SERIOUSLY, ARE JOURNALISTS IN ASIA BEING SILENCED?

The UN verdict on Japan
The global fight for press freedom
South Korea’s internet crackdown
Fearless Japanese publications

+ Said Karlsson profiled

Foreign con men in Taisho Japan
100 years ago...

Global trade was disrupted by WWI leaving Japan without a stable supply of bearings, the essential component in everything mechanical that moves—trains, planes, ships, tractors, industrial machinery and more. As worried industrialists explained at the time, without bearings—the “rice” of industry, the indispensable staple—Japanese industry would grind to a halt.

How did Japan solve this problem?

Nippon Seiko K.K. was founded in 1916 with a mission to provide every sector of Japanese industry with secure supplies of high-quality bearings. Over the century since, NSK has grown in step with Japan’s world-leading industries, working quietly behind the scenes to set the world in perfect motion.
I open this last column as president with a few important lessons for the new Board. The bottom line is that the FCCJ is an exceptional organization, my honest opinion is that the challenges can be handled with the talent we have onboard.

The Club’s year has been full of exceptional achievements. Function facilities remain fully booked, usage is high in the dining room and bar and big-name newsmakers continue to fill the Professional Activities calendar. We have successfully settled both the Union and ex-Presidents’ cases, which ended an enormous bleed on our resources and has helped make the Club feel more like one family again.

Financially, however, we continue to face huge challenges and the multiple hefty decisions the Club is tasked to make will define its future.

The Club is in financial trouble, a picture that contradicts the last BOD financial report that declared a ¥30 million plus “profit” for 2014. This “profit” was actually due to a one-time ¥20 million paper adjustment regarding long-term depreciation required by new rules combined with the inclusion of a ¥10 million capital gain on employee retirement fund investments as Club income. In practical terms, however, we were up to ¥7 million in the red, according to an analysis by the finance committee.

Our budget for FY2016 projects a loss of ¥8 million. This year’s finance committee reports that with the Special Levy of ¥23 million reserved for our move to the Club’s new location in October 2018, we are already over ¥30 million in the hole. Certain steps have been taken to cope: Currently we are in the process of negotiating a new contract with IRS and are considering other ideas that will help to put the Club back in the black for the next two and a half years. This year’s Board has reserved the Special Levy solely for paying the costs of moving to the new building, which may be as high as ¥100 million. We calculate there will be ¥83 million in this fund by the end of FY2018. This board has also spent a considerable amount of time debating the huge increase in rent the FCCJ will be required to pay for the new larger premises. Another major target for this year has been to increase membership, which is now at 1,920. New members are important to cope with the increase in spending when we move into the new Club.

The possibility of raising tax-free donations – one of the benefits of FCCJ becoming a “koeki” – has also become a reality. This is a formidable task that is currently being discussed by some of our dedicated members – and a foremost concern is protecting the journalistic character of the FCCJ. Donations are tax deductible in part.

Summing up, these problems I’ve outlined require extreme vigilance now and over the coming years to restore and bolster our financial stability. Any Member who has helpful suggestions or wishes to help, should not hesitate to contact Club management. We welcome all as proactive stakeholders in our future.

I end now with a big thank you extended to all the Members and officers who have worked so hard this year. And I wish the new Board the best of luck in their endeavors to move forward.

-- Suvendrini Kakuchi

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-- Suvendrini Kakuchi
A look at the state of journalism at a time when independent media are caught up in skirmishes with authorities across Asia – and the world.

ON PRESS FREEDOM

Fighting back

Journalists need new skills to be effective watchdogs for the public and ward off shackles on press freedom

by WILLIAM HORSELEY

Journalists everywhere need to wake up to the new normal: threats all around the world are using anti-terrorism, state security and other laws to constrain, harass or lock up questioning journalists. They need to up their game in response.

The extent and violence of the intrusion into the media’s freedom to report varies from state to state, but the same pattern can be seen almost everywhere. The chilling effect on open debate and civil society has been dramatic.

Egypt’s harsh repression of inquiring journalism makes it impossible, for example, to get to the truth behind the abduction and murder in Cairo this year of the Italian civil rights researcher Giulio Regeni, who the authorities claim was killed by a criminal gang but whose torture and death seem to bear the brutal hallmarks of the work of Egypt’s security forces.

In Turkey, President Erdogan has openly trashed his country’s commitments to press freedom by exerting personal pressure on media owners to sack critical journalists, while prosecuting over the widespread misuse of anti-terrorism laws to criminalize their work and prosecute them. The recent jail sentences given to two top editors of Cumhuriyet newspaper, Can Dundar and Erdem Gul, over their exposure of a suspected arms shipment to Islamists in Syria, is one example of Turkey’s open defiance of its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

UN agencies, led by UNESCO and backed by enlightened governments and non-governmental organizations, have elevated the protection of free expression and journalists’ safety to matters of high priority, acknowledging the wider damage done to societies from judicial harassment, targeted surveillance, jailings, physical attacks and killings of journalists. Media houses and journalists are being encouraged actively to defend journalists who face danger because they expose repression, corruption and crime.

Speaking out Turkish journalists go on trial for protesting the holy grail of press freedom/communication-and-information/press-freedom/

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stan. Landmark rulings in the human rights courts of Europe, the Americas and Africa have also held up the repressive actions of states to international censure. The International Consortium of the Americas and Africa have also held up the repressive examples of smart journalistic cooperation. Reporters Without Borders and the StopFake website’s exposes of the Panama Papers and the repressive examples of smart journalistic cooperation. Editors, media owners and journalists should pay attention to all this. They are in the forefront of challenging all forms of censorship and the attempt by states to control the information space.

To work effectively in the new hostile environment journalists need to develop new skills – to protect their online and physical security, expose disinformation, and secure real benefits from the enhanced protections that are now enshrined in international law but often ignored. Last December’s International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists by representatives of international media – convened by the International Press Institute and others – also pointed to the need for journalists to understand international human rights standards and mechanisms, to equip them to investigate and report effectively on injustices in the name of the public’s right to know. This is not time for journalists to look the other way or be cynical about what they do. Media silence only helps those who would perpetuate systematic abuses. Solidarity and the re-tooling of journalistic skills are needed for the press to confirm that the block had been instituted at the request of the National Intelligence Service. ‘It’s completely ridiculous,’ Williams said. ‘Do they really feel this is a threat to the national security of South Korea?’ He adds, however, that he was not surprised when his appeal, filed by the civil organization Open Net, was turned down. His lawyer confirmed that most of the handful of appeals that the committee hears each year end in failure. In upholding the ban, the commission singled out three articles: a story about a space-watcher’s inability to locate the satellite the North Koreans claimed to have put into orbit, a skeletal piece on the North’s claim that its cell-phone operator had reached 3 million subscribers, and one on the completion of a satellite command center. The commission claimed that they were “praising, inciting, or glamorizing the North Korea nuclear program.”

UK journalist Martyn Williams is planning to take on North Korea’s notorious National Security Law in court after the government dismissed an appeal against the blocking of his website, “North Korea Tech.” His case is following for its wide-ranging news from the country, ranging from internet activity through Pyongyang’s use of technology, the state that is in the face of recent pressure from the Abe government, and for traditionally having less inclination to tell truth to power. His lawyer confirmed that most of the handful of appeals that the committee hears each year end in failure. In upholding the ban, the commission singled out three articles: a story about a space-watcher’s inability to locate the satellite the North Koreans claimed to have put into orbit, a skeletal piece on the North’s claim that its cell-phone operator had reached 3 million subscribers, and one on the completion of a satellite command center. The commission claimed this lawsuit will fulfill a bigger role of pushing back against hard-handed censorship in general. Ironically, technology has made the South Korean government’s ban effectively useless, with anyone with a VPN connection able to get around South Korea’s. And to heap irony on that story, North Korea Tech is freely available in North Korea, the world’s least free society. In its latest Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders placed North Korea in 7th place, only Enterra was lower in the rankings – and Williams is pretty sure that North Korea Tech is freely available there as well.

South Korea’s internet crackdown

A journalist’s website focused on North Korean technology is dubbed a security risk – and blocked – by South Korean internet censors

by JULIAN RYALL

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Standing tall

Three representatives from Tokyo’s most fearless publications pointed to self-censorship and lack of interest as reasons for the sad state of hard-hitting journalism in Japan

by GAVIN BLAIR

The Japanese media has been accused of pusillanimity in the face of recent pressure from the Abe government, and for traditionally having less inclination to tell truth to power. His lawyer confirmed that most of the handful of appeals that the committee hears each year end in failure. In upholding the ban, the commission singled out three articles: a story about a space-watcher’s inability to locate the satellite the North Koreans claimed to have put into orbit, a skeletal piece on the North’s claim that its cell-phone operator had reached 3 million subscribers, and one on the completion of a satellite command center. The commission claimed this lawsuit will fulfill a bigger role of pushing back against hard-handed censorship in general. Ironically, technology has made the South Korean government’s ban effectively useless, with anyone with a VPN connection able to get around South Korea’s. And to heap irony on that story, North Korea Tech is freely available in North Korea, the world’s least free society. In its latest Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders placed North Korea in 7th place, only Enterra was lower in the rankings – and Williams is pretty sure that North Korea Tech is freely available there as well.

The article details how the deal was partly funded by the government-owned Japan Bank for International Cooperation, which sponsored the report. It also discusses the impact of the scandal on the Nikkei, which has been criticized for its handling of the story.

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financially, so it’s a business decision not to have reporters chase risky stories, which are expensive and can lead to legal action,” said Shintani. The biggest celebrities managed by the major talent agencies are usually “untouchable” for the TV stations in terms of negative coverage due to fear of reprisals, he said, including having stars from the roster of the same agency pulled from the offending network.

The three journalists stated they had never caved to pressure by the government, and two of them recounted instances when they were targeted.

Shintani said he informed the prime minister’s office of the phone call he had received from the largest kisha association.

Kaye’s appearance at the FCCJ came a day before publica-

tion of this year’s Reporters Without Borders’ world press freedom index, in which Japan came 72nd out of 180 countries.

“Now is the moment for Japan to take steps to secure its freedom of expression,” in Kaye’s words, “to become overly cautious since the state secrets act went into force in December 2014. The “rather vague” category of state secrets “is protected by a very harsh law that deters journalists from embar-

“Government officials assured me that journalists would not be prosecuted,” Kaye said. “But they need legal protection, not political promises.”

Weaker protection for whistleblowers meant journalists would lose access to sources for important stories, he added. “In the long term, it is the people of Japan who suffer from lack of access to information.”

Kaye had been due to visit Japan last December, but offi-
cials in Tokyo abruptly canceled his trip, citing scheduling problems. He had requested a meeting with Takachi during his visit in April, but was told that she was busy with her duties in the Diet.

Despite allegations on social media that Kaye had come with preconceived notions to be dismissed, he said his encounters with Japanese journalists had given him genuine cause for concern. “I came here with an open mind … not a blank slate, but a willingness to be open to all perspectives,” he said. “Having spoken to journal-
ists who feel under more pressure by the day, my concerns have grown stronger.”

“In the long term, it is the people of Japan who suffer from lack of access to information.”

“Now is the moment for Japan to take steps to secure its independent media.”

Justin McCurry is Tokyo correspondent for the Guardian and Observer publications in London and principal Japan and Korea correspondent for GlobalPost.
Said Karlsson
by TYLER ROTHMAR

“I don’t like writing. I see it as a way to be able to do everything else that I love about being a journalist”

T o call Said Karlsson a photographer and writer is not inaccurate, but it is entirely insufficient. Karlsson is curious in both senses, a juggler of disparate hobbies and skills with strong artistic leanings for whom independence is paramount.

He was born in Malmö, Sweden, in 1982 and raised in Norrköping, southwest of Stockholm, by a hard-working single mother. “When I wanted my first computer, my mother said, I can’t afford a computer. If you want one, you have to work,” he says. Finding ways to monetize personal interests has been a hallmark of his modus operandi ever since.

Karlsson got into photography during his last year of high school and was shooting for the youth section of the local newspaper by the time he was 18. He moved to Stockholm the day after high school graduation and began working for Metro, the first free newspaper in Europe. Sensing how competitive the media business was becoming, he armed himself with a one-year course in reportage writing at Tollare, a vocational school outside the capital known for journalism.

Like Norrköping, Stockholm proved “too small” for Said, so he went to Korea in 2006 to find skilled labor and pass time during his last year of high school. Karlsson got into photography and was shooting for the youth section of the local newspaper by the time he was 18. He moved to Stockholm the day after high school graduation and began working for Metro, the first free newspaper in Europe. Sensing how competitive the media business was becoming, he armed himself with a one-year course in reportage writing at Tollare, a vocational school outside the capital known for journalism.

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Click to view Figure 1.

KARLSSON BOUNCED BETWEEN KOREA, CHINA AND JAPAN ON TOURIST VISAS, EVENTUALLY FINDING HIMSELF BACK IN SWEDEN SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO MOVE TO JAPAN LONG-TERM.

The plots thickens.

As it turns out, from his teenage years Karlsson has been an adept at, perhaps even a devotee of, the Japanese video game “Dance Dance Revolution,” a large arcade game where players advance by stepping on colored floor sensors to the timing of increasingly complex tunes. “I got really obsessed with this game, and I even imported a big arcade machine from Japan to Sweden” at no small cost, he says.

HE MET AMERICAN PROGRAMMER MATTHEW SCOTT IN TOKYO, AND THE TWO DECIDED TO MAKE A SIMILAR GAME FOR THE IPHONE WHERE THE FINGERS TAKE THE PLACE OF THE FEET. IN JANUARY OF 2011, WITH THE GIFT OF FREE MUSIC FROM FRIENDS AND NO BUDGET WHATSOEVER, THEY PRODUCED RHYTHM CONTROL, WHICH SHOT TO THE NO. 1 SLOT FOR MUSIC GAMES ON APPLE’S APP STORE IN JAPAN.

They used the profits to start a small Sweden-based firm called Daikonsoft, which Karlsson now owns entirely, and eventually produced a sequel. Rhythm Control 2 can still be enjoyed for free and passed half a million downloads last year.

Now back in Japan once again, Karlsson shoots and writes reportage pieces for TT, Scandinavia’s largest news agency, covering a variety of human-interest topics, most recently the progress of LGBT rights in Japan. “I really don’t like writing,” he says. “I see it as a way to be able to do everything else that I love about being a journalist,” such as meeting people, traveling, taking photographs and doing research. “The writing is a necessary evil.”

He draws photography inspiration from “the old classic street photographers,” Henri Cartier-Bresson, Brassai, and the Swedish photographer Christer Strömholm. He has an eye for natural, spontaneous moments, and often uses a smaller, more discreet camera: “I shoot from the hip sometimes.” His street fashion blog tokyofaces.com, although semi-dormant, still gets regular traffic and remains a source of new clients, he says.

Karlsson’s photos have appeared in a variety of places, from Bloomberg to Pecha Kucha to the cover of a recent Swedish edition of the Haruki Murakami novel Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage, a shot taken in Shinjuku. He’s now moving toward video production out of personal interest as well as increasing demand from clients.

 Speaking with Karlsson for a while, one gets the sense he may have still more hobbies, facets we’ve yet to touch on. “Actually,” he says, “as our time is winding down, “I have been DJing quite a lot . . .”

Tyler Rothmar is a Tokyo-based writer and editor.

SERIES
PROFILE

FCCJ      JUNE 2016
Japan and China in 1921: world cruise that took him to
in his account of the round-the-
press magnate, Lord Northcliffe, and the pillars of the foreign communities of East Asia come
only an occasional visitor East of Suez. But both the drifters
Kipling and Conrad before him, or in his day, Maurice Collis and
boredom, jumped-up mediocrity and, above all, with failure,
the association of the foreign communities of East Asia with
straight from Somerset Maugham's vinegary pen.

German spies were poisoning his ice cream, so he may not have
Maugham's cheerfully ruth-

The only people I find who like it are (1) Scotmen, who will go
anywhere in the world, make money, and settle down. . . . (2)
People who at home would expe-

JUNE 2016 FCCJ JUNE 2016 FCCJ

THE TREATY PORT PECKING ORDER
By the turn of the century, the British Communities of Yokoha-
ma and Kobe had established a tight pecking order headed by
merchants, minor Treaty Port consuls, clergy and schoolteach-
er, with a floot of resting actors,aborstions,counterfeit-
er,beachcombers,and sepoys,liars, andjournalists and where seem to
to have occupied a more ambiguous space,swarming around the
another reach higher but feeding at the bottom according to necessity.

When Hartman visited Japan in 1917, it was as the last surviving link with the
Perry Expeditions, and he was wined and speeched and honored by everyone from
the Prime Minister down, as if to make up for any shortcomings in the greeting
given him and his commanding officer 64 years earlier. Described by the Japan
Orihime as "a tall, patriarchal figure with a long white beard, clad incongru-
ously as a sailor with bell-bottomed trousers and looking for all the world like
Coloridge's Ancient Mariner," Captain Hardy impressed all who met him with
his USS Mississippi sailor's cap, his tales of derring-do and the eight pieces
of surgeon's silver preço tions the ribs he had lost in the Civil War and the Spanish
American War. When Hardy was taken to the beach at Kurigahama where
the Expedition had landed back on July 14, 1853, the clarity of his recollections was a
marvel and a blessing to witness.

Lord Northcliffe looks on
less merchant of Kobe, Edward
Hyde Burton, offers a job to an
old bridge partner fallen on hard
times, on condition he com-

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

Nexis provides access to news and
information from more than 34,000
newspapers and specialist news sources. Also
included is a database of U.S. and
international company information,
biographical databases, country
profiles and a U.S. legal database.

For those already in the secret,
the application form is available on
the FCCJ website or from the
10p Club office.
**A young mayor attempts to lead a struggling Hokkaido city out of bankruptcy**

by DAN SLOAN

"Yubari is financially stricken, but we’re repaying ¥67 of debt every second. Japan, at the same time, is incurring ¥825,000 in new debt every second. I support the government policy that regions need to come up with their own solutions to their problems. The point is that the central government hasn’t come up with its own solutions."

Yubari Mayor Naomichi Suzuki, April 26, 2016

In 2007, the City of Yubari went bankrupt, strapped with some ¥85.3 billion in debt and municipal obligations, a long-dormant coal-based economy better left in the ground and a rapidly declining and aging population less than 10 percent its peak size. The road to its perdition had been paved over decades by dying industry, easy credit, poor governance, fiscal desperation, grm demographics and even bad luck—a narrative in Japan not limited to Yubari. The former mining town for coal and melons, was not the first in Japan to go bankrupt and won’t be the last, but its bankruptcy remains the stuff of national infamy with a law aimed at preventing future Yubari-like collapses through greater fiscal transparency. A subsequent stringent long-term recovery plan that could have made the International Monetary Fund blush, later became the responsibility in 2011 of its newly elected mayor, Naomichi Suzuki, then the nation’s youngest. Around the time of its failure, Suzuki had worked in Yubari on consignment from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. Suzuki has a clear voice and a Yoji Yamada melodrama, was later encouraged to run for mayor after building up support with regional public services, such as primary education and local tax collection, then took on duties such as running junior high schools and fire departments. As their office is tasked with redirecting funds to other projects they have about declining population, but I’m not thinking that way.

In March, Suzuki met with Prime Minister Shinzō Abe and related ministers, selling them the next stage is to focus both on financial reconstruction and revitalization, with a comprehensive plan coming in August. The Abe Cabinet places the biggest priority on economic recovery, but at the same time we know Japan has a long-term debt burden.

With its own population set to With its own population set to With its own population set to middle of the road after descending from the nearly pure white world is still vividly in my mind. The shape of the rice-covered trees extending far off into the distance and the morning moon sparkling above the trees gave a romantic, dream-like impression— as though I were on another planet. Perhaps due to climate changes, it is now difficult to view large, photogenic examples of rice-covered trees, but even now, I head off toward the mountain top through the deep snow with a heavy pack on my back, and my only desire is to feel those emotions from 40 years ago in the middle of a blizzard.

Erin Sloan is a freelance photographer who works regularly for ANA’s Wingman magazine. He also traveled to 60 countries in six years for the series, “The Roots of Vegetables,” which appeared in Shukan Bunshun. He was one of 10 photographers chosen to shoot the Beijing Olympics, and is chairperson of the Japan-China Photography and Cultural Exchange Association. He has held several exhibitions of his work.

JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE…

… on Monday, June 13 at 7:00 pm for the magical pairing of showbiz royalty Kyoko Kosumi and spark plug Fumi Nikaido, as radical aunt and bored niece, in the trivally quirky Kako. My Sullen Pest, the second film from award-winning writer-director-actor Shiro Maeda. Nikaido plays 18-year-old Kako, whose summer vacation is shaken up by the arrival of long-lost Aunt Mikiko, a wacky eccentric who is apparently still on the run. Mikiko takes up residence in Kako’s room despite her niece’s fierce protestations, but when Kako hears about her aunt’s days as a radical bombmaker, a grudging respect is born. Stuffed full of zingy dialog, oddball characters, off-kilter comedy, outrageous twists and unexpected turns, Kako never wears out its welcome. It moves so quickly, in fact, that its many screwball pleasures may require a second or even third viewing.

Nikaido and Maeda will be on hand for the Q&A session.

(Japan, 2016; 120 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.)
IN MEMORIAM

With deep regret I wish to inform FCCJ members that David Watts, a former Tokyo Bureau correspondent for the Times, is a past Regular Member and officer of the FCCJ passed away in the UK on April 10. He was 72.

An accomplished and dedicated newspaperman, Watts spent his career covering events and news in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. He was a popular member and took part in Club activities. Watts served on the Bruce MacDonnell Board as secretary 1986-1987 and was 2nd Vice President on the Naosuke Usui Board of 1987-1988.

He came to the post in Tokyo after four years as Southeast Asia correspondent for the paper, stationed in Singapore, from where he covered the ASEAN countries and made regular trips into Cambodia and Vietnam. We offer our deepest condolences to his wife Shizuko and his two sons, Mark and Dominic.

His obituary, which appeared in the Times on May 17, appears on our website.

- Peter Langan, FCCJ Acting President

REGULAR MEMBERS

CHLOE ARENSBERG was named Asia Bureau Chief for CBS News in April 2014, where she directs the news division’s coverage of the region. Based in China, she manages both the Beijing and Tokyo bureaus of CBS News. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Barnard College, Columbia University and a master’s degree from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Since joining CBS News in 2002, Arensberg has held a number of key positions within the New York and Washington, D.C. newsrooms. She has covered such major international and national news events as the 2015 earthquake in Nepal; the Hong Kong protests in 2014; the regional disputes in the South China Sea; the 2004 and 2008 Presidential campaigns, Hurricane Katrina; and the earthquake in Haiti.

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