



NUMBER 1 SHUMBUN

January 2016,
Volume 48 No. 1, ¥400

**YEAR OF THE
RED MONKEY:
JOURNALISTS'
PREDICTIONS
FOR 2016**

**ARE
YOU
REDDY?**

Crock 'n' trolls
Should journos
fight back?

Profiled
Stefano Carrer

**Ex-hostess,
deaf single
mother – and
politician**



> THEME.08
> CAR

Greener mobility requires less weight and friction

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Assemblywoman
Rie Saito

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Orangutan cover photograph: Ferlistockphoto
Underpants added by Andrew Potheary

SONJA BLASCHKE



From the President

WISHING ALL MEMBERS A Wonderful New Monkey Year – the best in health, wealth and may all your dreams come true!

Perhaps this sounds like wishful thinking, but a good dose of positive thinking is, I believe, the best way to launch 2016 at the Foreign Correspondents' Club – which is tackling important issues to maintain its fiscal health and journalistic integrity.

On the management side, the board will be looking to finally clear the staff litigants' case. A settlement has already been reached at the Labor Tribunal and final payment now awaits GMM approval following our by-laws. Ending this second lawsuit will mean more savings for the FCCJ and new opportunity for members and staff to start working together again.

The next big step is pushing ahead with plans for the Club move in 2018.

We all want a swanky new FCCJ in the swanky new Mitsubishi Building in the swanky Marunouchi area. But lurking over our head is the very real battle of finding solutions on how to achieve this. A nagging issue is coping financially, especially with the stark fact of the dwindling numbers of journalists, as they move to other locations or simply retire from their jobs. Your ideas and support are most welcome.

On the journalism front, the Freedom of the Press Committee is planning a seminar in the new year to shed light on the deeper nuances of this critical topic. Indeed, against the spanning of cultures in a growing globalized world, the definition of press freedom must also address the complexities of multicultural societies while maintaining absolute respect for the right to information and speech. Thanks to the diversity within the FCCJ we can expect a lively discussion and fresh perspectives that will contribute to the ongoing international debate on press freedom.

I also would like to report that Asian journalists, who still represent a minority in the FCCJ, plan to start a new forum group that will meet on a regular basis,

mainly to discuss and share insights on regional development. It is a well-timed move as Japan begins building stronger alliances with the fastest-growing region in the world. I am looking forward to the emergence of this platform, to which I will also belong, as a means of ushering in dynamism in the Club and to help pave the way to expand the numbers of members from Asia.

Finally, I forecast a more diplomatically active Japan in the new year as I observe the flurry of new approaches undertaken by the Abe government. The latest initiative was in December, with the high-level visit to Delhi by the prime minister to meet his counterpart, Narendra Modi. This resulted in new bilateral pledges and Shinkansen deals with the leader of the sprawling Indian subcontinent. The media on both sides have been supportive of a stronger alliance, touted as important for a security balance in the region, while pointing out the huge economic potential for both.

And so I wrap this month up with a toast to the prosperity of the FCCJ in the coming year.

– **Suvendrini Kakuchi**

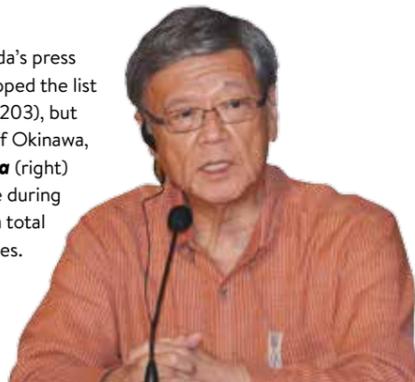
2015 by the numbers

TOP 10 PRESS EVENTS OF 2015

1. **HARUHIKO KURODA**, governor of the Bank of Japan
Mar. 20 **203 attendees**
2. **TENG-HUI LEE**, former president of Taiwan
July 23 **184 attendees**
3. **TAKESHI ONAGA**, governor of Okinawa
May 20 **141 attendees**
4. **TAKASHI UEMURA**, former *Asahi Shimbun* reporter
Jan. 9 **132 attendees**
5. **GOSHI HOSONO, AKIRA NAGATSUMA, KATSUYA OKAWA**, DPJ presidential candidates debate
July 23 **126 attendees**
6. **KO NAKATA**, expert on Islamic Law/Prof. Doshisha U.
Jan. 22 **123 attendees**
7. **EDDIE JONES**, former head coach, Japan National Rugby Team
Nov. 2 **120 attendees**

8. **YASUO HASEBE**, Prof. Constitutional Law, Waseda Law School; **SETSU KOBAYASHI**, prof. emeritus, Keio U.
June 15 **107 attendees**
9. **TAKESHI ONAGA**, governor of Okinawa
Sept. 24 **106 attendees**
9. **KOSUKE MOTANI**, chief senior economist, Japan Research Institute; **HIROMICHI SHIRAKAWA**, chief economist, Credit Suisse Securities Japan
Sept. 28 **106 attendees**

Haruhiko Kuroda's press conference topped the list for attendees (203), but the governor of Okinawa, **Takeshi Onaga** (right) appeared twice during the year, with a total of 247 attendees.



TOP 10 FCCJ VIDEO VIEWS

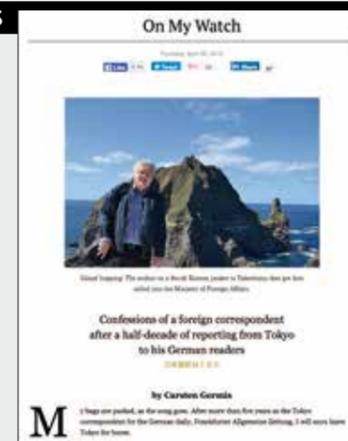
1. **ROBERT J. SHILLER**, economist & Nobel Laureate
Mar. 8 **25,421 views**

Robert J. Shiller, "Are We Headed For Another Financial Crisis?," which you can see on the FCCJ's YouTube channel
2. **IKUHIKO HATA & YASUAKI ONUMA**, "Comfort Women" issue
Mar. 16 **16,910 views**
3. **HAYAO MIYAZAKI**, film director, "Funds to Block Henoko"
July 12 **15,084 views**
4. **YUMENO NITO**, founder of Colabo, "Helping High-school Girls Escape the Sex Industry"
May 20 **11,291 views**
5. **FUNASSYI**, Unofficial mascot of Funabashi City
Mar. 4 **9,841 views**
6. **HIROAKI KOIDE**, former Kyoto U. Asst. Prof. "The Trouble with Nuclear Power"
Apr. 24 **9,723 views**
7. **SHIGEAKI KOGA**, formerly of METI, "Chilling of Freedom of Expression"
Apr. 15 **5,566 views**
8. **YOSHINORI KOBAYASHI**, manga-ka, "Constitutional Revision"
Aug. 9 **4,580 views**
9. **JUNKO ISHIDO**, Mother of ISIS hostage Kenji Goto
Jan. 23 **4,026 views**
10. **KATSUHIKO ISHIBASHI & SATOSHI SATO**: "Concerns Over Restarting the Sendai Reactors"
Apr. 27 **2,389 views**

WEBSITE FACTS

Total Page views, Jan.-Nov., 2015:

761,523



Most read Number 1 *Shimbun* article: "ON MY WATCH," by Carsten Germis **147,192 in English, 15,067 in Japanese**

10 OF THE MOST POPULAR BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY

- | | |
|---|---|
| Bending Adversity: Japan and the Art of Survival by David Pilling | Japanization: What the World Can Learn from Japan's Lost Decades by William Pesek |
| Capital in the Twenty-First Century by Thomas Piketty | Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy by Eri Hotta |
| Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan edited by Jeff Kingston | Last Boat To Yokohama: The Life And Legacy Of Beate Sirota Gordon by Nassrine Azimi; Michel Wasserman; With An Introduction by Beate Sirota Gordon |
| Fragrant Orchid by Yamaguchi Yoshiko, Fujiwara Sakuya; translated, with an introduction, by Chia-ning Chang. | Manchu Princess, Japanese Spy: The Story of Kawashima Yoshiko, the Cross-Dressing Spy Who Commanded Her Own Army by Phyllis Birnbaum |
| If There Were No Japan by Roger Pulvers | |
| Japan and the Shackles of the Past by R. Taggart Murphy | |

TOP 10 ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS

1. **FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY**, Dec. 13
2. **AFRICAN SAFARI AT THE FCCJ**, Oct. 23
3. **AMAZING THAI NIGHT**, May 14
4. **OSAKA NIGHT: THE BEST OF OSAKA BUNRAKU COMES TO THE FCCJ**, Sept. 3
5. **AN EVENING OF KAGAWA ATTRACTIONS**, Oct. 28
6. **RAKUGO NIGHT IN ENGLISH DINNER SHOW**, June 4
7. **YALE'S REDHOT & BLUE DINNER SHOW**, May 18
8. **HOKKAIDO SHIRETOKO NIGHT**, Feb. 9
9. **A DELIGHTFUL SHIMA EVENING: G-7 SUMMIT GOURMET PARADISE**, Nov. 1
10. **AICHI NIGHT**, Nov. 6



Monkeying around

2016 promises to be a year of antic swings between craziness and simply more of the same – that is, if any of our journalist prognosticators’ crystal-ball musings come true.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced the new focus of his “Abenomics” economic program. “It will be robots,” he said and changed one of his ministers for a machine.

– Alexander Lenin, Rossiyskaya Gazeta

Toyota Motor Corp. widens its lead as the world’s biggest automaker. But airbag supplier Takata Corp. is forced to abandon the airbag-inflator business after regulators order it to recall every single inflator it has made using the suspect ammonium nitrate chemistry linked to deadly airbag explosions and millions of recalled vehicles.

– Hans Greimel, Automotive News

Seismologists Masaaki Kimura and Katsuhiko Ishibashi’s next prediction: a “big one” soon with an epicenter in Shizuoka Prefecture. Dr. Kimura says “by 2017.” The year 2016 will prove they’re not quacks on quakes.

– Lucy Birmingham

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has admitted during his treason trial that he was an agent of the Chinese government. His mission, Abe testified, was to facilitate China’s takeover of Japan. “Abenomics would reduce Japan to an economic basket case, and crypto-fascism coupled with historical revisionism would make us a global pariah,” Abe said. “Then no one would care when the Chinese offered to buy Japan and turn it into a giant theme park.” Prime Minister Toru Hashimoto said that when Abe is found guilty he will be sent to the government’s new re-education facility on the Senkaku Islands.

– Steve McClure

There will be several shouting matches in the Main Bar between supporters of the so-called ex-Presidents lawsuit and their opponents, and at least one fist fight, leading up to the March GMM vote on the merits of the case. But when it is all over the Club will still be standing. (Fingers crossed on that last one.)

– Bob Whiting

The government cuts the target again for women in leadership roles, this time to 5 percent by 2050, with Abe explaining in a speech at an international conference, “Japan must address its problems of low birth-rate and shortage of elderly care workers before it can allow women to abandon their duties in the home.”

– Gavin Blair

A fresh poll ahead of the upper house election says a record percentage of Japan’s electorate would re-elect Shinzo Abe “in the right circumstances.” Nearly a fifth of those polled said they would most likely opt for Abe if they bumped into him after “4-5 glasses of shochu” in a small bar. Abe, who has yet to score higher than 18 percent of the popular vote, said he had never been to an izakaya in his life, but “might have a rethink.”

– David McNeill, Independent

Japanese cyber-crime prosecutors announce defeat over Bitcoin theft case; French CEO of Mt Gox declared innocent after 6 months of looming incertitude.

– Nathalie Stucky

1) The estimated costs of the Olympics rise, as do electric bills and Tepco’s profits – but not the earnings of the average person. 2) Stories about weird Japan continue to proliferate as new players join the media circus in Tokyo. 3) Newly flavored Kit-Kats appear on the market.

– Jake Adelstein

Demographic and economic reality make it clear the center of world gravity has moved from the Atlantic Ocean to Eurasia. Expect continued geopolitical turbulence, especially in the Middle East, as a result.

– Benjamin Fulford



As enthusiasm for Japanese food spreads around the world, 7-Eleven is awarded its first Michelin star for its famous cold spaghetti sandwich.

– Richard Lloyd Parry, the Times

ORANGUTAN © FERLISTOCKPHOTO; ILLUSTRATION, ANDREW POTHECARY

Beijing faces serious unrest in Xinjiang

– Greg Clark

Abe reads election victory as mandate to rewrite Constitution

– Julian Ryall, Daily Telegraph

Abe to launch panel to study Donald Trump’s immigration policies

– Andy Sharp, Bloomberg



To bring good luck – and hence avoid the above – horoscope experts advise wearing red underwear.

In a dramatic volte-face, Japan relaxes its immigration policy to accommodate millions of U.S. citizens following the election of President Trump.

– Justin McCurry, Guardian

Tokyo’s basic taxi fares rise to ¥10,000. Abenomics backfires.

– Yosuke Watanabe, Kyodo, Beijing

An interceptor drone from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department’s newly deployed crime-fighting drone squad brought down a mysterious unidentified aerial vehicle (UAV) by trapping it in its net. No claims of ownership by terrorist organizations have been received.

– Tim Hornyak

After the July House of Councilors election, Seiji Maehara, Sumio Mabuchi and Akihisa Nagashima will leave the DPJ to form, along with some survivors of the JIP, a political party called the New Security Club. Seiichiro Murakami will quip: “They’ve left the DPJ? When were they ever in it?”

– Michael Cucek

Increasingly common sights in Japan, 2016: Goromaru, tornadoes, and mosquitoes in December.

– Mary Corbett



Former PM Tanaka’s appearance at the Club later this year.

At an electrifying FCCJ press event, former prime minister and kingmaker Kakuei Tanaka, who was believed to have passed away in 1993, announces his return to politics. Appearing remarkably spry at age 97, Tanaka says he’d been in hiding at an undisclosed location in Niigata Prefecture while undergoing rehabilitation from a stroke. Explaining that he “could no longer abide” by the policies of the Abe government, he announces his candidacy for the summer upper house elections as a member of the newly formed Ganso Jiminto (Original Liberal Democratic Party), with Ichiro Ozawa and other core members of the former Tanaka faction. The new party’s manifesto assumes a strongly pacifist stance, calling for repeal of the new Security Law, improved relations with neighboring Asian nations and stemming the widening gap between the affluent and the poor.

– Eiichiro Tokumoto

Tensions in Okinawa will boil over after clashes between police and protestors over the relocation of Futenma air base to Henoko lead to fatalities. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will continue to insist there are no other alternatives.

– Eric Johnston, Japan Times

Horoscopes will be scientifically proven to be so accurate that the difference between primates will render reddish-brown orangutans entirely unsuitable stand ins for red fire monkeys, and climate change will re-introduce dragons to areas of Central Asia (and Wales).

– Andrew Potheary, cover designer, ox



Despite the ruling by the Japanese Supreme Court against allowing married couples to keep their surnames, the prime minister’s wife Akie goes back to her maiden name Matsuzaki. To show that he is serious about “Womenomics,” her husband Shinzo follows suit and adopts his wife’s surname.

– Sonja Blaschke

In a nondescript narrow meeting room in the Kita Ward city hall, a young assemblywoman sits erect on one end of the sofa. Her demeanor is friendly, albeit with a hint of insecurity, and it's hard to fault her for this. Only nine months ago, 31-year-old Rie Saito became the ward's first deaf assemblywoman, and she's the first to admit that she has yet to get completely comfortable in her role.

She describes her strength as being "good at listening to people's hearts." She has no choice, really, because Saito has been unable to hear ever since she came down with meningitis just before turning 2 years old. The brain infection left her as one of about 340,000 people with a hearing disability in Japan. It didn't have any effect on her ambition, however, neither deterring her from pursuing a lucrative career as one of Tokyo's top hostesses, nor from successfully entering politics in April 2015.

An interview with Saito today is far from a silent affair. While she prefers to give her answers in writing, she is also adept at voicing her opinions. Becoming familiar with her way of speaking takes some time – her intonation is quite different from that of a hearing person, and she cannot pronounce some letters, like "s."

"In the beginning we conversed with one another via the computer, even though we sat facing each other," recalls her secretary, Ryo Masuzawa. He has been working with Saito since her election victory at the end of April 2015, and has become her second voice: for the sake of the interviewer he repeats many of her answers slowly and clearly, sometimes repeats questions very slowly so that she can lip-read and other times types comments into her computer.

When Saito speaks, it is with a visible effort to produce words with clarity, which are accompanied with frequent gestures. Her movements are not *shuwa*, Japanese sign language, however, which she only knows on a beginner's level. There are two ways of thinking on educating the deaf in Japan: One method is to have children attend special schools and learn sign language. The one that her parents followed believes in schooling deaf children like regular children, which is why Saito learned to read lips.

SAITO'S ELECTION SUCCESS WAS revolutionary. But her disability was not the only reason. People who only know her in her present mode of conservative costume, neat bob and modest make-up might not be able to picture her as she was just a few short years ago.

Saito's life has been anything but straightforward. Frustrated by the discrimination she faced as a deaf child in Aomori, she became a rebellious teenager: She began smoking and drinking at an early age, and was even caught shoplifting. She left high school before graduation. Eventually, her attractive

Listening with pen and paper

As Japan prepares for the 2020 Paralympics, a deaf ex-hostess and single mother turned politician is striving for a "barrier free" Tokyo.



by SONJA BLASCHKE

looks helped her gain work as a hostess, pouring drinks and entertaining male customers. In 2007, Saito moved to Tokyo, where she became a top hostess in Ginza.

The hostess industry is an unforgiving one, and listening skills are considered key. Saito resorted to writing down her thoughts with an elegant fountain pen. Luckily, calligraphy lessons had given her beautiful handwriting, and Saito soon had a lot of regular customers.

While in her mid-twenties, the unmarried Saito gave birth to a daughter, who she is now raising as a single mother. It was another challenge that she faced in Japan, a country in which 98 percent of the children are born within wedlock.

One would think that just one of the factors that labeled Saito as an "outsider" would be enough to stymie a political career in a society that cherishes uniformity. But despite all that, Saito has made it to the mainstream of Japanese society, perhaps precisely because her story strays so far from the typical path. Her autobiography *Hitsudan Hostess*

PHOTOS: SONJA BLASCHKE

("The hostess with a pen"), published in 2009 by Kobunsha, became a bestseller. That, in turn, inspired a TV drama and a manga based on Saito's life story.

Then, after eight years of working as a hostess, Saito left her job. While continuing to write, she became active in campaigning for and supporting other disabled people. She began to realize that there was only so much she could do as a regular citizen, and an acquaintance encouraged her to run in the local elections. Saito agreed – and took another step in her unusual life.

Japan's strict election laws make things even more challenging for the disabled. The ban on the distribution of flyers and documents forces candidates to rely on speeches – a distinct disadvantage for Saito. But she excelled at the frequent meet and greets, and her life story seemed to help: Some voters told her that they had read her book and cheered her on. Others, she believes, could identify with her being a single working mother struggling to raise a child. She was elected with over 6,000 votes, far more than any of her 50 fellow candidates.

Saito's success, she believes, is part of a sea change. "In Japan," she says, "diversity is becoming much more accepted."

Her success is part of a sea change. "In Japan diversity is becoming much more accepted."



Communicating change

Rie Saito in discussion with her secretary Ryo Masuzawa.

Japanese society has become more open and diverse in the last few decades – something that applies not only to fashionistas or foreigners, but also to people with a disability, like Saito.

WHILE THERE IS STILL progress to be made, Japan has come a long way from being a country where disabled people were locked up out of sight from society. Until 1948, children with hearing disabilities were not required to attend school. And it was only in 1973 that deaf people were finally allowed to obtain a regular driver's license, provided they were using a hearing aid.

The new regulations did not apply, for example, to bus and taxi licenses, thereby limiting the choices of work for the disabled. But even that will soon be rectified. An amendment to be implemented from April will allow deaf people to obtain any type of driver's license. Masashi Matsumoto, director at the Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JFD), welcomed the planned

revision. "We will tackle an enlightenment campaign to have people understand that there is no problem with hearing-aid users' driving," he said in an interview with Kyodo News.

Deaf people faced discrimination in many other aspects of life as well. Until 1979, in fact, they were legally regarded as quasi-incompetent persons, i.e. comparable, for example, to people with a mental disability. As a consequence, their rights were severely limited: they could not get a loan, buy property or succeed the family business. It was only after pressure from the JFD that the Civil Code was changed to give them equal rights.

Now, in the run-up to Tokyo's hosting of the 2020 Paralympics, Saito has vowed to make not only the city, but also the hearts of its citizens "barrier free." "This would make life for everybody easier, especially the elderly," she says.

Disabled people are still quite rare in Japan's political arena. But about the same time as Rie Saito's election win, another deaf woman was elected to a local parliament in Hyogo prefecture. Saito interprets this as yet another sign of change.

HER PRESENCE HAS ALREADY resulted in visible changes in the halls of power. Her office was outfitted with a colored lamp indicating the presence of a visitor. The assembly chamber was also technically enhanced. Saito can now give her required speeches using software that audibly reads out her words, a system that she finds very workable.

"Hearing" what other people say, she says, has been more problematic. Voice recognition software displays on a tablet PC the words spoken by other legislators at the microphone. However, the error level of the system, especially during discussion sessions, can at times exceed 50 percent. In those cases, ward office staff sit next to Saito and jot down what the speakers say on a piece of paper.

The technological inroads used to help Saito's disability have also been revolutionary, as legislatures throughout Japan ban technical devices, including mobile phones. Now, for what is likely the first time in Japan, not only Saito but all legislators are free to use PCs in Kita Ward's assembly. And deaf citizens who wish to attend public meetings can now borrow the devices. Saito has become a symbol, and her secretary says that whenever it is her turn to address the public at the assembly, around a dozen deaf people show up.

For the time being, Saito seems much more challenged by the demands of her new work environment than by disability-related hurdles of communication. Many of the routines of a legislative year are new to her. She has struggled with some of the professional lingo, but she says she receives a lot of understanding and support from her fellow legislators.

She also draws strength and courage from her voters: "We need people like you (in office), who live with a disability," is something she often heard during campaigning. The feeling of being obliged to her voters weighs far more heavily than any fears of stumbling. "I want to work hard and deliver results," she says.

Saito keeps her ears open to the needs of others, and the requests for support are many. Saito's attentive way of listening and communicating with pen and paper, which she honed during her time as a patient and attentive hostess, now comes in handy in her new career in politics. "By choosing the appropriate Kanji characters for what one wants to say," she says, "one can sometimes express even more than with words that are spoken." ●

Sonja Blaschke is a German freelance journalist writing for publications in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. She also works as a producer for TV filming in Japan.



Stefano Carrer

by TYLER ROTHMAR

Stefano Carrer, who is from a small town in northern Italy between Milan and Lake Como, was born to middle-class parents in the early 1960s. In his youth he threw himself into a study of ancient Greek, “a very beautiful language, but a luxury. I regret not studying German,” he says.

He knew early on that he wanted to be a journalist, and made his choices accordingly: “I never wanted to make much money, I just didn’t want to do repetitive things. And maybe I was idealistic. I wanted to contribute, to spread news. And so I thought it would be good for my journalistic aspirations to have a background in law.” He took a law degree from the University of Milan, and a Master of Journalism at around the same time from the Institute for Journalism of Milan.

The beginning of his career in journalism was marked by encounters with two men who went on to become among the best-known Italians in the world. At the tail end of a year of compulsory military service, Carrer joined a lifestyle magazine focused on horse riding. His first assignment was to travel to the countryside with a photographer named Tiberti, who he later learned was a member of Operation Gladio, a clandestine “stay-behind” NATO operation for armed resistance in the event of a Russian invasion of Italy.

Together they drove to Tuscany, near Siena, to write about a blind young horseman known for terrorizing the countryside on his steed. Carrer’s editor later titled the piece “I See with the Eyes of my Horse,” and it became the first time that Andrea Bocelli, now a legendary opera singer, made the national press. “Bocelli gave me some tapes of his singing that I passed on to a music company in Milan,” he remembers.

The tapes were instrumental in Bocelli’s discovery, and Carrer still has the tenor’s letter of thanks. The remarkable story is capped off by the fact that Carrer was hired at the magazine by none other than Pierluigi Collina, a frustrated media company manager who later quit and went on to become the single most recognizable soccer referee in the world, officiating the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup final between Brazil and Germany.

Carrer traveled to New York to join the large community of Italian journalists there and was soon stringing for *Il Sole 24 Ore*, a large Italian financial daily rivaled only by the *Financial Times*. His first trip to Japan in 1991 was as a freelance international courier, a wonderful way to globetrot in which one called a number and chose a destination, paying perhaps \$75 for a round-trip ticket in exchange for transporting documents and no checked luggage. Unfortunately, the system came to an end after 9/11.

He continued to write for *Il Sole 24*

Ore after returning to Italy, officially joining in 1993 to cover international finance and commodities. From 2000, Carrer’s reporting was increasingly Asia-oriented, and he became the de facto Asia correspondent from 2006 to 2009.

Carrer was based in Italy but on vacation in Tokyo when the triple disaster struck in March 2011, and he extended his stay to cover the unfolding events in Tohoku and Tokyo. “I noticed that Japanese authorities were not particularly efficient in the first few days. Japan works best when the situation is under control, when the dimensions of the disaster are known and resources can be allocated according to an understanding of the big picture,” he says.

One week after 3/11, Carrer found himself being contacted for comment by other international news outlets, as not a few reporters had repaired to Osaka to do their jobs. His interviewers, in search of panicked on-the-ground reporting, were disappointed by his calm answers and cut things short. “In one interview I told them, ‘The only thing I am at risk of here so far is getting fat from the strange vending-machine drinks until more water arrives.’”

Carrer wonders what life as a foreign correspondent might have been like in the pre-internet age, given the time lag and the mechanics of filing a story in those days. To keep up with the demands of modern journalism, and to find an outlet for reporting that doesn’t make it to the printed page, Carrer taught himself video journalism on the fly, both shooting and editing, and has made more than 400 short videos in two years that can be seen on the “Pianeta Giappone” section of *Il Sole*’s website. They cover a wide range of topics, from culture to politics and finance.

As *Il Sole 24 Ore*’s East Asia Correspondent since April 2013, Carrer has been watching recent developments in Japan with great interest, and sees parallels with his own country: “Italy is constitutionally committed to repudiation of war as a means to solve international disputes,” he says. “But with our Italian planes, we ended up bombing Baghdad, Belgrade, Tripoli. We were dragged into counterproductive foreign wars by our allies, only to realize later that it was against our national interest. I worry that Japan may also lose the way to stay out of conflict that has until now served its national interest well.”

As this interview at the Club wound down, Carrer insisted on visiting the hallway leading to the elevators. “I’m impressed by Mishima, and of course by Kenzaburo Oe,” he says, indicating the portraits of past visitors. “But here! . . . maybe the most important guest of the FCCJ’s last 70 years: Roberto Baggioli!”

As this interview at the Club wound down, Carrer insisted on visiting the hallway leading to the elevators. “I’m impressed by Mishima, and of course by Kenzaburo Oe,” he says, indicating the portraits of past visitors. “But here! . . . maybe the most important guest of the FCCJ’s last 70 years: Roberto Baggioli!”

“I worry that Japan may lose the way to stay out of conflict . . .”



Tyler Rothmar is a Tokyo-based writer and editor.



Into the valley of the trolls

Is growing online harassment just part of the job or should it be confronted? And when does it cross the line?

by DAVID MCNEILL

For most correspondents, it has become an unpleasant morning ritual: opening the laptop and wading through abusive tweets and mail. One of my recent articles, on Japan's plunging press-freedom rankings provoked this response: "You're anti-Japanese scum. Japan grows weaker because left-wing traitors here mix with the likes of you. Get out, moron."

That's mild compared to the slurs that percolate on the Twitter feeds of star reporters. Hiroko Tabuchi, former Tokyo correspondent for the *New York Times*, recalls a stream of invective laced with sexual and ethnic smears (see sidebar). Justin McCurry, Tokyo correspondent for the *Guardian* has been branded an "ultra-leftist North Korean spy" and repeatedly invited to "Fack off."

Many reporters trudge the path taken by McCurry, from engagement to frustration, and resignation. "I have tried

several different ways to deal with trolls, from snapping back to taking the time to dream up what, in my mind at least, is a rejoinder so withering that it will surely be the final word on the matter. It never is, of course." Increasingly, he says, he reaches for the Twitter mute button: When trolls send an abusive message now "they are simply pissing into cyberspace."

But McCurry says it's important to understand the difference between legitimate criticism and trolling. "I've had my share of critical emails, tweets and Facebook postings," he says. "When the point is made in a temperate manner and, more importantly, with a real name attached, I take in what has been said and, if necessary, respond. But I regard this as reader feedback, not trolling."

Cyber abuse is a serious issue, notes a recent article in the *Columbia Journalism Review*. "There's far from any kind of consensus on how to deal with it and what journalists' roles are," says author Lene Bech Sillesen. Law enforcement struggles to deal with the proliferation of anonymous online harassment. Platform providers often "suck" at dealing with trolls, Twitter CEO Dick Costolo memorably admitted this year.

Increasingly, the consensus seems to be shifting toward confrontation. The *Review* cites a growing genre of stories about unmasking trolls. In the Swedish TV show *Troll Hunters*, journalist Robert Aschberg tracks down and confronts offenders on camera. "It's a huge problem," says Aschberg, "and it's no different from exposing, let's say, corrupt politicians, or thieves."

THE RISE OF THE troll, and the shifting terrain it represents in our networked society, is a particular dilemma for journalists. For decades, virtually the only rejoinder available to print readers was the carefully moderated letters page, but the internet has opened up multiple channels of feedback. Many bloggers view journalists as fair game because they are public figures.

Inevitably, the result is a steady river of bile, but most journalists are understandably wary of trying to block it. As Martin Fackler, a former Tokyo bureau chief of the *New York*

Times notes: "You're walking a fine line. Journalists dish out criticism, and need to take it with the same grace. Otherwise, we look hypocritical. And we need to support freedom of speech, even for our critics."

In practice, most journalists follow Fackler in not feeding the trolls, and many don't even block them to avoid the veneer of cyber-street cred. Fackler, who says he has yet to block any troll accounts, advocates only shutting down those that cross boundaries of decency. "Short of that, I think everyone deserves the same freedom of speech that we demand in our own work."

Where, however, do these boundaries lie? Perhaps the only line everyone agrees on is the one dividing incivility from threats of violence.

The debate is about to get a legal airing in North America in a case that involves reporting on Japan's nuclear accident.

As most correspondents are only too aware, Fukushima has triggered terabytes of outraged online commentary by anti-nuclear activists alleging a cover-up by the establishment media. Some have attacked journalists and experts, and at least one, Dana Durnford, has threatened the lives of two scientists: Ken Buesseler of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts and Jay Cullen of the University of Victoria (British Columbia).

Durnford used Facebook, YouTube and other social media to reach a large audience with a disturbing – and deluded – message: much of the Pacific Ocean is dying from the impact of Fukushima's payload. Scientists who disagreed were "mass murderers." In one of about 300 YouTube messages he declares: "Every university, every academic, every nuclear scientist will be hunted down and fucking murdered. We want you dead." Ironically, Buesseler agrees that governments and journalists have done a poor job of documenting the impact of radiation. But there came a point where he felt enough was enough.

"I can put up with being called a liar. But we counted four death threats."

"I can put up with being called a liar," he says. "Lots of people don't agree on radiation. But when you get these threats to thousands of followers, it became a bit cult-like. We counted four death threats." Buesseler and Cullen called in the authorities and Durnford has been charged with two counts of criminal harassment. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, he claims he is being silenced and has appealed to his followers for money to pay legal costs.

Buesseler insists that the abuse had to be confronted. Durnford has been forced to expunge his videos and commentary from the Net. "In the short term it has brought more attention to him and has taken a lot of time and energy to deal with – but it *has* slowed him down," he says. "I can see the reluctance to tackling it head-on but these people need to be told that there are rules against threatening people for doing science."

SUCH EXTREME EXAMPLES ARE rare. For most correspondents, the problem is limited to irritating but mostly harmless nit-picking. Still, popular Twitter accounts (one attacking the FCCJ and specific journalists recently boasted 18,000 followers) can creep up Google searches, leaving freelancers more vulnerable. As Michael Penn of Shingetsu News Agency says: "Anyone searching my name on Google in either English or in Japanese is going to find this garbage among the top results."

Female journalists are particularly vulnerable, says the *NYT's* Tabuchi. "Trolls elicit eye-rolling from our male colleagues and advice to 'just ignore them,' rather than any acknowledgement that this is a critically serious and deep-rooted problem that's threatening to silence prominent female voices online." Michelle Ferrier, an African-American journalist, felt strongly enough about her harassment to create *Trollbusters*, a platform that allows women suffering from online harassment "to type in the URL of an offensive message in order to locate the troll," according to the International Journalists' Network.

Still, says Ferrier, the best advice for journalists being insulted – but not threatened – is to often simply step away from the computer. Trolls are simply not worth bothering about. ●

FIGHT OR FLIGHT?

HIROKO TABUCHI, *New York Times* correspondent formerly based in Tokyo: "I talked to several journalists I respected for advice on the harassment I was receiving, and was basically advised to ignore, grin and bear it. I think the (let's be honest, basically still white male-dominated) world of foreign media in Japan has very little understanding of how sick, personal, and sexual online attacks on women can be – in a way they usually aren't for men. Being a local journalist also means there is little escape. I was personally very disillusioned by the lack of any collective rage or even public support among the foreign journalist community for female journalists (not just me) who were publicly harassed online."

Julian Ryall, the *Telegraph*: "I'm firmly in the 'ignore them and hope to hell they go away' faction. I just have too much to do to start a conversation with someone who, firstly, almost certainly has plenty of time on their hands – they're unemployed (for good reason), they're students of the issue I've written about and want to nit-pick over a 300-word article that I've written, or they're some sad foreigner who has lived in the middle of nowhere in Japan for 20 years and assume that gives them the right to pontificate about all things Japanese and to tell everyone how much more intelligent they are than anyone else. The desk in London tells us to basically ignore the comments section on the bottom of stories. I get the impression they're there to generate traffic and keep people coming back."

Michael Penn, Shingetsu News Agency: "I agree that smaller trolls should be ignored. However, certain trolls have gained large followings and can wield an uncomfortable degree of public influence. When confronted by one of these more formidable trolls, simply remaining silent can eventually become a counterproductive strategy. It is a regrettable fact that a certain percentage of people tend to view dignified silence in the face of public accusations as some kind of an admission of guilt. If you are holding a position in which public perceptions about you can have a significant effect on your career or status, you simply have to defend yourself publicly in these cases, though different opponents may call for varied strategies to counter them."

Teddy Jimbo, *Videonews.com*: "I've been in this business for a long time so the abuse doesn't bother me any more, unless there are physical threats to me, my family or staffers. It's just toilet graffiti and people give it too much attention because they don't know how to deal with it. Shutting down abusers works in one way, however: instead of sitting back and just bearing the attacks, you do something and feel better. It makes it easier to cope."

Tim Horynak: "Because of the endless torrent of stupidity and abuse online, comments on news sites are on the way out. They've been eliminated at sites like *Popular Science*, Reuters, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Daily Beast*, CNN and others. More and more people are recognizing that there's little value in allowing anonymous users on websites and social media. I expect the online landscape will move toward more of a Facebook-style basis of real names for dialogue as it matures."

David McNeill writes for the *Independent*, the *Economist* and other publications. He has been based in Tokyo since 2000.

After almost two decades as a popular entertainment personality, Patrick Harlan is both cheerleader and critic of the Japanese media.

Pakkun's view from the inside

by JULIAN RYALL

JAPAN NEEDS TO MOVE away from news programs that shy away from controversy in favor of harmony, believes Patrick Harlan, the U.S.-born television personality, and embrace a model such as that pioneered by Jon Stewart in the hugely popular *Daily Show* on American screens.

"News, from an American perspective, is very different from news from the Japanese perspective," said Harlan, who is one half of the PakkunMakkun comic duo but is also in demand as a commentator on television chat shows and recently started to host the TV show "Through Foreign Journalists' Eyes."

"My impression is that Americans thrive on controversy – and you only have to look at the leading Republican candidate for the presidency; he's a walking controversy, and that's why he is so popular." When Donald Trump holds forth, ratings go up, advertising dollars flood in and the station is happy, Harlan said.

Speaking at a recent press event at the FCCJ, he said he believes that this country needs more stimulating debate of the news, more options on news coverage and more interpretation of the news. But he admitted the different mindset makes those possibilities less likely. "I'm not sure that it would thrive in the same way as it does in America because when a Japanese television program does present a controversial issue, they try to present it with limited controversy," he said. "They don't want to get telephone calls from aggravated viewers. But I think it might be time for a new media model to be given a chance, to stoke a little controversy and to take those calls from angry viewers."

Harlan says he hopes his BS-TBS show might evolve into that sort of program and he intends to model himself on Jon Stewart. And for good reason.

"There was a study in the U.S. in which they asked people on the street about their knowledge of domestic and international events and ranked them based on where they got their



Patrick Harlan speaking at the Club

news from," Harlan said. "The highest-ranked were people who listen to National Public Radio, the second most informed group were people who watched Jon Stewart's politico-comedy – real news with funny jokes that lingered and gave people a good understanding of the news.

"Third was CNN, then the people who watched no news at all were the fourth most-informed group – and the

I think you can have a strong press corps that is polite without being namby-pamby and weak.

fifth most informed group got their news from Fox," he added with a shrug.

Entertainment is not a career that Harlan planned for himself. A graduate of Harvard University, where he studied comparative religion, he came to Japan in 1996 with the intention of staying a year.

Almost two decades later, he is one of the longest-serving foreign *talento* on the Japanese entertainment scene – doing everything from DJing to acting, stand-up comedy and appearing on radio and TV as a commentator. He also finds time to teach at the Tokyo University of Technology.

Japan's quirky approach to comedy

was a difficult skill to master initially, Harlan admits, with politics and sex jokes effectively off-limits and "red-neck" jokes passing Japanese audiences by. He has also had to get to grips with the all-powerful agents who manage personalities here, as well as the convention of unscripted "variety" shows on television.

While praising many aspects of the Japanese media world, he is frank about his concerns. "Japanese people do not grow up debating, so you see very little hardcore discussion of the news on television," he said. "Instead, you see people being nice to each other, which is a trademark of Japanese society. But the exchange of ideas is not helped by that politeness.

"I think you can still have strong debate with politeness and I think you can have a strong press corps that is also still polite without being namby-pamby and weak." He went on to point out some "frightful developments" regarding freedom of the press recently, including the example of a prefectural governor who refused to be interviewed by a newspaper because he objected to an article in a magazine affiliated with the newspaper.

"And recently, a television company was taken to task by the government for the content of one of its broadcasts," he said. "In America, the government interfering with the story would be the story. The government interfering with the freedom of the media would automatically set off an incredible response from all media outlets, not just the targeted one."

In recent years, Harlan suggested, there has been a sharp decline in respect for the freedom of the press and the media in general. "I see this as a trend from humor through communication and into the media," he said. "I feel the 'kisha-club' system needs to be revised because it is a hurdle to the freedom of the press."

He admitted that American news coverage is just as imperfect as the news that is served up here – "It's over the top and alarmist" – but suggested that there are opportunities for the two countries to learn from each other's systems.

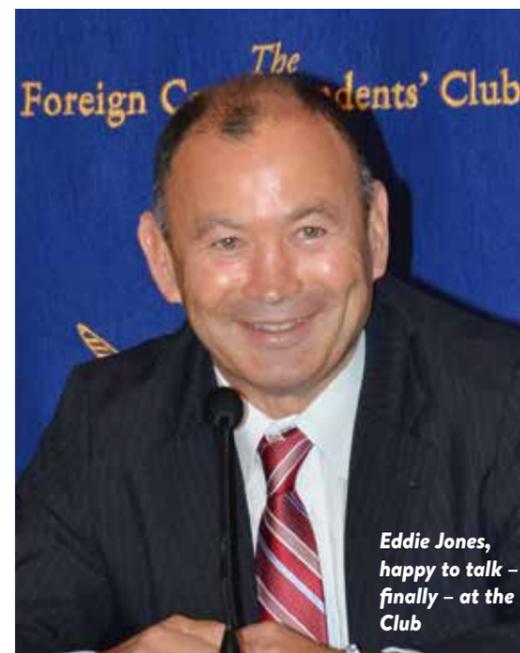
"That is where foreign correspondents have a role to play," he said. "Bringing foreign perspectives into Japan and exporting Japanese perspectives to the world. Now, more than ever, we need you." ●

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

Former Japan national rugby coach Eddie Jones shrugged off his handlers to make a sayonara appearance at the FCCJ.

A messy maul for Japan's rugby PR

by FRED VARCOE



Eddie Jones, happy to talk – finally – at the Club

IN A RECENT JAPAN TIMES, columnist Philip Brasar wrote about the way Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his handlers try to control press conferences so that journalists don't ask unexpected questions. Perhaps the saddest part was how the media allows themselves to be controlled and how often journalists actively participate in their own neutering through complicity and self-censorship.

The sports world is no different. One of the most ludicrous examples occurred in the lead-up to the 2002 FIFA World Cup. After FIFA President Sepp Blatter sat down in front of a crowded room full of journalists at a press conference organized by Japan's World Cup Organizing Committee, the emcee stood up and announced that journalists could only ask questions in Japanese. This was despite the fact that foreign journalists were in the audience and any questions and answers in Japanese would have to be translated into English for Blatter. FCCJ member Joel Legendre-Koizumi stood up in the middle of the press conference to blast the organizers for their discriminatory decision, and I later tackled the issue in the

Japan Times. It became a spectacular own-goal for the World Cup organizers.

With two major sporting events – the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Olympics – on the horizon, one would think organizers would try to avoid such faux pas, but it seems many organizations haven't made much progress. The 2020 Olympics Administration organization has made such a mess of things that I don't need to recap it here.

And it seems that the organizers of the Rugby World Cup are headed in the same direction. The recent performance of the Japan team in England was one of the

major feel-good sports stories of the year, a PR gift from the gods. And the impact at home and abroad was astonishing. Wouldn't the Japan Rugby Football Union (JRFU) want more of this lovely publicity?

MAYBE NOT. SOME YEARS ago, a senior Japanese rugby official confessed, "We're just a bunch of amateurs at the JRFU." Sadly, that may be too true of their media relations staff judging by the fiasco they made of Eddie Jones' recent appearance at the FCCJ.

Soon after Japan's national rugby team's spectacular performance at the recent Rugby World Cup, the FCCJ's Professional Activities Committee (PAC) staff asked the JRFU if coach Eddie Jones, captain Michael Leitch, fullback Ayumu Goromaru or any other team member could speak at the Club. Jones had spoken at the Club a year ago and we were confident he would like to speak again, especially as his time as coach was ending and he was due to leave Japan in a matter of days.

The answer from the JRFU spokesperson was, for a long time, nothing. Emails went unanswered, as did several telephone calls. Finally,

we were told that Jones would have no time for us, and that if we wanted a player, we should contact their respective teams. As it was a great opportunity for rugby to get more exposure, the curt "can't help you" was disappointing and surprising.

A couple of FCCJ members suggested contacting Jones directly, so PAC staff duly sent off an email. Jones responded positively, agreeing to speak at the Club on Oct. 31, the final day of his contract with the JRFU. Terrific.

Well, it was terrific – until JRFU officials heard about it and asked us to cancel Jones' appearance. When contacted, Jones said he didn't want to cancel the event, so PAC staff told the JRFU the Club would go ahead. The JRFU contact then accused the Club of arranging the event without trying to contact them, a blatant untruth, and asked that the Club cancel the event – with the added proviso that the members shouldn't be told the reason, since it was the Club's fault for not following procedure. Huh?

Curiously, the JRFU then arranged a press conference for Jones – the man with no time – at the National Press Club, and then asked us to move our press conference to Nov. 2. Luckily, Jones agreed.

His appearance was one of the biggest press conferences of the year at the FCCJ. No longer under JRFU "supervision," Jones could say what he liked, which was that rugby in Japan is in a mess and, by implication at least, they need to work on their PR, an opinion that – while not particularly new – was a powerful message considering its source.

Put simply, sporting events like the FIFA World Cup, the Olympics and the Rugby World Cup need input from all sides and all sorts, including journalists. Without that, we'll be seeing more fiascos like the Olympic Stadium and the 2020 logo. It's clearly time for Japan – and the hosts of the 2019 Rugby World Cup – to grow up on the PR front. ●

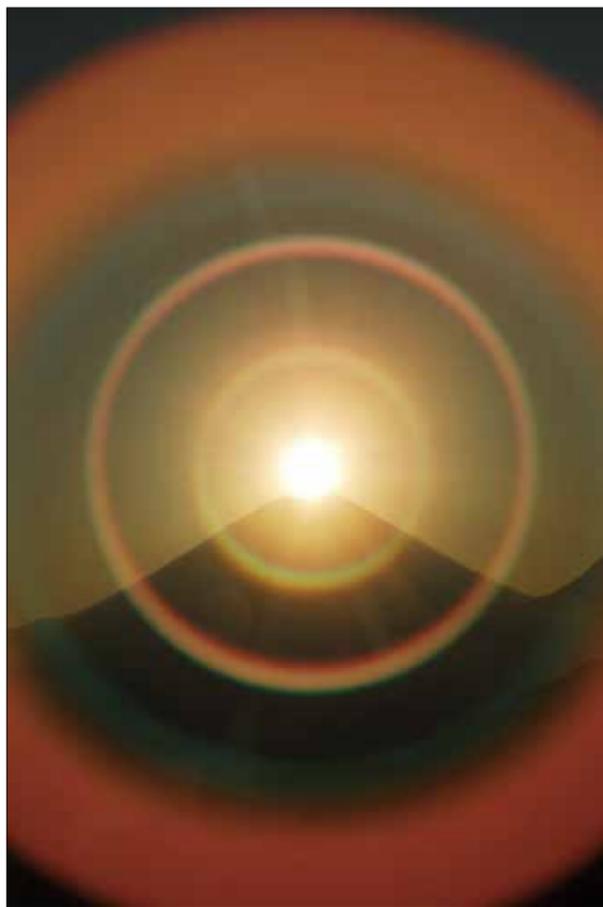
Fred Varcoe is a Chiba-based freelance journalist.



**Art is Mirror
Reflecting Nature
Power & Healing
Photo exhibition
by
TAiYO((©))KEiTA**

IN MY WEAVING OF the tapestry of Mt.Fuji and sunshine, I hope you will catch the feeling of this mysterious world captured through the refraction of the lens. (All the images are raw, untouched photos).

I had an experience in 1997, after a terrible traffic accident which almost killed me, that was a turning point in my life and made me appreciate the little everyday things that I had not noticed before. I became fascinated by the magnificent beauty created by the sunrise, sunset and Fuji. The 1997 incredible encounter with my true self led to the "Feel The Fuji" website, a social community created with the concept of "Be Japanese again through music and art." ●



JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE . . .

. . . on Tuesday, Jan. 12 at 7:00 pm for *The Actor*, Satoko Yokohama's first film since the much-lauded *Bare Essence of Life*. Busy TV actor Ken Yasuda gives an extraordinarily versatile performance in the role of a lifetime, demonstrating his skill in a range of parts on a variety of film sets and theatrical stages. *The Actor*, which world premiered at the 2015 Tokyo International Film Festival, highlights Yokohama's flare for surrealistic touches, unusual imagery and offbeat musical selections. A witty, warm-hearted paean to a bit-part player – you recognize his face, but you can never remember his name – the film follows Takuji Kameoka as he auditions, rehearses and shoots, then drinks away his loneliness with fellow low-achievers in nearby bars. Then one night, he awakens from a nap and falls in love with the radiant bartender Azumi (Kumiko Aso). As if that isn't enough, he's invited to audition for world-famous arthouse director Alan Spesso (Ricardo Garcia). Suddenly, Kameoka is facing an existential midlife crisis . . .
(Japan, 2015; 123 minutes; English with Japanese subtitles.)



FCCJ CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Club's Christmas Party was held on Sunday, Nov. 13 and was a great success. It was attended by over 150 people (including 50 children and one Santa Claus) – making it the most successful event of the year. (See also page 5.)



RICOH's Visual Communications



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When we say, "imagine. change." it's no idle boast. For all of us at RICOH it's an urgent call to action. We rode the wave of office automation for decades, making printers and copiers to help people put their ideas on paper. But watching work-styles evolve we realized the need to imagine what's next – and lead the way to change.

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To learn more about RICOH's Visual Communications, visit:
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CLUB NEWS



REINSTATEMENT (REGULAR)

URSULA HYZY is the bureau chief of Agence France-Press Tokyo. It is her second Tokyo assignment, after a stint between Sept. 2001 and May 2005. Hyzy studied economics at university in Paris as well as Russian at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales. Since joining AFP in 1992, she has held posts in Lille, Lyon and on the Africa and Europe desks in Paris. She was then based in Washington D.C. and Moscow before heading AFP's Warsaw regional bureau, which covers Poland, the three Baltic states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Prior to her Tokyo assignment in June, she was covering French macroeconomics at AFP's Paris headquarters. Her native language is French and she also speaks English, Russian and Polish.



REGULAR MEMBERS

SONG KAN KAN is the chief correspondent for Shanghai SMG Media Center. Hailing from Beijing, Song has lived in Japan for 18 years, and has received a master's degree in environmental information from the Musashi Institute of Technology. After her graduation, she has held positions at CCTV, NHK and Phoenix TV before joining Shanghai SMG, where she reports on political, economic and social news from Japan.



MICHIRO OKAMOTO is a Senior Research Fellow following the Middle East and the international affairs at Yomiuri Research Institute of the Yomiuri Shimbun. He studied Arabic and Middle East affairs in Tokyo University of Foreign studies, before joining the Yomiuri as a staff writer in 1983. He worked as a resident correspondent in Tehran and as Cairo bureau chief before he was assigned as the general bureau chief of the Americas in June 2008. He returned to the Tokyo head office in October 2011, where he has held posts as a commentary & analysis editor, international news editor and as deputy managing editor. Okamoto was born in Chitose-shi, Hokkaido.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Masaki Sakuraba, Cornes Technologies Limited
Takao Furukawa, Sankyo Corporation

REINSTATEMENT (ASSOCIATE)

Yutaka Hokura, Tokyo College of Music



Discount LexisNexis Subscriptions for FCCJ Members

The FCCJ is pleased to offer members a substantial discount on subscriptions to LexisNexis' news database service, Nexis.com

The Members-only deal allows for flat-rate access at **¥7,900 per month** - offering big savings on a service that normally costs **¥126,000 per month**

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 sources, including Kyodo News, Jiji, Yonhap, Xinhua, AP, Reuters, AFP, all major world 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 on the secret, the application form is available on the FCCJ website or from the 19F Club office.



311 iko - nichibe wa bosai de kyoryoku dekiruka?
 Keiichi Yoshikawa
 Kindai Shobosha
 Gift from Keiichi Yoshikawa



Censored 2016: Media Freedom on the Line
 Mickey Huff; Andy Lee Roth
 Seven Stories Press
 Gift from Brian Covert



Atarashii kuni e: utsukushii kuni e kanzenban
 Shinzo Abe
 Bungei Shunju

Okinawa Solution: Futenma o owaraseru tame ni
 Akikazu Hashimoto; Mike Mochizuki
 Obirin Gakuen Shuppanbu
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Why Japan?: A Diplomat's Perspective
 Manlio Cadelo
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Ohotsuku no akari: Karafuto, senzo kara no mura ni umarete
 Yoko Abe
 Crews

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Innovation
that excites

WHAT IF YOU COULD ELECTRIFY YOUR DRIVE?

NISSAN LEAF



**“I’M IN THE MOTHERSHIP
WHEN I DRIVE.”**

Deborah L, USA, LEAF Owner