In this issue

From the President by Peter Langan

Freedom of the Press: Statement by the Hong Kong Journalists Association and Hong Kong Press Photographers Association

From the archives:

The controversial professor

by Charles Pomeron

Investigating the story of the century

by James Fahn

Queen of the (subtitled) screen

by Gavin Blair

A finger in the eye of the powers-that-be

by David McNeill

Ben Dooley

The New York Times

by Julian Ryall

Profile

Lens craft by photographer Members

In Memoriam: Charlie Cole; Press conference voices; Join the Film Committee; FCCJ Exhibition; New Members; New in the library

Cover photo: Fire consumes the Amazon rainforest in Altamira, Brazil, on Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2019. (AP Photo/Leo Correa)
THE HONG KONG JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (HKJA) and Hong Kong Press Photographers Association (HKPPA) on Sept. 12 made a joint call for the government to stop police violence against journalists covering the anti-extradition bill protests.

The police, they said, should apologize for their increasing attacks, both physical and verbal, against front-line reporters in the past three months.

The two journalists’ groups issued their demands at a joint press conference, which was aimed at countering police accusations against journalists who covered the protests. They include claims that reporters had blocked police operations, with some in “zero distance” with officers, and that there were “fake reporters.”

The groups demanded that the police stop making unfounded accusations and reiterated their call for an independent investigation into the way police handled reporters during the protests. HKJA Chairperson Chris Yeung said in the press conference: “Claims that reporters have obstructed police officers in carrying out their duty have never been substantiated with evidence.”

“They were tactics taken by the police to justify their abuse of power and violence against journalists,” Yeung said. “Journalists have not obstructed their enforcement of the law; we have monitored their violation of the law. There are growing hostilities among at least a sizeable segment of the police force towards journalists, as shown in their deeds and words.”

Press freedom is under threat,” Yeung said.

The two groups said there were a long list of cases clearly showing that media footage and pictures of the clashes and arrests have helped the public knew the whole truth. If journalists had been barred from reporting at the protest areas, stories such as the presence of undercover police officers among the protesters and the serious head injury of a young student at the Tai Po MTR station would have never been able to see the light, they said.

Responding to police claims that there were “fake reporters,” the two associations have called on the police to explain what they meant by “fake reporters” and what evidence they have.

HKJA executive committee Lam Ying-pong and a HKPPA representative gave more details of police violence, including a case when a number of reporters were pepper sprayed in Mong Kok. Worse, they said failure of police officers to show their identification numbers made it difficult for reporters to lodge a formal complaint.

The two groups also made an appeal to the public not to harass, bully and obstruct the work of journalists at the protests, which they say will adversely affect people’s right to know. The public should not target journalists from certain media organizations that they feel discontented with because of various reasons, they said.

During demonstrations, rallies and clashes between police and protestors, they said members of the public should try to keep a distance from reporters to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Professor Saburo Ienaga, controversial historian and educator, speaking at the Club on Sept. 2, 1997, following a partial court victory in his ongoing fight against what he called censorship by the Japanese government in their screening of his high-school textbook. Giving him full attention is former 1987-88 FCCJ president Naoski Utsi (McGraw-Hill).

Born in Nagoya in 1913, Saburo Ienaga graduated from the University of Tokyo in 1937. In 1949, he became a professor at the Tokyo University of Education—a venerable institution founded by the government in 1872 that became the University of Tsukuba in 1975—where he later became a professor emeritus. From 1977 until 1984, he taught at Chuo University. He authored some 50 books, including several in English, and in 1984, was awarded the Japan Academy Prize.

Ienaga’s long struggle against government textbook screening dated from the early 1960s, following alterations and deletions required by Japan’s Ministry of Education in revised editions of his 1947 high-school textbook. According to the ministry, the revisions were required because of factual errors and matters of opinion. It took until 1997 until Japan’s Supreme Court found to a ruling that the government’s removal of his description of biological experiments on people in China by the Japanese Imperial Army’s Unit 731 during WWII was illegal.

It was only a partial victory: the Supreme Court also rejected his claims of illegal removal of four other descriptions of wartime atrocities. Despite in only being partially successful, however, Ienaga’s fight against what he called censorship of textbooks by the ministry’s screening process continued even after his retirement. It apparently had a beneficial side effect in that it encouraged other authors of Japanese school textbooks to include descriptions of Japanese wartime atrocities.

Ienaga was nominated by Noam Chomsky and other scholars for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999 and again in 2001. In his later years, he suffered from Parkinson’s disease, which may have affected his battle with the government.

He died on Nov. 29, 2002, at the age of 89.

— Charles Pomeroy

editor of Foreign Correspondents in Japan, a history of the Club that is available at the front desk
Climate crisis: Part II of a series

In these two installments of our series, we look at the environmental impact of government rules, foreign aid, and carbon credits.

By James Fahn

GOVERNMENT RULES AND SUBSIDIES

The public sector obviously plays a vital role in determining the extent to which all of us, including private companies, address the challenge of climate change. Most investigative journalists should already be on the lookout for ways in which vested interests like fossil-fuel companies are influencing government policies.

But they may not be aware of all the arcane ways such lobbying affects climate change. It could be through the passage of restrictions on the development of renewable energy for example, or relaxing rules on safety and other forms of pollution in order to make fossil-fuel production cheaper.

One area that generally does not receive enough attention is how government subsidizes the industries, particularly fossil fuels, that cause greenhouse-gas pollution. One study in the journal World Development estimates such global subsidies at over $5 trillion per year, and that doesn’t take into account the support for other polluting industries, such as cattle ranching. Many of these subsidies are damaging in other ways, too. For instance, governments often support their fishing fleets by providing them with cheap petrol, damaging fish stocks as well. So, is your government trying to prevent overfishing by providing them with cheap petrol, damaging fish stocks as well?

FOREIGN AID, INVESTMENT AND EXPORT CREDITS

Journalists need to keep track not only of what goes on in their own countries, but also what their governments are doing abroad. In the United States, for instance, even as coal-fired power plants are being shuttered, coal exports have grown rapidly in recent years. Similarly, China is planning to reduce its use of coal at home, but Chinese interests are involved in more than 200 coal projects around the world.

The OECD has set up rules to guard against providing export credits from wealthy nations for the construction of coal-fired power plants, but there are some allegations that they’re being skirted. Similarly, vows by the multilateral development banks that they will follow the Paris Agreement and not back dirty development have to be monitored.

UNEXPECTED OR UNDER-REPORTED IMPACTS

Reporting on the impacts of climate change can be tricky, because linking climate change to, for instance, specific weather events is notoriously difficult. Even when attribution is possible—and the science of determining attribution is getting better all the time—in most cases we can only determine that a particular event was exacerbated by global warming, not caused by it.

By and large, the media has been doing a better job over the years of reporting on climate change impacts, and has even started reporting on secondary or “knock-on” effects, such as how climate-induced migration and resource stress...
Climate crisis: Part II of a series

is causing conflict in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. This needs to be explored more in other regions, too, such as Central America.

The enterprising journalist needs to investigate the many factors, including but not limited to climate change, that can lead to catastrophic weather-related events. For instance, the conditions that created the wildfires which tore through some California in recent years have certainly been exacerbated by climate change, but they’re also due to forest management practices and to development patterns that have been building more houses deep in the woods. Sources can include scientists who are researching such phenomena, but also others—such as insurance companies—that keep track of the data that lie behind such events.

There will still be some impacts that surprise. Some people living inland from the coast, for instance, may be surprised that they, too, are affected by rising sea levels as they push up the water table underneath their land, potentially causing more flooding. Also in recent years, there has been speculation that they, too, are affected by rising sea levels as they push up the water table underneath their land, potentially causing more flooding. Also in recent years, there has been speculation that they, too, are affected by rising sea levels as they push up the water table underneath their land, potentially causing...
OCTOBER 2019

FCCJ

THE PAPER HAS ALSO carried a series of articles on how Denstu, Japan’s largest advertising company, has been paying Kyodo News Agency to run articles on pharmaceuticals. Another reported on the construction of coal-fired power stations in Indonesia by Japanese and South Korean companies using technology that fails pollution standards in their own countries.

The pickup of these stories in the local Japanese media has been negligible, the two journalists lament. In 2007, however, the FCCJ awarded the Waseda Institute its Supporter of the Free Press Award, recognizing its importance in a climate that includes “growing self-censorship” and press clubs that leave journalists struggling to serve the public interest and fulfill their democratic mandate.

The FCCJ nod was important, says Watanabe. In fact, it was a mortal wound to Japan’s flagship liberal newspaper. For Kimura and Watanabe, though, it was the end of the line, and both quit soon after.

But despite the slap in the face, both stayed in the journalism profession. Today, they can be found running the Waseda Chronicle, an online, non-profit investigative newspaper out of a small office in Tokyo.

When we met, Kimura had just returned from a reporting trip to the Philippines, source of most of the bananas consumed in Japan. Unknown to most consumers, the industry is a black hole for human rights, he says, with instances of strikebreaking, intimidation of workers, even murder. It’s exactly the sort of story the mainstream media has steered away from their desks to see their boss holding an impromptu press conference on the newroom TV screens. For months, the newspaper had been taking flak over an article about the Fukushima nuclear accident. Now Toshikazu Kimura, its president, was apologizing to the nation and announcing that the article in question was being retracted.

Hidesaki Kimura, who wrote the piece, and Makoto Watanabe, who ran the special investigative section that carried it, watched in astonishment as the president stood up, flanked by the paper’s heads of editorial affairs and public relations and bowed low for six seconds. Neither reporter knew what was coming. But then Kimura straightened up, and vowed strict punishment for “all concerned.”

For many, the humiliating mea culpa, coming on the heels of another Asahi retraction of articles on “comfort women” a month earlier, was a mortal wound to Japan’s flagship liberal newspaper. For Kimura and Watanabe, it was the end of the line, and both quit soon after.

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WATANABE NOTES THAT THE mainstream media has steered clear of the Denstu pharmaceutical story, which he spent 10 months researching while at the Asahi, because of the chokhold the huge ad agency has over advertising. “I knew how to approach government officials, but Denstu’s conservative rivals. Yet, Watanabe and Kimura still believe it was accurate. Yoshida had openly contemplated the ruin of east Japan, says Watanabe, so was it so hard to imagine that his foot soldiers might panic and flee the field of battle? “Yoshida is quoted in his transcript as saying that ‘All of the nuclear materials could escape and spread. Our image is a black hole for the journalists that work here,” he says. “And still he chose that option.”

The article, well at odds with the official narrative of brave samurai holding out against lethal odds, predictably infuriated Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), the government and the Asahi’s conservative rivals. Yet, Watanabe and Kimura still believe it was accurate. Yoshida had openly contemplated the ruin of east Japan, says Watanabe, so was it so hard to imagine that his foot soldiers might panic and flee the field of battle? “Yoshida is quoted in his transcript as saying that ‘All of the nuclear materials could escape and spread. Our image is a black hole for the journalists that work here,” he says. “And still he chose that option.”

The need for independent journalism to monitor corruption, censorship and the growth of personal surveillance has rarely been more acute, says Watanabe. He cites the growing use of DNA technology in Japan. “The DNA of about one in every 100 people is stored on record,” he says. “It’s not destroyed, as it should be. But the media doesn’t like to write about the police, so it’s a dangerous situation.”

A finger in the eye of the powers-that-be

The non-profit investigative cyber-paper Waseda Chronicle, led by ex-Asahi journalists, looks for important stories ignored by the mainstream media

By David McNeill

The Olympus business scandal in 2011, survives thanks to sub-

scribers and an initial rich donor.

The Chronicle has no such largess, lamentas Watanabe, and Japan’s culture of charitable funding is comparatively unde-

veloped. One reason for publishing in English is to broaden the paper’s reach—but translation and copy editing add to the cost.

To save money on his banana story, Kimura few economy class and stayed in the houses of local labor union mem-

bers in Mindanao, where the plantation is based. The price tag for his entire two-week reporting trip came to less than ¥250,000. He is unfazed by how this might have colored his story. “When you start from the principle that you’re on the side of the victims, you don’t have to worry about being neutral,” he says.

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Ben Dooley  The New York Times

By Julian Ryall

“I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT THAT CORRESPONDENTS NOT EXOTICIZE THE PLACE WHERE THEY ARE POSTED”

AFTER almost five years reporting from Beijing, Ben Dooley says Japan is a breath of fresh air—both professionally and personally. The Japan business correspondent for the New York Times, Dooley arrived in Tokyo in February and says his first reaction to being here was to be grateful for the lack of pollution in the city.

“There were days when I would look out of my window in Beijing and I wouldn’t be able to see to the other side of the road,” he said. “After being there for a few years, I developed a natural sensitivity to air quality and while there is still pollution here, it’s not the same as in China.”

Originally from what he describes as “a small town on the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia,” 40-year-old Dooley says he is also grateful for the relatively unfettered access to government agencies, academics and corporate leaders. Asked about the “hurdles” that he has come up against in his reporting in the last seven months, Dooley says they are relatively low.

“They don’t seem like hurdles because I’ve just come from China, where it is so difficult to report on anything and to just do your job,” he said. “It’s refreshing to come to Japan and to be able to walk into METI [The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry] and be briefed on an issue by an official who is at least being reasonably frank with you.”

Dooley credits his present position to “a good degree of luck.” He completed a degree in Asian studies at the University of Virginia, where he “fell in love with kanji characters.” “They were just so very different to anything that I had seen before and there was something very graceful and expressive about them.”

HE ADMITS THAT LEARNING sufficient kanji to be able to get by “did not come easy,” but—after 18 months with a South Korean Internet startup and as a PBS online video producer in Washington DC—he honed his language abilities during two years in a mountain town in Aichi Prefecture with the Japan Exchange and Teaching program.

In 2005, he returned to the US and took a Masters in East Asian Studies at Stanford University. It was during his time at Stanford that his career path veered off. “I had thought that I would go into government, but I attended a lecture by Bill Keller, then the executive editor of the New York Times, and I got it into my head that journalism would be an interesting and fun thing to do. Correspondents do not, of course, simply walk into plum overseas assignments, although Dooley felt that his knowledge of Asia, some of its languages, culture, economic and political issues, meant that he would be most valuable to a news organization in this part of the world.

Back in Washington but with an eye on Asia, Dooley joined the local bureau of Kyodo News. Initially hired as a news assistant, he was soon given free reign to chase down his own stories, primarily in the State Department and then in the White House. During his four years with Kyodo, Dooley was promoted to a staff-writer position and was informed that the agency had an opening in China for an English-speaking correspondent.

Around 18 months after taking up the position, he moved over to Agence France-Presse and was covering domestic Chinese politics, business and, increasingly, human rights issues. “When I first went to Beijing, I did not really have an interest in human rights issues because it looked like things were getting better. But it became apparent that things were actually getting much, much worse, far more quickly than anyone expected,” he said.

“TO ME, NOTHING WAS more important to write about than the persecution of people by their own government,” Dooley said. “The Uighurs is the most obvious case, but there were a lot of horrible things happening to people all over the country.”

He went to China wanting to write good things about the country, but it was very difficult when so much that was negative was going on. “It became more and more oppressive. Everyone believed—and hoped—Xi [Jinping] would be a reformer and would open the country up when he came to power. But those hopes quickly disappeared.”

Towards the end of his fourth year in Beijing, a friend contacted him to let him know that the Times was looking for a correspondent with experience and language skills to be based in Tokyo. It was, he says, another stroke of luck.

After a spell training at the paper’s headquarters while he waited for his accreditation to come through, Dooley arrived in Tokyo in February. Contrary to some suggestions that Americans in general are not very interested in what is going on beyond their borders, Dooley says readers of the New York Times do care about what is happening around the world.

“My job, my challenge is to make the news interesting and enjoyable to the readers,” he said. “At the same time, I don’t want to do the vending-machine stories or write about sex robots. I think it’s important that correspondents not exoticize or fetishize the place where they are posted.”

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Instead, Dooley said, he wants to get his teeth into the longer-term investigative stories, similar to some that he pursued in China.

“Those would be my first love in journalism. It would be better for the world as a whole if those stories were not out there, but we all know they are.”

Julian Ryall is Japan correspondent for the Daily Telegraph.
IN MEMORIAM

Charlie Cole
Feb. 28 1955 – Sept. 5 2019

Charlie Cole, one of the four photojournalists who captured the iconic image of the Tiananmen protester “Tank Man” in June 1989, passed away in September in Bali where he had lived for some 15 years. He was 64. He leaves Rosanna, his wife.

Well-known in the Asia-Pacific region, Charlie was resident in Japan for much of the 1980s and 1990s and was a regular visitor to the Club along with buddies the late Greg Davis and “Rambling” James Gardner.

Writer Bradley Martin drew on him for a character in his latest novel, Nuclear Blues.

Cole, covering the Beijing pro-democracy demonstrations for Newsweek, received the 1990 World Press Photo award of the year.

– Geoff Tudor

“THERE ARE A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN JAPAN WHO ARE INTERESTED IN DOING SOMETHING ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES, BUT DON’T GET THE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES, OR DON’T HAVE PEERS TO SHARE THEIR INTEREST.

I HOPE OUR ACTIVITIES WILL INSPIRE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE WILL, BUT NOT THE COURAGE OR KNOW-HOW.”

Hiroto Inoue, 19, Co-founder, Fridays for Future Tokyo, “Marching in the Global Climate Strike,” Sept. 17

Lens craft

Face off medallists
Japan clinch the mixed team gold medal at the World Judo Championships in Tokyo on Sept. 1, while silver went to France and bronze to Brazil.
by Rodrigo Reyes Marin

Dance off performers
Sakaikami High School’s team (from Osaka) perform at the Japan High School Dance Championship, “Dance Stadium,” in Yokohama on Aug. 16.
by Yoshikazu Tsuno

Club news

Photographer members
The Club had a successful evening celebrating “The Rhythms and Colors of Bangladesh” on Sept. 4. Left, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, Rabab Fatima (center in the black and pink sari), is surrounded by singers and dancers (left to right, Papiya Rahman Piky, Sangya Ghose, Tania Islam Mithun, Gerome Gomez, Shammi Akhtar, Ashim Malik and Mabud Sarker). Attendees were also treated to delicious Bangladeshi cuisine.

Left, the evening was introduced by the Club’s 1st Vice President and reporter for the Bangladesh Daily Prothom Alo, Monzurul Huq. Photos: Albert Siegel
I studied delicate nikango-style painting from a young age. Then, a few years ago, I started using stiff, oil-paint brushes to create thick, line paintings of people. One of the things I learned from this is that a black line is not a line, but a surface. Next I photographed the finished painting and turned it into an image. However, being an experienced graphic designer, I found that I was not satisfied with the resulting image. It was then that an old friend suggested I added information to the picture and print it. This marked the birth of “THE PAPER,” a free newspaper that offers a complete contrast to the modern trend of delivering information digitally over the internet. The works in this exhibition illustrate the path that led to the creation of “THE PAPER.”

Hiroyuki Sato was born in 1955. He began his career at Nippon Design Center and later moved to the design office Breakfast. In 1985, he opened Suto Graphics and has designed album covers for over 130 musicians. In addition, he has been the creative director for a number of magazines.

... on Oct. 3 at 5:00 pm for a very special TIFF-FCCJ collaborative event with legendary director Yoji Yamada, whose highly anticipated Tora-san, Wish You Were Here, has been selected as the Tokyo International Festival Opening Film. Joining the internationally acclaimed director to discuss the 50th anniversary of his beloved Tora-san character, as well as to share highlights of this year’s 32nd edition of the festival, will be TIFF Festival Director Takes Home and Japan Now Programming Advisor Koki Ando. Following a screening of his new film with English subtitles at Shochiku, Yamada will appear at FCCJ for a Q&A with Kohei Ando. Following a screening of his new film with English subtitles at Shochiku, Yamada will appear at FCCJ for a Q&A with Kohei Ando. Following a screening of his new film with English subtitles at Shochiku, Yamada will appear at FCCJ for a Q&A with Kohei Ando.