industry's woes may be well publicized, but make no mistake: film is still big business. Although just displaced by China from its long-held No. 2 position, Japan remains the world's third-largest film market (accounting for \$2.4 billion in 2012, just behind China's \$2.7 billion). It is also big diplomacy. With the tense political situation between Japan, China and the Koreans, cultural transactions ("soft power") like film festivals have become increasingly important to peace and prosperity in the region.

As arthouse cinemas continue to shutter (since 2008, 25 in Tokyo alone), as specialty distributors bite the dust, as government and corporate support for filmmaking shrinks a little more each year, festivals have become the new theatrical run for many films – and for those lucky few, the gateway to awards and commercial success. The current generation of independent filmmakers almost always relies on buzz from the festival circuit to build sustainable careers. So today's festivals serve the dual role of propping up diplomatic relations and buttressing a market in transition.

Japan's peak festival viewing season is upon us, starting with the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (Oct. 10 - 17), followed immediately by the Tokyo International Film Festival (Oct. 17 - 25) and a month later by TOKYO FILMeX (Nov. 23 - Dec. 1). Three festivals in just over two months may look like cinematic overload, but each has its own personality, its own thematic focuses, its own stylistic preferences. Yet like most festi-

vals, these three are run by nonprofits facing the same challenges as the filmmakers they support; underfunded, understaffed and overextended, they are held together by indefatigable volunteers, appreciative filmmakers, enthusiastic audiences, a stitch here, a safety pin there.

Although their submissions and audience numbers are increasing and they claim to be reaching the holy-grail younger demographic, YIDFF, TIFF and FILMeX are struggling to stay funded, to exploit social media to their advantage, to help get their foreign films distributed in Japan, and to help their Japanese filmmakers find festival berths and sales overseas.

If you're a film fan – and really, who isn't? – you don't need a reminder that festivals can be exhilarating, especially in the (increasingly rare) opportunities they provide to experience other worlds and make transformative discoveries. But now you know they are also essential to discovering and nurturing talent, and to helping assure that tomorrow's independent cinema has a life outside the living room. So slide into a seat, and make a worthy contribution to Japan's ongoing cultural and economic vitality.

Here are brief snapshots of the fall festivals, in order of occurrence:

■ YIDFF

Founded in 1989 as Asia's first-ever documentary festival to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Yamagata City, YIDFF has been held biennially ever since. Located in the scenic mountains of Yamagata, some 370 km north of Tokyo, the festival screens an eye-popping number of films, hosts several hundred guests, attracts close to 25,000 visitors and still feels intimate.

YIDFF Tokyo Office Director Asako Fujioka celebrates her 20th year with the festival in 2013. "I didn't give birth to it, but maybe I'm like the surrogate mom," she laughs. Fujioka joined YIDFF after a childhood spent overseas and an early career in film distribution. The festival was then, as now, a magnet attracting emerging



Asako Fujioka, YIDFF Tokyo Office Director

13th Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival
October 10 - 17, Yamagata City, Yamagata
On view: 240+ documentaries
Main competition titles: 15
Don't miss late nights at: Komian Club
Website: www.yidff.jp

documentarists across Asia. Fujioka attributes this to YIDFF's many special events and programs highlighting the history and diversity of alternative, independent, nonfiction film. "We've chosen not to be on that mad festival circuit, chasing premieres. Other festivals try to bring the biggest names, but our focus is on the films."

YIDFF 2013 is highlighting work from Southeast Asia in all its sections. Fujioka touts *The Ethics Machine: Six Gazes of the Camera*, with films and discussions about the ethical choices facing documentarians. "When 3/11 occurred, many Japanese filmmakers began braving taboos," she says, "but they were too respectful to their subjects, gave them too much distance. This made the films a bit constrained and not very interesting in the end."

Fujioka is also excited about a 45-film retrospective devoted to Chris Marker, the late French filmmaker who brought us *La*

Jetée, *Sans Soleil* and *AK*, an essay film on Akira Kurosawa – which will all be shown at YIDFF. Says Fujioka: "Marker had a strong connection with Japan. He loved it, he made several films here, he had friends here. So to have this retrospective here is very special. We're doing the largest one up until the huge one at Pompidou Center."

■ TIFF

TIFF begins its second quarter-century with a new director general, Yasushi Shiina, a shiny new logo, a new slogan ("A films-first festival") and revamped main sections.

A veteran of Asmik and Kadokawa, Shiina was a member of the TIFF Executive Committee for the past 12 years. After being named to replace the affable Tom Yoda, the popular TIFF chairman from 2008 to 2012, Shiina packed his bag with a vision before moving in.



Yasushi Shiina, TIFF Director General



26th Tokyo International Film Festival + 10th TIFFCOM Marketplace for Film and TV
October 17 - 25, Roppongi (TIFF) and October 22 - 24, Odaiba (TIFFCOM)
On view: 70+ films*
Main competition titles: 15
Don't miss late nights at: Roppongi karaoke clubs
Website: <http://tiff.yahoo.co.jp/2013/en/>

PHOTOS: SEVERNS/MORE

"I'm determined to make TIFF an essential film festival, as it once was," says Shiina. "To do that, we need to achieve a better balance between commercial and arthouse films, which is difficult. We need to raise our artistic profile without



14th TOKYO FILMeX
November 23 - December 1, Yurakucho
On view: 26 films*
Main competition titles: 10
Don't miss late nights at: Nichigeki screenings
Website: <http://filmex.net/2013/en/>



Kanako Hayashi, FILMeX Festival Director

compromising on our selections."

Shiina is also considering other improvements. "We're very grateful for Mori Building's support," he says, "but Roppongi only has seven screens, and that's not enough. We're looking at opportunities in Yurakucho, Hibiya and Nihonbashi, so we can expand the number of screens. And there's also the separation of TIFF and TIFFCOM, which will be in Odaiba again for the second year. The festival and market should be together; it's not convenient this way. Another issue is timing: November doesn't have to be the only choice."

Shiina promises that TIFF is shifting its focus back to the filmmakers themselves, and he's eager to make anime a major focus of the festival. "Animated films earn a lot more at the Japanese box office than live-action movies," he says, "and there's global attention on animation. I would like to bring together Japanese and Asian talent to encourage collaboration." The 2013 festival lineup* will also include more homegrown productions, with Japanese films to be featured in every section.

One more change that Shiina feels will particularly please Number 1 Shimbun readers: "We are planning a new program especially for international audiences and film journalists, and we're improving our previous system for the press, modeling it after the Cannes Film Festival's."

■ FILMeX

From its launch in 2000, TOKYO FILMeX had a special brief: to offer serious films for cinephiles and cineastes. Supported by "Beat" Takeshi Kitano's office, its driving force is Kanako Hayashi, an international film festival veteran who spent 11 years promoting Japanese films overseas, and consulted for the Venice and Berlin film festivals.

During the festival run, she is a familiar figure in the Asahi Hall lobby, where she meets, greets and presides over introductions after every screening. "Our most important role is building bridges between filmmakers and their audiences, and between Japan and the world," she says.

Hayashi is proud of the festival's consistent line-ups: "At most festivals, the opening and closing films are just fireworks to attract crowds and the media, appetizers to impress the sponsors. FILMeX has to start right in with the main course, so we can only accommodate spectacular films. We cannot compromise on the selection."

Despite having to watch close to 1,000 films, that selection is made solely by Hayashi and Program Director Shozo Ichiyama. She explains: "I can't afford to miss any diamonds in the rough before they get polished. As long as there is clearly talent, I watch them all."

FILMeX 2013* will include 10 competition films, 10 special screenings and a Japanese Classics section featuring films by Noboru Nakamura, a twice-nominated Academy Award contender whose career at Shochiku extended from 1941 thru 1979. "He was known as the Great Conductor," says Hayashi. "He worked with composer Toru Takemitsu, editor Keiichi Uraoka, and actors like Keiko Kishi, Isuzu Yamada and Mariko Okada. Nakamura is not well known internationally, but he deserves to be."

Serious about its commitment to the "Bright Future of Cinema," FILMeX features a student jury, conducts workshops to "educate and encourage the next generation," and will be bringing 15 emerging filmmakers to participate in its 3rd Talent Campus Tokyo, for "insider" sessions with industry veterans and coaching by famous mentors. ①

*TIFF and FILMeX unveiled their full lineups after we went to press. For more, see their websites, and the Movie Committee's blog at fccj.ne.jp.

Karen Severns is a writer, filmmaker and educator who lectures widely on film and architecture.

One of the great jazz voices of all time breaks into song before an enthralled Club crowd

Tony Bennett is in the house

by Julian Ryall

He may be 87, but Tony Bennett showed that he still knows how to work a crowd when he appeared for a press conference at the FCCJ, just ahead of his headline appearance at the Tokyo Jazz Festival. Asked whether he might treat the packed house to one of his songs as a preview of the festival, Bennett initially declined on the grounds that he is in show business – with the emphasis on “business” – and that the onlookers would just have to come along to the show.

But apparently unable to resist the look of disappointment on FCCJ Member Haruko Watanabe’s face, Bennett broke into the first verse of the song that has defined his long and impressive career, “I left my heart in San Francisco.” Pitch-perfect even when performed at the drop of a hat, it was met by a rousing round of applause.

Bennett was performing in Japan for the first time in 13 years, and a review in *The Japan Times* of his set at the festival described it as “commanding.” He performed more than 20 numbers, backed by a jazz quartet, including “Fly me to the Moon” and “Boulevard of Broken Dreams,” and over-ran his rigidly allocated time by 10 minutes.

From his earlier comments at the FCCJ, it appears that he still gets as caught up in the moment as when he was a fresh-faced singer emerging into the spotlight alongside such greats as Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday. Sinatra once described Bennett as “the best singer in the business” – an accolade that the man himself dismissed with a self-deprecating “But what did he know?”

“I’m an entertainer,” Bennett replied with a shrug when asked to describe himself. “And I consider myself to have been blessed.

“Jazz is funny; it’s not something you can go to school to learn,” he said. “You can study music, of course, but jazz is the art of spontaneity and improvisation. You either have it or you don’t. It’s a gift of an



Tony Bennett, before taking to the press-conference stage

art form and when an artiste performs it well, they are giving it to anybody who cares to listen.”

It was not always easy for Bennett, who served as an infantryman in Europe in the closing stages of World War II before developing his singing techniques and joining Columbia Records. He had his first number one hit – “Because of you” – in 1951.

“When I first started, there were a lot of seasoned performers who were resentful of the fact that I was becoming popular,” he said. “They were still nice enough to say, ‘you’re doing alright kid, but it will take you seven years to learn how to walk onto the stage properly.’ They were right, but I always felt they could have been a little nicer to me,” he added.

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

That was one of the motivations for his most recent collaborations, *Duets: An American Classic*, released in 2006 and followed in 2011 by *Duets II*. It features the Italian-American veteran from Astoria, New York, performing alongside Michael Buble, Lady Gaga and Amy Winehouse, among others. A new recording, *The Classics*, is a new collection of 22 of his most famous recordings, while an entire album with Lady Gaga is due to be released around the end of the year.

“I’m one of the elders in the business now, and I did these albums with all these different popular artistes to show to the world that they can do these things, to show that they do not have to be restricted and to show that what I was told – that you have to wait seven years to be famous – is just not true.”

Asked his most memorable experience in his long musical career, Bennett unhesitatingly singled out his working with Lady Gaga. “She did ‘The Lady is a Tramp’ with me and it became a big hit,” he said. “I consider Lady Gaga to be the Picasso of the entertainment world. She is very, very intelligent and a very talented person.”

Their new collaboration will include some works by the great songwriters of Bennett’s generation – Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Irving Berlin – with the support of a big swing band.

But if he was forced to select a personal favorite singer, Bennett opts for Billie Holiday. “She was absolutely the best singer who ever lived,” he said. “Any recording of hers is beautiful. It’s not digital, it’s not multi-track and it’s strictly mono, but boy, it’s timeless. She was exquisite.”

As he approaches his 90th year, Bennett is still in good physical shape and can clearly still command the stage. “I just love to entertain people,” he confessed. “It keeps me alive and it keeps me in shape.

“I’m a great fan of the artist Hokusai, who said he was just learning to paint when he turned 102,” he said. “I like that.”

FCCJ EXHIBITION: The Shine of Khmer Children (1994 - 2010)



Photographs by Baku Saito

These photographs were taken in post-war Cambodia between 1994 and 2010.

We often hear, “Asia is a leader in the 21st century,” but for many Japanese, including myself, awareness of Asia’s very poor has not always been present.

I think that now, with various problems such as ethnic conflict and population growth, it is important to deepen solidarity across Asia. Recognizing the culture of each other will be the cornerstone of building tomorrow. ❶

Baku Saito has been freelancing since 1980. He has exhibited these photographs in Paris, Tokyo, Phnom Penh and elsewhere and has published several books of the photographs.





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A new service is being developed to keep Club journalists on top of the nation's happenings

FOP retooling for a new mission

by Michael Penn

The new Freedom of the Press Committee is already well along in its first project to improve the news-gathering environment for working journalists at the FCCJ. We are building a Journalist Information Service to better inform our members about media events of interest in the Kanto region.

One way that many foreign journalists are excluded from media events in Japan is that we are not informed about them until after they have occurred. There have been many occasions when I saw a report on Japanese television about an event that I would love to have covered had I only known about it.

With persistence and experience, many foreign journalists do begin to adapt, eventually missing fewer of the events that they want to cover. But it is still a daily struggle to keep well informed, to know where to be and when to be there, especially as the only journalists being directly tipped to many key events belong to the traditional Japanese press clubs.

To some degree, it will always be the job of individual journalists to discover and cultivate their own sources, but the Journalist Information Service now being fashioned is

meant to ensure that the FCCJ becomes a crucial artery through which foreign journalists can gain the information they need to do their jobs more effectively.

Keeping abreast of media events in the vast Kanto region is a full-time job (and then some), so the FCCJ has assigned staff to carry out the work under the guidance of the Freedom of the Press Committee.

The inaugural team leader is Akira Yokota, a longtime staff member at the Club. Yokota is a Tokyo native who went to high school in Saitama Prefecture and joined the FCCJ as an F&B staff member in the mid-1980s. In his almost 30 years of service at our club, he has functioned as a bartender, as dining room staff, in the food procurement section and in operations and banquet planning.

Obviously, Yokota was among those FCCJ staff members who were most directly impacted by the decision to outsource our F&B operations. He now works in the Club Office on the 19th floor and had been looking for an important new role to play as the FCCJ changes its structure.

In a way, Yokota is a metaphor for the FCCJ as a whole. Long accustomed to

engaging in certain kinds of functions, we are now branching out into new fields in line with our aim to strengthen the public service dimensions of the Club. These are welcome changes, but ones that require us to retool for new missions in an unsleeping electronic era.

Yokota and his small team are calling various organizations, making contacts with press officers, building databases of useful information for journalists. The early stages will by necessity be slow and careful as their training commences and their confidence builds. But the spirit of engaging in an important new enterprise is already beginning to take hold.

FCCJ Members should be able to participate in the Journalist Information Service in a matter of weeks. We already have a prototype version based upon a limited email list functioning now. Once we feel it is ready for wider scrutiny, interested FCCJ Regular Members will be able to sign up to receive the service directly.

This email service will be ultimately be complemented by functions built into the new FCCJ website, though we are still hammering out some of the key policies about technical capabilities, information security and practical management.

Challenges remain, but Yokota believes "there is a new wind blowing at the FCCJ." Our task now is to ensure that this new wind takes us to a place where every foreign journalist in Tokyo wants to join us. ❶

Michael Penn is president of the Shingetsu News Agency and chairman of the Freedom of the Press Committee

NEW MEMBERS



RAMÓN ABARCA AZPIAZU is the Tokyo Bureau Chief of EFE Spanish News Agency. From 1997 to 2002, he was a reporter for *Diario de Noticias-La Ley*, a weekly publication on legal issues. He became the London correspondent for Telecinco TV in 2003, until he made the move in 2006 to Cuatro TV/CNN+, also as London correspondent. In 2011, he became London correspondent for EFE, where he worked until his posting to Tokyo in Feb. 2013. He has also contributed to *El Periodico*, *Elle*, *Fotogramas*, *GQ* and other publications.

REGULAR MEMBER

Ramon Abarca Azpiazu, *Agencia EFE*

PROFESSIONAL/JOURNALIST ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Shinichi Ueyama, *Keio University*

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mariko Watanabe
Masahiko Yamaguchi, *Cones Technologies Ltd.*
Daisuke Narita, *That's Corporation*

Tatsunosuke Tominaga, *UPM-Kymmene Japan K.K.*

Yoshiaki Takahashi, *Royal Liquor & Food Co., (Japan), Ltd.*
Toshio Arita, *Huawei Technologies Japan K.K.*

REINSTATEMENT (ASSOCIATE)

Hiroshi Ishida
Isao Saito, *U & IHR Consulting*
Norihiko Nishiyama

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

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Kissinger, Henry
Penguin Books

3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan
Samuels, Richard J.
Cornell University Press

The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in The Failed Stalinist Utopia
Lankov, Andrei
Oxford University Press

OBITUARY

Remembering Ray Falk

Ray Falk, who was our most senior member, passed away in Tokyo on Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, at the age of 90.

Ray joined the Club in 1946, and became one of the 16 residents in the Club's first premises, known as No. 1 Shimbun Alley. It remained his home until the change of premises in 1954. Over the years, Ray worked for ABC News and the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA).

He covered the Korean War for ABC radio news and was present at the signing of the armistice in Panmunjom in July of 1953. In the same capacity, he covered the Matsu and Quemoy crisis in 1958. He was also active in print news for NANA, writing book reviews and commentary that appeared in publications like the *New York Times*.

Ray served as Club treasurer during the critical years of 1953-1954 preparing for the Club's move to new premises and its successful bid for the non-profit status known as *shadan houjin*, bestowed on the Club in November, 1954.



Ray was later made a Life Member and attended Club functions, especially anniversary parties, until health problems made that difficult in recent years.

— Charles Pomeroy

OBITUARY

David Coll Blanco, the Catalan photographer who was an FCCJ Member from 2005 to 2007 died on Sept. 6 in his native Barcelona at age 39 after a year-long battle with bronchial cancer. He leaves behind his wife Miwako Uno and daughter Maia, age 5.

Although an FCCJ Member for only a short time, during 10 years in Japan David made many lasting friendships in the Club, and among Tokyo's international community of press and artistic photographers. He worked extensively with the Tokyo bureaus of European Pressphoto Agency

Remembering David Coll Blanco 1974-2013



(EPA) and EFE, the Spanish news agency, and freelanced widely. Many FCCJ journalists will fondly recall David's cheerful presence on assignment.

With the kind assistance of Bruce Osborne and the Exhibition Committee, plans are in progress for an exhibition of David's life's work in the Main Bar. One idea is to make the works available for sale, with the proceeds going to young Maia.

— John R. Harris

David with his daughter Maia (then aged 3) in Tokyo.

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For more on the benefits of membership for yourself or a colleague, contact Naomichi Iwamura at iwamura@fccj.or.jp or 03-3211-4392 for further details

