

The magazine of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan



# NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

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A host  
of quotables  
who spoke at the  
Club last year. *Plus*,  
our correspondents'  
predictions for  
the year ahead.



## WELCOME TO THE YEAR OF THE COCK

**Tube talk:**  
The broadcast industry  
braces for change

**Profile:**  
Freelancer  
Abigail Leonard



> THEME.08  
> CAR

# Greener mobility requires less weight and friction

Today, the world's automakers are driving different roads to greener mobility: hybrids, electric vehicles, fuel cells and radical improvements to conventional powertrains. But no matter which road they choose, all automakers must reduce both weight and friction to maximize gains in environmental performance. And for that they depend on NSK, the world's largest supplier of automotive bearings.

Reduced friction in moving parts means less energy is required to make them move. The same is true when you have less mass to move. That's why R&D efforts at NSK are focused on developing new bearings that do more with less: more motive power with less friction and weight. We don't often make headlines, but NSK's efforts are a key factor in the drive to greener mobility.

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Japan's Olympic Silver Medal-winning 4x100 relay team

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**Cover illustration:** Andrew Potheary



From the President

SOME SHARE THE VIEW that Japan is finished as an international news hub – and believe that the age of foreign correspondents is part of the past as well. I disagree.

This country remains a major democratic nation and a key country in world affairs and global power games. It has an East Asian neighbor that seems intent on becoming a nuclear power. For journalists living in Japan, it's enough to keep us working extensively – and luckily in a free environment.

From a media perspective, Japan is the source of much of the news from Asia. The Japanese economy is still the third largest in the world, with a giant financial market that keeps the newsrooms busy 24/7.

In terms of technology, this country is far out in front in many areas of expertise, and Japanese products continue to dazzle and amaze.

Because of Japan's position as a diplomatic leader leveraging her unique position both as the only nation to have experienced a nuclear bomb attack and as a major provider of development assistance, those of us in Tokyo often see the flags of another country gracing the streets of downtown Tokyo when world leaders come to visit.

Ministers, CEOs and VIPs from all over the world come to Tokyo year-round, in all seasons. International conferences regularly invite world-class speakers, and celebrities and sport stars are often gold mines of quotes for journalists stationed in Japan, especially when they come to talk at the FCCJ.

A number of unfortunate natural disasters have also attracted the world's attention, and required some extensive reporting.

At the heart of all of that, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan retains its place as the international press club in Japan, a location where news is still made and reported.

After 71 years of operation, the long tradition is being proudly upheld, and the Club – and our foreign correspondent members – is still alive and kicking, determined to help get the news out.

I believe our best days are ahead of us, and with pride and confidence, I would like to extend my New Years' greetings by saying, "When you come to the FCCJ, you will feel the buzz of news-making at work and at play."

Happy New Year!

– Khaldon Azhari

COLLECTIONS

CLUB NUMBERS



TOP 10 PAC EVENTS

1. **Junichiro Koizumi** (Former PM) 181
2. **Yuriko Koike** (Candidate for Tokyo Gov) 160
3. **Shigetada Kishii, Soichiro Tahara, Shuntaro Torigoe, Akihiro Otani, Satoshi Aoki** (Journalists) 143
4. **Kengo Kuma** (Architect/Olympic stadium) 121
5. **Shintaro Ishihara & Shizuka Kamei** (Former Tokyo Gov & Member of house of Representative) 110
5. **Pikotaro** (Singer/songwriter) 110
7. **Tadae Takubo** (President of Nippon Kaigi) 107
7. **Renho** (Candidate for DP president) 107
9. **Rachel McAdams** (Hollywood actress) 102
10. **Gerald Curtis** (Burgess Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Columbia University) 97

TOP 10 FCCJ YOUTUBE-CHANNEL VIDEO VIEWS

- 113,485 **James Rickards: Author of Currency Wars, lawyer and economist** (March 21)
- 29,343 **Masaaki Hatsumi: 34th grand master of the Togakure-ryu Ninjustsu** (May 30)
- 19,398 **Yuriko Koike: Candidate in the Tokyo Gubernatorial Election** (July 7)
- 11,103 **Dan Wang and Billy Fung Jing-en: Tensions between China and Hong Kong** (Oct. 16)
- 8,112 **Manny Pacquiao: Deepening the relationship between Japan and the Philippines through boxing!** (Nov. 24)
- 5,740 **David Kaye: Freedom of Expression in Japan** (Apr. 18)
- 4,287 **Mashu Baker, Shohei Ono and Haruka Tachimoto: Judo gold medalists at Rio Olympics** (Aug. 29)
- 4,273 **Nomi Prins: How will a Donald Trump America impact Japan and global markets?** (Nov. 16)
- 3,883 **Kengo Kuma: New Olympic Stadium Tokyo 2020** (Jan. 14)
- 3,874 **Ryugo Hayano and Haruka Onodera: The 5th Anniversary Series of the 3/11 Disaster** (Feb. 7)
- 2,493 **Pikotaro: Why PPAP took over the internet** (Oct.27)

WEBSITE NUMBERS (Jan.-Nov.)

105,200  
Total users

532,830  
Total page views



TOP 5 FILM COMMITTEE EVENTS

1. **While the Women are Sleeping**, with producer Yukie Kito; stars, Shioli Kutsuna, Sayuri Oyamada and Makiko Watanabe (130 attendees)
2. **Nikkatsu Roman Porno reboot kickoff** with Hideo Nakata, Sion Sono, Isao Yukisada, Akihiko Shiota, Kazuya Shiraishi; and special screening of **The World of Geisha** (Tatsumi Kumashiro) (120)
3. **A Bride for Rip Van Winkle** with director Shunji Iwai (110)
4. **Red Turtle** with director Michael Dudok de Wit (110)
5. **Desperate Sunflowers** with director Hitomi Kuroki (110)

TWITTER FOLLOWERS

3,248 (as of Dec. 19)

TOP 5 BOOKS MOST INQUIRED ABOUT AND BORROWED FROM THE LIBRARY

1. **Tensai** by Shintaro Ishihara
2. **Islam in Indonesia: The Contest for Society, Ideas and Values** by Carool Kersten
3. **The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter With Tokugawa Japan** by Adam Clulow
4. **Japan, Russia and their Territorial Dispute: The Northern Delusion** by James D. J. Brown
5. **Japan Restored: How Japan Can Reinvent Itself and Why This Is Important for America and the World** by Clyde Prestowitz

FROM THE ARCHIVES

TRUMP MAKES A TOKYO VISIT



Real Estate Developer – and as of Jan. 20, President of the U.S. – Donald Trump presents his views at a professional luncheon on Aug. 18, 1993. FCCJ President Lew Simons (Knight-Ridder) is seated next to him, smiling at the speaker's remarks. Trump was on a swing through Asia to thank investors who had helped him during his financial crisis and to discuss potential retail projects. His comments were quoted in a New York Times article of the same date by Andrew Pollack, and included urging the U.S. to get "tougher" with Japan in its trade negotiations and calling past U.S. negotiators "morons" and "idiots." The article also quoted him as saying that in trade negotiations America should be represented by a top businessman.

Donald J. Trump needs no introduction, but here's a thumbnail sketch. He was born on June 14, 1946, in New York City and raised in a family entrenched in the real estate/construction business. From the early 1970s, when he took over the family's business and renamed it the Trump Organization, he successfully expanded the company until becoming financially over-extended in the late 1980s after building resort casinos.

Trump's dire financial situation was further aggravated when his wife, Ivana, discovered an affair and divorced him in 1992. (She reportedly received a \$20 million settlement.) "The Donald," as Trump had come to be known, however, made a successful comeback by the end of the 1990s, and went on to become a celebrity entrepreneur as the host of NBC's hit show, "The Apprentice."

Trump, too, had long been active in politics, supporting candidates from both major parties over the years. He considered running for the presidency in 2000 as a candidate from Ross Perot's Reform Party and in 2012 as a GOP candidate, but bowed out of the race.

Little can be added to all that's been said about Donald J. Trump over these many years and especially the last few months. His utterances have been sliced and diced by both opponents and supporters, with appropriate spin given by each side.

There is little doubt, however, that his inauguration this month will also bring major changes, domestically and internationally.

– Charles Pomeroy

# Voices in 2016

Over the past year, the dais of the FCCJ hosted a wide variety of newsmakers – speakers who offered their views and opinions and answered probing questions about a wide variety of issues . . .

Feb. 8:

*“The effect of internal exposure to radiation in Fukushima is very much less than we initially feared, and right now is almost no problem . . . which was not the case after the*



*Chernobyl accident.”*

• **Ryugo Hayano**, Professor of Physics, University of Tokyo  
On the radiation from the 3/11 meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant

March 22:

*“The structural lack of data is something we hope to fill by using the power of ourselves. . . . From there we can have more informed dialogues and make more informed decisions.*

*We strongly believe that data is the starting point, not opinion.”*

• **Peter Franken**, Safecast volunteer citizen monitoring project: On data activism around Fukushima

March 24:

**“It is clear that what she said is against the Constitution and against the Broadcasting Law. If she doesn’t know them, then as a minister, she is disqualified. If she knew them and distorted the interpretation, then it is taking us a step closer to speech control.”**

• **Shigetada Kishii**  
News 23 commentator and special senior writer at the Mainichi Shimbun  
On communications minister Sanae Takaichi’s comments about suspending the licenses of TV stations that didn’t follow the rules of fairness in covering politics.



Jan. 14:

**“At projects I have done overseas, I’ve felt a very welcoming environment for architects from other countries. However, considering English communication issues and the very particular ways of proceeding with meetings and conferences, I think that there are still many aspects in which Japan could make more efforts to open its doors and make it a more welcoming environment for people from other countries to work in.”**

• **Kengo Kuma**, Architect  
On the conditions facing architects working in foreign countries

Feb. 17:

**“Prior to the nuclear power plant disaster, the population of the town was more than 70,000. As a result of the disaster, however, it fell below 10,000. It has now recovered to the point where we have 57,000 residents in the town of Minami-Soma, but a lingering problem is that many young people have left – the working and child-rearing generation.”**

• **Katsunobu Sakurai**, Mayor of Minami Soma  
On the devastation suffered by his town from the 3/11 disaster



April 4:

**“If I were Japanese, I would feel exposed, because so much is riding on the assumption that the U.S. will always be there. You can see from [Trump’s] election campaign that there is a current of thought in the U.S. that is asking, ‘Why should we always be there and what real interest do we really have? Why should we be facing off against China all the time.’ The fact that these questions are being asked suggests the possibility that America might not always be there.”**

• **Clyde Prestowitz**, Author of Japan Restored  
On Japan-U.S. relations

June 3:

**“HIS SPIRITUAL FATHER IS MAO TSE-TUNG. . . . I DON’T THINK HE CAN BE ANOTHER MAO, BUT HE HAS THIS AMBITION TO BE THE SECOND MAO.”**

• **Wang Dan**, leader of Tiananmen democracy movement  
On Chinese President Xi Jinping

Aug. 28:

**“While we were only able to achieve our medal in the relay this time, at the next Olympics I believe that all of us will be able to achieve a medal in the individual races as well.”**

• **Aksa Cambridge**, Anchor, Japan’s Olympic Silver Medal-winning 4x100 relay team  
On aspirations for the 2020 Olympics to be held in Tokyo

Aug. 31:



**“Creating a transparent Tokyo Metropolitan Government is my main goal. Public information disclosure is the first step toward improving its transparency. I want to create two-way communication where we talk openly with Tokyo citizens about city government and city government affairs and invite frank feedback from third-party observers. I believe this is the way to run a city government that puts its citizens first.”**

• **Yukio Koike**, Governor of Tokyo: On her goals following her recent election victory

Oct. 27:

*“My knee was hurting so I went to the hospital. I went to the restroom and when I was coming out, a woman was exiting the women’s room. Our eyes met.*



AP PHOTO/EUGENE HOSHIKO

*We kissed. It was instant love. She’s cute. She’s pretty. She looks like a piranha. She’s so charming with her teeth sticking out.*

*Her name is Tami. Her hobby is peeling bananas, arranging the peels and taking photographs of them. She’s 78 years old.”*

• **Pikotaro**, Comedian/media phenomenon  
On his wife of two years

Nov. 22:



**“Putin is probably the only leader Russia has had or will have, for as far as**

**we can see, who’s capable of giving up territory and getting away with it in terms of domestic Russian opinion. And Abe is the only prime minister that one can imagine in Japan who’s capable of settling for less than the return of all four islands. So you put these two together and you have the possibility of a deal.”**

• **Gerald Curtis**, Professor of Political Science, Columbia University  
On Japan/Russia relation

Nov. 24:



**“I’m not thinking about becoming president. My main focus is to change our country and help the president. The president and I are very close, and I honor him because he’s the only president who fights illegal drugs and this is an opportunity to bring back harmony and peace in our country.”**

• **Manny Pacquiao**, World-champion boxer: On his political aspirations



All videos of these press conferences are available to watch on the Club’s YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/FCCJchannel](http://www.youtube.com/user/FCCJchannel)

# 2017: Something to crow about?

There were many sighs of relief heard around the world as the year 2016 came to a close, yet there is little evidence pointing toward a quieter 2017. The political upheavals from populist movements that shook the stability of such nations as the U.S. and Britain seem to be just the tip of the iceberg. And while a negotiated peace halted the long civil war that killed thousands and thousands of Colombians, the Middle East seems stuck in its cycle of warfare in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

Japan, on the other hand, has been relatively quiet, and we wonder if this year will be the same. Will 2017 see a song sillier than PPAP? Will Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike's strong stance against the runaway Olympic costs and toxic landfill be rewarded? Will baseball wunderkind Shohei Otani flee the professional fields of Japan for the major leagues? Will some mediocre celebrity be pulled from a commercial after a sleazy affair goes public? (The answer to that one is just too easy.)

To get some hint of what's to come, we asked a few of our brave correspondents to peer into their crystal computer screens and make some bold predictions for the year ahead:

## REALITY? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' REALITY

This year will start seeing people wearing **VR headsets** in unexpected places, as virtual reality will become even more mainstream, pushed by major brands like Sony and Microsoft. Augmented reality applications will continue to proliferate in the consumer and B2B fields. AI assistants and AI reporters will take over the writing of sports events, stock reports and other news. The few human reporters still on contract will be found sitting at their newsroom desks, dejectedly mulling over the debris from the U.S. election while sipping Family Mart coffee and chewing 7-11 doughnuts delivered by drones.

• **Tim Hornyak**



## GETTING OUT WHILE THE GETTING'S GOOD

Sensing that a shakeup at the top could mitigate hostilities between **warring factors**, Tsukasa Shinobu, the Yamaguchi-gumi's top boss, will step down in the Year of the Rooster. The past two years have not been kind to Japan's largest organized crime group. Not only did its membership drop in a mutiny but it also became engaged in a sometimes violent dispute with the Kobe Yamaguchi-gumi, a rival gang composed of former members.

The groundwork for Shinobu's move may have already been set. In late September, a secret meeting - dubbed "The Yakuza Summit" - between Shinobu and the bosses of the Sumiyoshi-kai and Inagawa-kai, two other top syndicates, was held in Yokohama's Chinatown. Was the purpose of the summit to prepare for his resignation? Japan's criminal underworld is about to find out.

• **Brett Bull**, Editor-in-Chief, the Tokyo Reporter ([www.tokyoreporter.com](http://www.tokyoreporter.com))



## NO ROOM FOR THE VIEW

The number of **inbound tourists** will continue to grow at a rate that surprises even the most positive analysts at the Japan Tourism Agency. In order to cope with the hordes of people flocking to the most well-known tourist destinations, different kinds of barriers and screening mechanisms will be put in place. There will be a lottery deciding who will get to venture past Asakusa's Kaminarimon gate and spots in the elevators that lead up to the observation deck at Tokyo Skytree will be auctioned to the highest bidder.

• **Said Karlsson**, Navitime for Japan Travel



## FORWARD TO A VERY BLEAK FUTURE

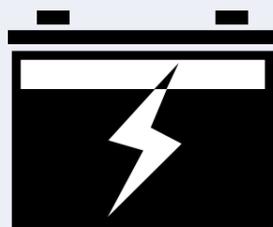
This year, Japan's auto industry will pass a momentous tipping point that could fracture the bedrock of national prosperity - the \$150 per kilowatt/hour (kWh) cost of electric **vehicle batteries**.

This is widely seen as the level where EVs start becoming cheaper to build than conventional cars. Once it's crossed, internal-combustion engines may disappear with head-spinning speed.

The balance point is battery cost vs. a long list of components EVs don't need: engine block, transmission, exhaust system, gas tank and more. All those get replaced by simple, durable electric motors that have few moving parts and need no lubricants. Tipping the scale further is the lower cost of EV ownership - especially for homes with solar panels.

Although a godsend for the planet, Japan may suffer - given how much of its economy is devoted to skills-intensive making of today's auto drivetrains. With no compensating inherent advantage in making batteries, a huge chunk of manufacturing may simply disappear along with a wide swath of auto services, since EVs need no gasoline, oil changes or timing-belt replacements.

• **John R. Harris**, Automobile Magazine



## IF I HAD KNOWN I WAS GOING TO LIVE THIS LONG, I WOULD HAVE TAKEN BETTER CARE OF MYSELF



In a further sign of the "silver tsunami" engulfing Japan, new research reveals that by the middle of the

century 98.6 per cent of articles written by foreign correspondents based in Tokyo will be about the ageing society. The remaining 1.4 per cent will be about **cute robots**.

• **Richard Lloyd Parry**, The Times

## THE MAN WHO WILL (STILL) BE KING

**Shinzo Abe** will remain as the king of global politics in 2017, for better or worse.

The conservative prime minister is the only global leader, aside from German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who enjoys a stable government. Of course, he has challenges.

The biggest international one is how he'll deal with President-elect Donald Trump. But he also is unlikely to make progress in peace treaty negotiations with Russia and China, while North Korea is likely to remain provocative and the Japan-Korea relationship is precarious. Domestically, he has not delivered economic reforms to bring innovation.

All these questions are critical for him to push for his ultimate goal of revising Article 9 by the end of the newly set tenure of 2021.

But the best news for Abe is the fact that there are no alternatives as long as the largest opposition Democratic Party remains pathetically weak and incapable

• **Ayako Mie**, Japan Times

## THE ODDS HAVE IT

The **fake news** phenomenon appears to have swept across the Pacific to Japan with reports that U.S. President Donald Trump is to open a casino on the Senkaku islands. Katsuto Momii emerges from his post-NHK retirement to become chief cabinet secretary, citing his mahjong expertise as justification to oversee the casino industry launch. "It is extremely regrettable," says everyone. The Liberal Democratic Party finally agrees to send a cabinet minister to the FCCJ to discuss "how to bet at roulette and other important stuff." The press conference ends in chaos after correspondents press the minister to discuss government policy, sparking threats to prosecute reporters under the state secrets act. "This is deplorable," the minister says. "Now ask me about my favorite season."

• **Justin McCurry**, The Guardian

## WHEN A WOMENOMICS PROGRAM DISAPPEARS IN A BUREAUCRATIC FOG, DOES IT MAKE ANY SOUND?

**Prime Minister Abe** will meet his goals for women in management positions by first revising the target from 15 to 1.5 percent, then by including male managers who promote women and finally by including men who were born to women.

The Labor Ministry, which last year convinced exactly zero companies to apply for a subsidy that rewards firms for promoting women, will double that with an offer to cover the salaries of three female, non-regular workers plus a round of drinks for the HR bucho at a hostess club.

Finally, American Ambassador Ivanka Trump will serve as a shining example of women who fuel the Japanese economy when she inks a deal with Sanei International and then holds bilateral talks on behalf of her father, who will be busy filming the latest season of "The Apprentice" in the Oval Office, this one featuring Miss USA contestants.

• **Abigail Leonard**



## NO, THE SUPREME LEADER NEVER LEARNED TO PARALLEL PARK

Nintendo partners with Toyota and Google to create "Super Mario Kart Driver," an augmented reality game that is downloaded more than 25 million times on its launch day - and the stock prices of the three partners and a host of related companies go stratospheric. The game allows players to use footage streamed live from dashboard cameras of random cars to simulate a **realistic driving experience**, into which characters from the Mario games are superimposed. On the fourth day of release a team of North Korean-sponsored hackers uses the app to take control of thousands of cars via their onboard computers and cause hundreds of accidents, many of them fatal.

• **Gavin Blair**



# Abigail Leonard

by TIM HORNYAK

On her first trip to Japan, Abigail Leonard had a brush with fate. She was on a plane flying from Tokyo to Okinawa on March 11, 2011 when the massive earthquake struck Tohoku, and – when Tepco’s nuclear power plant in Fukushima melted down – what was supposed to be a two-week cultural exchange program for overseas journalists turned into an opportunity to report on the emerging nuclear crisis.

“I was here for something that was critical and historic and identity-forming for Japanese people and a lot of foreigners who were here,” says Leonard. Her interviews with *hibakusha* in Hiroshima about the Fukushima radiation problem, contrasting it with the effects from the wartime atomic bombing, ended up airing on “Need to Know,” a program on the U.S. Public Broadcasting System.

Born in Boston to a lawyer father and research scientist mother, Leonard went to school in Philadelphia. A desire to do “something meaningful” after graduating, led her to a job teaching junior high for two years in New Orleans.

She later returned to university studying science and environmental reporting in a journalism program at New York University, before going back to work as a staff producer for “Now on PBS.” She also wrote for MSNBC’s “Countdown with Keith Olberman,” hosted by the acerbic popular sports and political commentator. “He was an amazing editor and writer and presenter,” says Leonard. “I learned from him how to communicate ideas really effectively – how that it’s more of an argument, building a case rather than telling a narrative.”

Leonard continued to expand her parameters, writing for “The War Room” with Jennifer Granholm, and working as a producer for CNN, ABC and Al Jazeera America, where she had the opportunity to research and produce impactful material. “We did a story on privatizing prison healthcare in Arizona that brought a lot of attention to an issue that people don’t normally care about,” says Leonard. “What we uncovered showed they were making a profit while driving the costs down as low as possible.”

**THE PROGRAM WAS A** brutal exposé. One female prisoner interviewed by Leonard claimed that doctors had left her with an open wound from a C-section and, when it didn’t heal properly, packed it with kitchen sugar from McDonald’s. Although Leonard’s Al Jazeera article included a dismissal of the claims from a state lawmaker who drafted the privatization legislation, allegations of mistreatment were also raised in an ACLU lawsuit that claimed prisoners were

**“It’s really important for democracy to have a healthy press, obviously, and that’s true now more than ever in the U.S.”**



suffering “pain, amputation, disfigurement and death.” Media scrutiny of prisoner care raised awareness, and reforms were made.

“It’s really important for democracy to have a healthy press, obviously, and that’s true now more than ever in the U.S.,” says Leonard, referring to the media fallout in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. She believes that funding is a key part of the disconnect between mainstream media and voters who felt marginalized and distrustful toward media like the *New York Times*. And that it takes money to assign reporters from power centers in New York and Washington into the heartland to do journalism than can make a difference to people. “I worked in the U.S. for 10 years, and you could see that good investigative journalism wasn’t getting funded,” she says. “And how do you even start to deal with fake news?”

She believes that it’s something that Facebook and Google are going to have to grapple with. “But the good thing that could come out of the election is that some thought is now being given into how to do better journalism and how important it is to have a free and open press. People are recognizing that and people are subscribing [to such outlets].

“It’s a critical time in American media, particularly at a time where you have a president like Donald Trump, who himself is spreading disinformation and vilifying the press. So it’s a tough time to be away from the U.S. – but for now I’m in Japan.”

**LEONARD IS NOW FOCUSED** on working as a freelance journalist in Tokyo after her husband was sent here to open a Tokyo office for his company in 2015. She operates out of a co-working space near Shibuya but visits the FCCJ for press conferences and PAC meetings. While doing radio stories for the BBC, she’s also been writing print pieces for the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Popular Science*, *Vox*, the *New York Daily News* and *Newsday*. She’s also written for OZY and NPR. She dislikes wacky Japan stories, the grist for many a freelancer’s mill, and is especially interested in women’s and social issues that aren’t being covered. One example of how she matches her interests to her work is a *Newsweek* story she did on how Japan’s declining population could lead to restrictions on women’s access to reproductive care.

“There are so many stories out there that need to be told. Personally it’s been an amazing journey. I’ve met some really incredible people and hopefully I could change things for the better in some small way.” ●

**Tim Hornyak** is a freelance writer who has worked for IDG News, CNET News, Lonely Planet and other media. He is the author of *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*.

ANDREW POTHECARY



Tune in to Japanese television on any given evening and you will find nothing that different from two or three decades ago. Programming is still dominated by the usual menu of variety shows packed full of segments on food and travel punctuated by excited cries of “*Oishii!*” and “*Sugoi!*” emanating from the familiar roster of celebrity faces, along with some largely formulaic dramas, the ubiquitous quiz shows and the occasional elaborate popular music program.

But take notice, for changes are afoot. A shrinking domestic market is forcing the big networks to look further afield for growth, while competition from new platforms such as Netflix and Amazon is posing challenges, but also creating opportunities.

*Demographics and new technologies are having a big effect on viewing habits in Japan.*

## A change in the air(waves)

by GAVIN BLAIR

The programming and business of the commercial broadcasters – and to a lesser extent NHK – revolves around the “Golden Time” hours of 7 to 10 pm, when the highest-rating programs and biggest-earning commercials air. And while you may not notice the difference, the shifting demographics of the domestic audience has led to a shift in content over the last 10 to 15 years to programming designed to appeal to older viewers, according to Taka Hayakawa, director of worldwide production and sales at Fuji TV. “There is no young generation, so it’s all about the *ojisan* and *obachan*,” says Hayakawa, whose career has also included writing, directing and producing for television.

This has manifested itself most visibly in the increasing number of police detective and medical-themed dramas, with relatively simple, formulaic storylines in the primetime slots, says Hayakawa. “If it’s a detective story, you can guess the conclusion is going to be catching the bad guy; with a medical-type drama, if you can understand the first few minutes, then you will be able to work out the story.”

According to Hayakawa, these dramas are “safe and comfortable, without any edginess or feeling of danger.” He says that despite Fuji TV’s efforts to resist the shift, the broadcaster will run two dramas with such themes in its next primetime slots.

Makito Sugiyama, vice president of global business at Tokyo Broadcasting System Television, doesn’t see such a significant change in content on the terrestrial channels, although the Broadcast Satellite channels are “targeting older viewers.”

ONE CHANGE THAT HAS undeniably occurred in television viewing habits, though not one peculiar to Japan, is the growing tendency to watch programs in time-shift: either recorded, on VOD (video on demand), catch-up services or on net-based platforms such as Hulu and Amazon. The way that viewing figures are calculated in Japan was recently changed to reflect this change, bringing some cheer to the networks, which are able to show that their audiences have not dropped as much as had been thought. With the price of commercial slots based on ratings, the networks now have to devise new formulas to reflect the time-shift audience, complicated by the fact that some can



watch ad-free or skip ad breaks on recorded programs.

In addition to expanded offerings from cable and satellite networks, the Japanese TV industry now faces stiffer competition from a growing number of alternative content platforms in a now crowded marketplace. “Amazon, Netflix and other new platforms have been totally disruptive in the U.S. and are now trying the same strategy in Japan,” says Hayakawa. “Competition is getting very tough and we are only at the initial stage of disruption in Japan as they have just launched recently here. But their growth is inevitable. The Japanese TV industry is pondering how to survive in this landscape.”

Definitive numbers are unavailable, but local platform Abema TV is reported to be the most popular VOD service, followed by Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, dTV and then Netflix. In terms of hours watched weekly, dTV – which was originally a mobile service launched by DoCoMo that has expanded to television – is in the lead, followed by Amazon and Netflix.

Hulu found it difficult to carve out a niche in the local market and sold its Japan operations to Nippon TV in early 2014. Since the takeover by NTV, the service has ramped up its local original programming, including a Japanese version of the German police series “The Last Cop,” which became a big draw for Hulu last year.

Original content is becoming a key part of the expansion of the new platforms in Japan, mirroring the strategy of Amazon Video and Netflix’s global ambitions. Amazon Japan has already announced 12 original series, including dramas, documentaries, variety shows, anime programs and children’s shows, with plans for more. In the summer of 2016, Netflix Japan launched “*Hibana* (Spark),” a 10-episode drama based on an Akutagawa Prize-winning novel by Matayoshi Naoki. As well as boosting local content, the drama was made available on Netflix in 190 countries and dubbed into around 20 languages.

ALTHOUGH THE NEW PLATFORMS are a clear challenge to the legacy commercial broadcasters, the networks aren’t adopting a siege mentality, but rather working with them. Fuji TV created the drama “*Underwear* (Atelier)” for Netflix, and the

DAVID BECKER/NBC



### Airborne

Opposite, Jessie Graff in the “American Ninja Warrior” finals; left, Taka Hayakawa, director of worldwide production and sales at Fuji TV; below, the Netflix drama, *Hibana*



two have formed an alliance to co-create dramas for the Asian market. Even staid public broadcaster NHK partnered with Netflix on “Tokyo Trials.” The four-part mini-series about the trials of war criminals after World War II was broadcast on NHK in December, while Netflix streamed it overseas. NHK will offer it on its own VOD service before Netflix makes it available to its subscribers in Japan.

For decades, movie production has been an important revenue stream for the commercial networks. Many of the annual box office leaders are spin-offs from drama series or other films that TV companies are involved with through a movie production committee system that brings partners from distributors, rights holders and advertising agencies together as investors. NTV has announced a movie spin-off from “The Last Cop,” due for release this spring.

Few of the 400 or so Japanese films released each year generate more than minimal interest or box office overseas. But the emergence of the huge Chinese theatrical market at a time when relations between the two countries have thawed enough for Japanese films to start getting released again is creating new opportunities. *Flying Colors* (Billy Girl) was the third-biggest Japanese live-action film of 2015 with ¥28.4 billion (\$23.6 million). Based on a true story about a waster of a high school student who suddenly decides to go to an elite university, it featured TBS as a leading company of its production committee. The film was given a wide release in China in April 2016 and took in more than \$6 million. Although that is only a fraction of the \$80 million that the anime hit *Your Name* (Kimi no Na wa) had made in China by late December, let alone the hundreds of millions that a Hollywood blockbuster can pull in there, it represents significant overseas box office success for a Japanese film.

ON THE ANIME TV series front, overseas sales have been growing exponentially over the last couple of years, helping to boost revenue for the anime industry to ¥1.83 trillion (\$18 billion) in 2015. That was up by 12 percent from a year earlier, according to the Association of Japanese Animations, helped

by a growth in sales of streaming rights to China of 78.7 percent.

Clearance of copyright was a major issue for online distribution of all Japanese content because the Broadcast Law and copyright are governed by different ministries. Many of the hurdles have now been overcome, but the issue remains a barrier for international distribution, according to Sugiyama of TBS: “Everyone is working toward trying to resolve this, but it’s not as simple as people think it is; clearance is difficult even for the music used in TV programs, since it may be cleared for domestic distribution, but not overseas.”

The networks don’t own the rights for all the programs they broadcast, but are often involved as co-producers of anime, receiving a share of the revenue from overseas sales. “TV stations used to sell content in stages, with first broadcast and then DVD releases. But now distribution through broadcasting, streaming and DVD sales are becoming almost simultaneous,” says Sugiyama.

Sales of formats – essentially ideas for shows – has been a long-running global success story for the TV networks. The “Dragons’ Den/Shark Tank” show, where venture

capitalists decide whether or not to invest in entrepreneurs’ business ideas, has been remade in around 30 countries, but started life as “Money no Tora” on NTV in the early 2000s. Other global hits include “America’s Funniest Home Videos,” “Takeshi’s Castle” and “Sasuke/Ninja Warrior,” all of which originated at TBS, and Fuji TV’s “Iron Chef” and “Hole in the Wall.”

Many observers put this plethora of ideas down in part to the large number of short segments in Japanese variety shows, which are often the birthplace of formats for programs in their own right. The low-budget nature of much of Japanese TV leads to producers being creative and often coming up with ideas for shows that can be made relatively inexpensively – another attraction for international buyers.

With younger people in particular now consuming video on a variety of devices from multiple platforms, the business model of the traditional linear broadcasters looks unsustainable. Factor in the shrinking population, and the TV networks face a particularly acute environment. In addition to aiming for further growth in overseas markets for content and ideas, the broadcasters will likely need to follow the lead of corporations in other sectors in making investments and acquisitions abroad.

Fuji TV, for example, was an early investor in Niantic, the San Francisco-based developer of worldwide smash hit augmented reality game *Pokemon Go*, despite not being the broadcaster of the TV anime series. The company also produced a documentary about the *Pokemon Go* phenomenon, in Japanese and English, that was broadcast in Japan in December and is targeted at a global audience. Such strategies and synergies are the way forward, according to Fuji’s Hayakawa, who both led the investment and acted as a producer for the documentary. “Similar to the divide between Silicon Valley and Hollywood in the U.S., the two industries are separate in Japan, but we have to combine the two in order to survive,” suggests Hayakawa. ●

Gavin Blair covers Japanese business, society and culture for publications in the U.S., Asia and Europe.



Left to right, Chieko Kuribayashi, Yasuhi Aoto and Charles E. McJilton at the Club

Activists dealing with the country's disadvantaged claim that the poor, especially children, are being ignored by the government.

## Is the government blind to Japan's impoverished?

by JULIAN RYALL

DESPITE PRIME MINISTER SHINZO Abe's declarations of concern over the nation's stubbornly unyielding poverty rate, Yasuhi Aoto says he has no interest in the problem that grips millions of households across the country.

Poverty, including child poverty, does not translate into sufficient votes for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party for it to be a major concern, says Aoto, who has witnessed the problem close up as chairman of the Japan Association of Child Poverty and Education Support Organizations. "To put it simply, I do not believe that Abe has any interest in child poverty, or the problem of poverty in general, and I believe this attitude is common to all conservative parties because the issue does not generate votes," Aoto told a press conference at the FCCJ last November.

"Politicians are living in a world of immediate reality and I don't believe they have the ability to think about the lives of children today and the people they will be in 40 or 50 years," he said.

In April, a report issued by the UN Children's Fund underlined Aoto's concern for the most vulnerable in Japanese society, revealing that children from the poorest households here are relatively far more disadvantaged than children in most other industrialized nations. That finding is backed up by research by Aoto's organization and others campaigning against the problem here – but who also admit that determining precise figures for poverty rates is more difficult in Japan for a number of reasons, not least because the social stigma attached to being poor causes millions of people not to claim welfare support.

"If we look at how difficult the situation has become, particularly for children, over the last 25 years, I believe there are two main reasons: education and employment," said Aoto.

ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATION, 16.3 percent of Japanese households are living on less than ¥3 million a year, affecting 3.5 million children under the age of 17 – which is fully one in six of all children in the country. And looking into the future, Aoto points out, this will inevitably worsen as fewer children are born, the government's tax revenues decline and increasing numbers of elderly people require pensions and healthcare.

The cost of a university education has similarly increased in recent decades, climbing from ¥100,000 a year in the 1970s to more than ¥500,000 a year today, even for a liberal arts course, he said. Invariably, the majority of people that Aoto's group assists are from families that have not had a university-level education. Some are not even able to make it to senior high school; such is their lack of financial resources and support.

Chieko Kuribayashi is chief director of the non-profit organization, Toshima Kodomo WakuWaku Network, and was instrumental in setting up the first "children's cafeteria" in Toshima Ward for youngsters in her community. The initiative has since been replicated across Japan and there are now 300 such centers. "I am not a teacher or a professional, but a mother who raised my children in the area," she told the press conference. "I would often meet kids who were hungry and had not had

anything to eat all that day. I started to provide learning support for children who feared they would not be able to go on to senior high school.

As well as providing a place where local children can meet up, eat together and simply spend time in a comfortable environment, the centers invite volunteer high school and university students to help the children study.

BUT THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS are not being dealt with, in part, critics say, because the government is handing over responsibility for caring for those living below the poverty line to NGOs. "I believe the government should be doing more and that its current policies for alleviating poverty are insufficient," Kuribayashi said. "However, citizens across the country are now learning that this problem exists. This is an opportunity to think about our children's futures."

Charles McJilton is executive director of Second Harvest Japan, the country's leading food bank and a close collaborator with both local and national governments and other NGOs – and he is more aware than most of the problems facing those living on the fringes of Japanese society: he once spent 15 months living in a cardboard box in Tokyo alongside homeless people to gain a better understanding of their plight. "Within Tokyo, there are maybe 40 or 50 locations where someone can pick up hot food, an emergency meal," he said. "In New York city, there are 1,100 places, Chicago has 600, San Francisco, even Hong Kong has 520. So why do we have so few here? We have resources, so how come we can't reach those who are in need?"

McJilton's organization has set itself a goal of feeding 100,000 people in Tokyo every week by 2020 and he is calling on the government to see food safety for the most vulnerable in society in the same way as it sees healthcare provisions. All children up to the age of 16 receive free healthcare, he said. They should also have the same guaranteed access to sufficient food. ●

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

Riko Muranaka says the vaccine can help save the lives of 3,000 young women a year, but a libel lawsuit seems aimed at silencing support for its use.

## Vaccine battle stakes are high

by JUSTIN MCCURRY

JAPAN'S REFUSAL TO OFFICIALLY recommend a vaccine that protects against cervical cancer is a threat to thousands of women who contract the illness every year, according to medical doctor and journalist Riko Muranaka, whose campaign to prove the drug's safety has landed her in court.

Muranaka, a lecturer at Kyoto University's school of medicine, is now fighting a libel suit after she accused Shuichi Ikeda, dean of the school of medicine at Shinshu University, of "fabricating" the results of an experiment with a single mouse that he then used to "prove" that the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine causes serious neurological conditions.

Ikeda, who had been given a grant by the health ministry to investigate alleged adverse side effects, insisted on a causal link in a TV appearance, generating alarmist newspaper headlines the following day.

The HPV jab was made available for free in late 2010 for girls between 12 and 16 years old, and became part of Japan's national immunization program in early 2013. But just two months later, the health and welfare ministry made what Muranaka called the "unusual and perplexing" decision to keep the vaccine in the program but suspend "proactive" recommendations for it.

The decision followed Ikeda's claim and the release of a video by a group of alleged victims showing vaccinated women with serious neurological symptoms.

Since the ministry suspended its recommendation, the vaccination rate among the target age group has plummeted from 70 percent to less than 1 percent.

IN AN ARTICLE IN *Wedge* magazine in March of this year, Muranaka accused Ikeda of fabricating the data. "Doctor Ikeda's data is not just about one mouse experiment," Muranaka said at the FCCJ in November. "It is about the consequences it has for 10,000 women and their families who get cervical cancer every year in Japan, and the 3,000 women who die from it."

"Because of his actions, more young



Riko Muranaka at the Club

women have decided not to get a safe and effective vaccine [that could] save their lives," said Muranaka, whose case is not expected to reach a verdict for at least another 18 months. "I would like to ask Dr. Ikeda if he feels any responsibility for this."

She said that the epidemiological data from around the world has shown no increase in the vaccinated group for specific diseases such as neurological diseases or auto-immune diseases. And a health ministry task force subsequently ruled out a causal link between HPV vaccine and the professed symptoms, adding that the reported cases were most likely psychosomatic. Despite those findings, the government has not made a "proactive recommendation" to reintroduce the vaccine into the immunization program.

The ministry's decision has been criticized by the World Health Organization, which fears that dubious claims about harmful side effects could lead to a global drop in vaccinations and a rise in cervical cancer cases. There is evidence that the controversy in Japan has already hit vaccination rates in Denmark and Ireland. Worldwide, about 528,000 new cases of cervical cancer are reported annually, causing 266,000 deaths. In Japan 9,300 cases of invasive cervical cancer cause 3,000 deaths a year.

While the libel case continues, the health ministry has publicly accused Dr. Ikeda of "causing misunderstanding." According to an op-ed by Muranaka in the *Wall Street Journal*, the ministry statement said: "We are truly sorry his inappropriate presentation caused misunderstanding

to society. Ikeda's social responsibility is big. We found no evidence to suggest reported symptoms are related to the HPV vaccine."

MURANAKA, WHO IS PAYING her own legal fees while accepting donations from a support group, believes many of the 3,000 Japanese women who die from cervical cancer every year could have been saved by the vaccine. She accused her opponents of "sowing the seeds for misunderstanding about the safety of the HPV vaccine that persists to this day."

To support the claims she has made in numerous papers and articles, she cited a study of 70,960 vaccinated and non-vaccinated adolescent girls in Nagoya that found "no significant associations between 24 alleged vaccine-induced symptoms and the HPV vaccines."

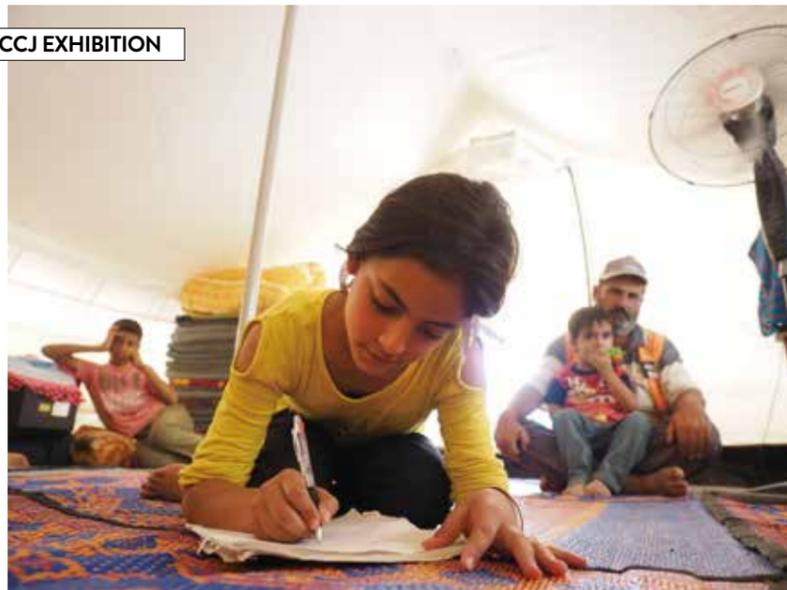
Muranaka said that she had been unfairly targeted by opponents, and that other doctors who support her stance are too scared to speak out in case they too end up in court. "Publishers refused to publish my articles, and declined to publish a book, even though they had agreed to do so," she said. "One magazine ended my regular column since they don't want to be involved."

She scolded Japan's medical society and the media for their silence. "I have asked Doctor Ikeda time and again to publish more details about his experiment and the original data, but he has failed to comply," she said. "I hope the court will understand that the lawsuit was not the right thing to do, because Ikeda should have refuted my claims in the scientific realm. I'm happy to discuss this with him within the scientific community, but he won't do that."

Muranaka said that her single aim is for Japan's government to comply with global expectations and global standards. "The voices of the victims are echoing around the world, but scientific journalists have to do the same – we have to make our voices heard around the world and publish science-based articles, or else people's health will be at risk." ●

Justin McCurry is Tokyo correspondent for the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers in London and writes about Japan and Korea for the *Lancet* medical journal.

FCCJ EXHIBITION



## Some Day, Going Back Home – Syrian Refugee Children photographs by Natsuki Yasuda

NATSUKI YASUDA IS CURRENTLY documenting the tragic plight of the refugees of the Syrian civil war. Since it began in 2011, the worsening conflict in Syria has forced 9.5 million people – around half the population – to leave their homes. Over three million of these displaced people have been forced to leave Syria, including over 600,000 who have sought refuge in Jordan. These photographs are windows into the lives of the people there. ●

While at high school, **Natsuki Yasuda** went to Cambodia on an NGO program to document projects for young people. Now a professional photojournalist, she reports from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Japan. Since the Tohoku earthquake her main base has been Rikuzentakata, from where she has documented developments in the disaster-hit area. In 2012 she won the eighth Younosuke Natori Photography Award for her work on Uganda's HIV-AIDS orphans. [www.yasudanatsuki.com](http://www.yasudanatsuki.com)



JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...



... for a very special sneak preview of Martin Scorsese's long-gestating passion project, *Silence*, on Thurs., Jan. 12. Nearly 30 years after he read Shusaku Endo's 1966 novel about the persecution of hidden Christians in 17th-century Japan, the legendary director has finally released this story of two Portuguese padres, Sebastian Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) and Francisco Garupe (Adam Driver), who journey from Macao to Japan to search for their missing mentor, after receiving the startling news that he has gone native. The priests begin their arduous journey to the Japanese heart of darkness with a lapsed Christian named Kichijiro (Yosuke Kubozuka), settling in with clandestine worshippers in the tiny village of Tomogi. But soon enough, the area's ruthless Inquisitor Inoue (Issey Ogata) throws Rodrigues and his new followers behind bars, and sets about putting their faith to the ultimate test.

In collaboration with Kadokawa, Scorsese's masterwork will be screened from 4:15 pm at the Kadokawa Cinema Yurakucho, above Bic Camera, with the Q&A session starting from 7:30 back at FCCJ. Japanese stars Issey Ogata and Yosuke Kubozuka will be on hand to discuss the months-long filming of this epic international production. (U.S., 2016; 161 minutes; Japanese/English/Latin with Japanese and English subtitles.)

– Karen Severns

MEDIA VISIT TO YAMATO HOLDINGS "HANEDA CHRONOGATE"



Chronogate is located next to Haneda Airport, close to JR Freight Container Terminals and Tokyo and Yokohama Ports. The giant integrated terminal provides seamless land, sea and air connections both in Japan and throughout the world.

THE SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE arranged a visit to Yamato Holdings Co. Ltd's Haneda Chronogate, the most advanced and biggest logistics hub in the world. Led by SPC committee member Kenji Obayashi, the group of nine FCCJ journalists made the visit on Dec. 14. Opened in Sept. 2013, Haneda

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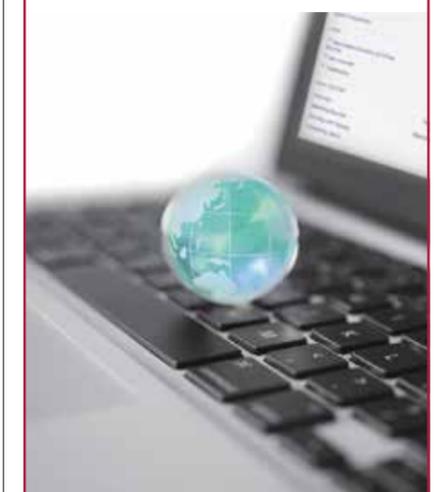
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The service will be billed by the Club. The FCCJ benefits from all subscriptions sold under this arrangement.

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



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The FCCJ is offering a special deal for new Associate Members. Until March 31 this year, those joining are eligible for a **¥100,000 DISCOUNT** off of the regular fee of ¥300,000.

If successfully approved, the applicants will be able to enjoy all the member benefits: attendance at all the major press conferences and professional and social events; dining services at the Main Bar, Pen & Quill Executive Dining area and the Masukomi Sushi Bar; special discounts on sports, arts and cultural events; free wi-fi, half-price parking, the Club's monthly magazine; and access to reciprocal press clubs around the world.

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**WALTER SIM** is the Japan correspondent for the *Straits Times*. He joined the paper, the most-read broadsheet in Singapore, fresh out of Nanyang Technological University's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, and first cut his teeth on the crime desk, covering everything from lurid sex-for-corruption trials and murders to the Little India riot in 2013. He then moved to domestic politics, reporting on the death of founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Singapore's general election in 2015. It was during his first trip to Japan – a solo trip to Tokyo in 2012 – that he fell in love with the country and decided to pick up the language. In his present position, he covers Japan-related news including politics, diplomacy and social issues with an eye on Singapore and the region.

**KAZUNORI TAKADA** is the Tokyo Bureau Chief for Bloomberg News, overseeing 140 reporters and editors in both the English and Japanese language services. Kazunori joined Bloomberg in April 2016 from Reuters where he spent 16 years covering a wide range of areas from general news to market and corporate news in Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and China. In his last stint at Reuters, he was Shanghai bureau chief responsible for coverage of financial markets and corporate news in China. He was educated in Japan and the U.S. and is a graduate of International Christian University in Tokyo. Kazunori, a Yokohama native, is married with two children.

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