

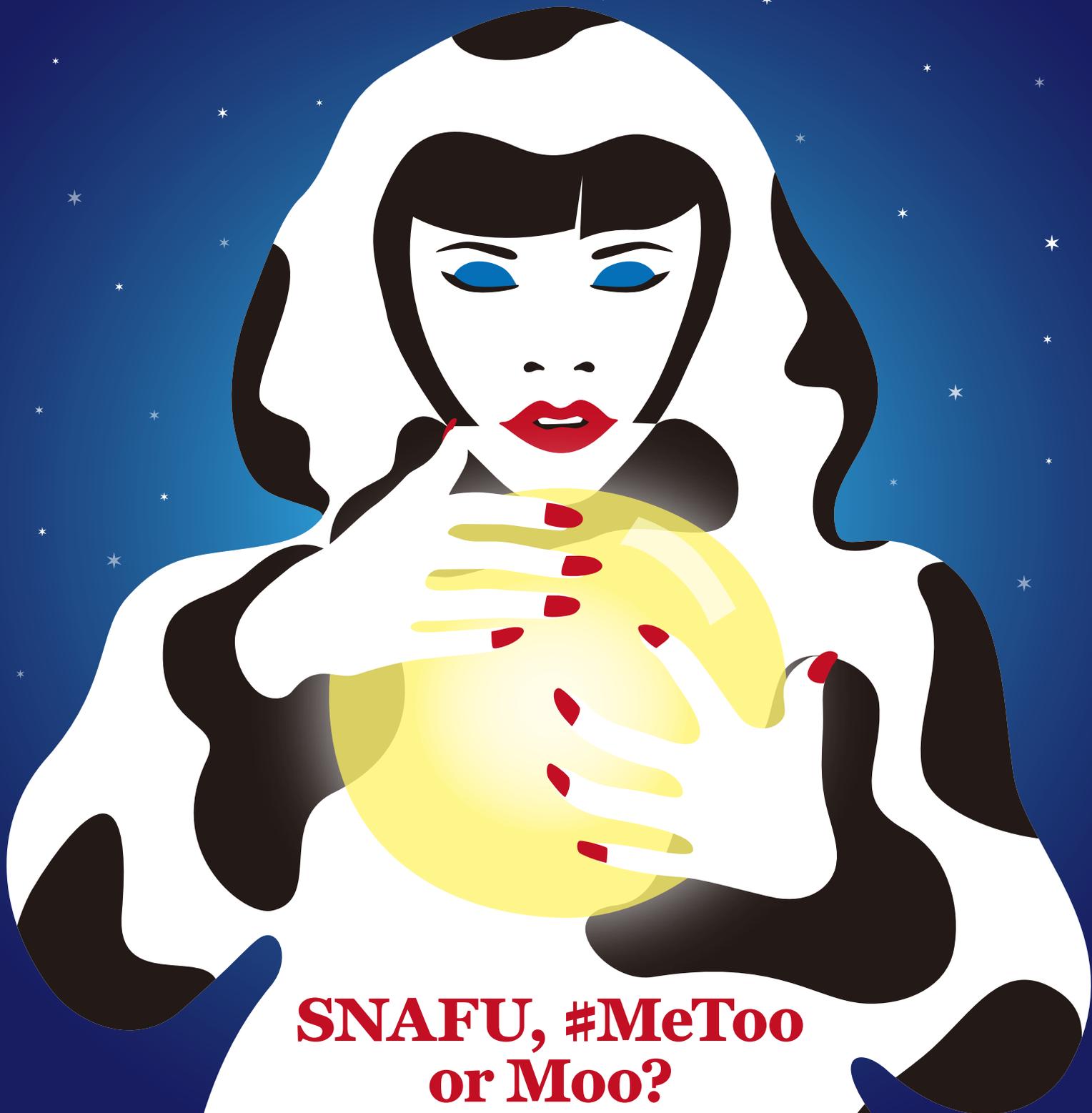


The Magazine of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan



NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

January 2021 · Volume 53 · No. 1



SNAFU, #MeToo or Moo?

**Your prophecies for
the Year of the Cow**

NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

January 2021 · Volume 53 · No. 1

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In this issue

2020 was the year in which just about everything that could go wrong, did go wrong. With this issue, the oracle at Marunouchi has spoken on the year ahead and we release our visions to a waiting world, alongside a close view of the troubles at Kusatsu, a retrospective on the rise of the capsule, and two recollections on the passing of the great Takashi Oka.

As BREXIT falters, COVID conquers and China wins the world, the FCCJ will continue as an oasis of wisdom, calm and congeniality, with wonderful dining privileges on the side.

Meanwhile, this editor takes his leave. It has been an honour and a privilege and a lot of fun putting this magazine together with the expertise and inspiration of Julio Kohji Shiiki, our designer. I wish my successor Justin McCurry every possible success, and all of us wish you, our readers, an especially happy New Year.

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THE FRONT PAGE

From the President



Dear Members,

I'm writing this column for the last edition of *Number 1 Shimbun* to be edited by Peter O'Connor, who steps down at the end of the year to be replaced by Justin McCurry. It was with a bit of a jolt that I remembered this evening that I've been Club President since August, but haven't met Peter in person even once - we know each other only through Zoom, phone calls and emails. That's just one aspect of the slightly ghostly life many of us have been living since the pandemic broke out - we can be working closely with people even in the same city for months without ever meeting face-to-face.

Peter has been a hardworking and nimble editor, producing a timely edition on women just as four female directors were elected to the Board, and delving through the archives to put together a tribute to the Club's history to mark its 75th anniversary this year, an event that we were sadly unable to celebrate with a party because of virus concerns. Please help Justin maintain *Number 1 Shimbun's* high standard in the New Year by pitching ideas for upcoming issues.

As we head into the holidays, I'd like to express my deep appreciation to the staff and volunteers at the Club who have made great efforts to maintain all our areas of activity, despite the unprecedented difficulties we've

faced in 2020. After a year featuring everyone from would-be prime ministers, to a former member of SMAP, the Professional Activities Committee in December offered journalists the opportunity to get right to the heart of a controversy. Both accuser and accused in a sexual assault allegation that has caused a political drama in the traditional hot spring town of Kusatsu in Gunma Prefecture came to the Club to discuss the case. Meanwhile, Book Breaks, film screenings, photo exhibitions and other events have all continued, with careful precautions against the virus.

There's a whole lot more to look forward to in 2021. We're planning to revive our Freedom of the Press awards, so keep an eye out for details on how to nominate those you see as most deserving in Japan or the region, with prizes to be awarded in the coming months. Importantly, the Board has also selected a new Food and Beverage vendor, W&D LLC, who will be opening operations with a soft launch and a limited menu from Friday, January 8, gradually building up to full service in the coming weeks. I'm looking forward very much to seeing everyone in the Main Bar to toast the arrival of the year of the Ox.

● Isabel Reynolds has been reporting for Bloomberg in Tokyo since 2012. She has lived in Japan for more than 20 years and been a Regular Member of the FCCJ for most of that time.

COVER STORY

SNAFU, #MeToo or Moo?

FIFTEEN PROPHECIES FOR THE YEAR OF THE COW

PETER O'CONNOR

In the dying hours of a terrible 2020, assorted members, their guests and officers of the Club, gazed into their crystal balls to see if 2021 would bring us anything better. While the general feeling was that at best we can only expect more of the same, some were more optimistic and one invoked a higher power, just in case. The good news is that there'll be more than enough *gekikara* to go around. We all know the bad news. The least we can do is hang on, find some joy in whatever is coming down the line, and from everyone at *Number 1 Shimbun* and the FCCJ, wish all of you the very best of what may not, after all, be quite as bad a year as the one just gone. Moo!



Toshifumi Nagasaka
University professor

“I have a sense that fundamental social change is coming, but it’s too early to define or understand.”



Masumi Sugamori
Transmission Co., Japan

“I think we’ll look back on 2020 as a warning and an opportunity for change. So, to me, in 2021 we have to become less violent, take care of our planet and put more faith in the fundamental power of humanity to change through love.”



Nobuhisa Kishi
CEO Artisan Group

“2021 is going to be bad, but we might as well enjoy ourselves.”



Hajime Kimura
40-year member, Senior Advisor Abie Ventures

“When the Club moved to new premises, I was a bit worried, but things seem to have settled down. As for 2021, I would like to see more professional activities at lunchtime. All in all, 2021 could be far better for new ventures – we may have turned a corner.”



Khaldon Azhari
Former President, FCCJ

“I don’t see 2020 as a bad year – because we survived it. So I’m optimistic, mainly because things can’t get any worse. The Club will survive, God will see us through.”



Ayaka Nakamoto
Guest, website developer

“2020 was difficult, but 2021 looks more hopeful. I think we’ll see a revival of individual enterprise and initiatives.”

SNAFU, #MeToo or Moo?



Kathryn Wortley

Co-founder and Director at Sterling Content

“We’re all facing so many challenges right now and 2021 may bring even more, but even in the middle of this pandemic I know we’ll cope.”



Roger Schreffler

Former President, FCCJ

“The Trump horror show will last for several more weeks, but the American democracy will survive, battered and beaten, and “Trumpism” will slowly weaken from Jan. 20 when a new administration takes office.”



Monzurul Huq

Former President, FCCJ

“For all our current concerns, let’s hope that the promise held out to us by the crop of Covid vaccines turns out to be more than a reflection of our own optimism.”



Ilgin Yorulmuz

Secretary to the 2020-21 Board, FCCJ

“My prediction for journalism is that we can expect a big increase in ‘journalist influencers’, especially in countries where press freedom is being curtailed. As for #MeToo in Japan, it looks as if in 2021 it will be as hard as ever for women to confront and disprove their abusers. No worthwhile development is likely without sea changes in education, public opinion and the rule of law. Going by recent events, these look as unlikely as ever.”



Andrew Horvat

Former President, FCCJ

“My wish is to remain alive in a world in which at the end of the year I will still wish to remain alive.”



Andy Sharp

1st Vice-President, FCCJ

“Abe makes a miraculous recovery after finding Avigan helps his bowel disorder, and swoops in to take over from Suga to save the day for the LDP.”



Walter Sim

2nd Vice-President, FCCJ

“More of the same: It’s difficult to see how things will be different: Covid-19 will rage on, travel will be impeded, and Japanese politics will be just as riddled with scandals. Meanwhile, on the food front, I’m relishing the boom in tongue-numbing *gekikara* (extremely spicy) food and a growing appreciation for craft gin, two F&B trends that will grow in 2021.”



Dan Sloan

Director, FCCJ

“2021 will make dumpster fire 2020 crawl into the annals of awful, as mass vaccinations, new governments and Tokyo Olympics punctuate multiple recoveries.”



Isabel Reynolds

President, FCCJ

“I want as many people as possible to take the vaccine.”

PAC AFTERWORD

J'ACCUSE, REDUX



Shoko Arai, former Councilor to the town assembly of Kusatsu.

DAVID McNEILL

Shoko Arai, the sole woman Councilor in Japan's oldest hot spring resort says the Mayor sexually assaulted her. Both brought their claims to PAC events at the FCCJ in December.

For centuries, the gushing volcanic waters of Kusatsu (pop. 6,200) have lured Japan's wounded and sick. The town's fame grew during the Edo era when syphilitic visitors from Tokyo made the 200km. trip to its cluster of hot spring resorts in search of a cure. In recent months, however, Kusatsu has become synonymous with a poisonous spat between the town's Mayor and its only female assembly member.

Former Councilor to the town assembly of Kusatsu, Shoko Arai says she was "forced into sexual relations" by Mayor Nobutada Kuroiwa during a meeting at his office on January 8, 2015. Mayor Kuroiwa dismisses her claim as a "100-percent fabrication." Each made their case at the FCCJ last December, in dueling press conferences following a week in which their row went

international, making the pages of the *New York Times* and other national dailies and broadcasters, no doubt to the acute embarrassment of Kusatsu's conservative elders.

Going online

Arai laid out her claims in an online book published last year. The Mayor reacted with fury, launching a civil libel suit for ¥44 million and campaigning successfully to expel her from the Kusatsu town assembly in December 2019. The prefectural government reversed that decision in August, restoring her seat, whereupon the Kusatsu assembly initiated a referendum to unseat Arai, saying she had "disgraced" the town. Over 90 percent of voters signed a petition against Arai's reinstatement.

The defeat, and her recall in December, were crushing experiences but, given the context, unsurprising, insists Arai. The assembly is dominated by people with ties to local businesses, including the head of the local inn association, she points out. "A small number of men hold power and women are in very weak positions." Most of Kusatsu's citizens depend on tourism, virtually the town's sole industry (about 3 million people visit every year).

JACCUSE, REDUX



KUSATSU TOWN WEBSITE

Kusatsu onsen, one of the oldest and most popular in Japan

“I saw the Mayor become more aggressive and dictatorial in running the town,” she told the FCCJ, citing incidents where he bullied or silenced opponents.

“How many would be able to refuse such a vote when asked to do so by their employer?” she asked the Club at her PAC appearance on December 18th.

Gender and power

Japan’s skewed gender balance forms the inevitable backdrop. Just 10 percent of lawmakers in the House of Representatives are women. Outside Tokyo, the situation for women is ‘pre-war’, fumes a recent academic paper. A third of town and village assemblies do not have a single female councilor. Women politicians such as Arai ‘battle deep condescension’ in such places, she told the

FCCJ. [Those few who speak out are drowned out by the “violence of numbers,” she said.](#)

High stakes

Since going public, Arai says she has been approached by three other women who claim to have been verbally or physically assaulted by the Mayor, although none has spoken out. Initially, fear kept her from reporting her own assault, Arai says. She would see the head of the local police sitting beside Mayor Kuroiwa at local gatherings and wonder how far she would get if she spoke out.

“I gave up the idea of speaking up. I thought, if I say something nobody will believe me. I could hardly believe it myself. I thought, if I go to the police it will be rubbed out.”

Arai had, in any case, lost her seat, although she continued to attend and monitor the Kusatsu assembly. “I saw the Mayor become more aggressive and dictatorial in running the town,” she told the FCCJ, citing incidents where he bullied or silenced opponents. In consequence, her own regret about not speaking up about her assault, coming on top of a series of incidents of petty harassment and sexism she witnessed in the assembly, motivated her run for a second term in April 2019.

Publication and controversy

Once Arai-san’s claims were published, by journalist, Reiji Izuka, the dispute quickly turned ugly. Izuka’s book title alone (*Kusatsu Onsen Shikkoku no Yami*) suggesting dark and dirty business lurking beneath the town’s façade would have been enough to get the business community’s collective backs up. In the assembly, Arai was asked to read aloud the passage detailing her assault and heckled and denounced as a liar as she did so. Her one supporter was disciplined and later compelled to read an apology to the assembly. [“It really was a second rape,” she said.](#)

Bewildered

Arai seems to have been bewildered by the political storm she had unleashed. During the recall, she said, supporters of the Mayor plastered the town and public buildings with 600 posters for the referendum, in addition to distributing fliers and ads in local newspapers. Campaign cars drove around the streets every day, denouncing her.

JACCUSE, REDUX

Nobutada Kuroiwa, Mayor of Kusatsu, makes his case.

“In this case it is the other way around: it is I who have filed criminal and libel cases against former Councilor Arai. She has not produced a single piece of evidence in the past year.”

As Arai-san asked the Club, “Why does the Mayor want to go to such lengths to remove me from the town council, and even the town itself?”. Was he, she or Kusatsu the problem? “Does the Mayor want to drive me out of the town, to destroy my life?”

‘Upset’

For his part, Mayor Kuroiwa insists he is defending the town, describing how ‘upset’ he became, taking calls from reporters as far away as France asking what was going on.

“Under Japanese law, the burden of proof lies with former Councilor Arai. She is posing as a victim but has not filed any criminal charges. Victims should appeal to the police and the courts. In this case it is the other way around: it is I who have filed criminal and libel cases against former Councilor Arai. She has not produced a single piece of evidence in the past year.”

Outcomes and consequences

The odds appear to be against Arai. In addition to the usual legal problems of proving sexual assault claims (even had she filed a complaint) the Mayor has far greater resources and has

most of the town publicly on his side. During his press conference, he produced photographs of his office, with its many glass windows, showing, he said, how the assault could not have taken place in the way that Arai described it without it being witnessed. As he put it, “She is lying to bring me down.”

Kuroiwa, on the other hand, faces perhaps the key question in all sexual assault cases: why would someone go to such lengths to make something up? Arai says that since initially speaking out, she has become aware of many similar cases in Japan. Though clearly wounded by her battle with the Mayor she says she is determined to fight on. “His way of thinking is that if you repeat a lie 100 times it becomes the truth. It is a fact that I was assaulted by the Mayor. I will keep saying so.”

● David McNeill is co-chair of the FCCJ’s Professional Activities Committee and a professor at the Department of English Language, Communication and Cultures at Sacred Heart University in Tokyo. He was previously a correspondent for *The Independent* and *The Economist* newspapers and for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

PERSONAL BEST

FORTY YEARS ON: THE MARCH OF THE CAPSULE



▶ Knut Netz (top capsule) hails the author (lower capsule)

MARK SCHREIBER —————

“ It was one of those stories that epitomize the bizarre side of Japan’s technological frontier. Irresistibly it caught the minds of desk editors around the globe, and sent hordes of Tokyo-based newsmen into the ultimate in Japanese rabbit hutches, the hotel capsule.”

This lead to “We Swallow Capsule Story” appeared in the June 15 1981 issue of *Number 1 Shimbun*, under the byline, “Our Investigation

Team.” The story continued, “Seasoned foreign correspondents swallowed their pride at following up a story first run in Tokyo’s *Weekender*,’ usually noted for its write-ups about staff changes at airlines and snaps of the glitter people looking at each other in Roppongi.”

Wait a second! Was Tokyo’s free weekly tabloid being damned with faint praise or being accorded some grudging respect? In a follow-up column, *Weekender* publisher Corky Alexander took the *Number 1 Shimbun* follow-up as an accolade. As he wrote:

FORTY YEARS ON: THE MARCH OF THE CAPSULE

Roving reporter finds 'capsule hotel' Osaka backs 'hutch' theory

TOKYO WEEKENDER

Vol. XII No. 2 "A Forum for Foreigners in Japan" January 16, 1981

Compartment-size rooms the 2001 item of the future?

By Mark Schreiber

Billed as a "hotel for the year 2001," the 450-man-capacity Capsule Inn Osaka has been a favorite target of media derision throughout the first two years of its existence. "Rabbit hutch," they first snickered; "great training quarters for Japan's budding astronauts" others scoffed, along with "a real homecoming for ex-submariners"; "people coops"; "human laundromat!" and other assorted brickbats.

"Foul!" cried the hotel's management, countering with figures showing an occupancy rate consistently over 90 per cent and presumably profits to match.

Regardless of readers' familiarity with Asia's great and not-so-great hostels, the Capsule Inn is sure to come as something out of the ordinary.

Believing the nesting habits of the Japanese traveling salesman to be virgin territory for a good investigative article, I packed my pseudo-leather overnighter and journeyed to Osaka for a one-night stand.

"Hey Knut," I said to Knut Netz, Germany's gift to Asian womanhood, "there's an interesting new hotel we should try on our way to the Portopia Association meeting in Kobe next Tuesday."

"Vot's the difference vere ve stay," he

replied with Bavarian-accented scepticism.

"To me, it's chust a place for sleeping."

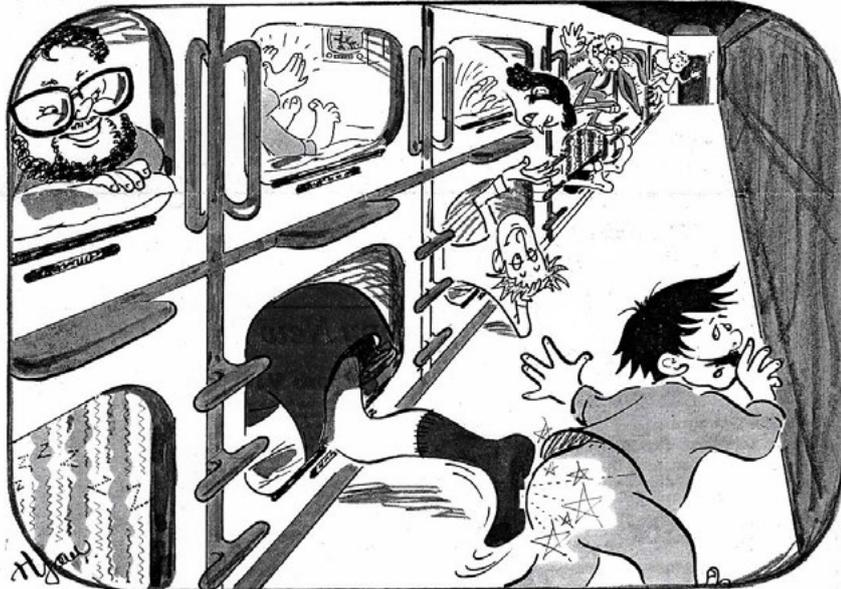
"But this place is different—there aren't any rooms, only capsules."

"Only vat?"

"Capsules. Caves. Little holes in the wall. Instead of a room, you get a compartment about one meter wide, one meter high and two meters deep."

"It sounds to me more like chail. Did I effer tell you about the time I was arrested in India on suspicion of spying for Pakistan? Der chail vas filthy!"

(Continued on Page 4)



▲
The original capsule story, *Tokyo Weekender*, January 15th 1981

"Small Moments of Joy Department: It's nice to realize that out there somewhere, someone is reading the stuff we go to the trouble to have set in type, put onto page form, hoisted onto our old rattletrap flatbed press and rumble off onto the street for you nice folks." After explaining that the capsule hotel story had been covered by Urban Lehner in *The Wall Street Journal*, which cited both *Weekender* and Schreiber, he concluded, "Nice to be noticed, as we say." [Or show scanned article from *Tokyo Weekender*]

Forty years have flown by since this humble scribe was credited with a world "beat" for his humorous review of Capsule Inn Osaka. My story appeared in the *Weekender* of January 16 1981 under the headline "Compartment-size rooms the 2001 item of the future? Roving reporter finds 'capsule hotel' Osaka backs 'hutch' theory."

Evolution: bidets and LCDs

An estimated 300 capsule hotels currently operate in Japan, and over the past four decades they have evolved and diversified to meet the varied needs of the marketplace. A December 2017 study of 788 travelers (363 males, 425 females), published by Nippon Legal Information Co., Ltd., noted that one respondent in four had stayed in a capsule hotel.

The top reasons given for their selection were low price (51%); missed the last train departure (19%); was located close to one's workplace (14%); and stayed there out of curiosity (7%). Nine percent of respondents said they felt staying in one carried an element of risk. Other negatives included lack of a room they could secure by locking (41%); more likely possibility of theft occurring (26%); guests could stay without showing ID (11%); used by large numbers of people (10%); and used by many foreigners (8%).

In addition to becoming longer and wider over the years, the facilities have undergone improvements to meet the expectations of new generations of travelers. Tiny monochrome TVs have given way to larger LCD TV screens. Lockable security boxes have been added. Laundromat facilities have been made available, and in the common restrooms, "Washlet" warm-water bidet-type commodes are now standard. Wi-fi connections and battery charging terminals are, of course, ubiquitous.

The general manager of sleep capsule sales at Kotobuki Seating pointed out that from 2013 his company shifted from use of FRP (fiber-reinforced plastic) to panels.

"This eliminated electrical wiring tasks," he told me. "So now an assembled unit can just be plugged in, without the need for electrical wiring work." The result was to speed up the construction process considerably, so that the average time from initial order of from 100 to 200 capsules to opening for business has been reduced to as little as 80 days. The only other requirement is a ceiling height of at least 2.4 meters.

These days, an overwhelming percentage of bookings are said to come via the internet, so multilingual web sites (and multilingual hotel staff) have also become a must.

While guests are discouraged from eating in bed, many places provide a cosy social room where they can consume boxed meals or instant noodles brought in from outside. Another welcome development is that guests are no longer required to check out each morning and check in again later in the day, as was the practice in the early days of the capsule. Today guests can book for an extended stay in the same capsule, thanks to a secure space for stowing luggage below the sleeping platform.

One rule that has not changed since their inception is strict separation of the sexes. Sleep capsules for males and females are typically situated on separate floors and, to the best of this writer's knowledge, capsules are limited to a single occupant. Small children of either gender are generally not welcomed. Capsule hotels are many things to many people, but love hotels they are not.

FORTY YEARS ON: THE MARCH OF THE CAPSULE

The origins of capsules

The original “capsule” concept evolved from a post-war Japanese architectural movement called “Metabolism” that fused ideas about architectural megastructures with those of organic biological growth. These concepts were tested by students from the architect Kenzo Tange’s MIT studio and put on display at the 1960 Tokyo World Design Conference.

Another architect, Kisho Kurokawa, designer of the controversial Nakagin Capsule Tower erected in 1972 in Tokyo’s Ginza district, personally oversaw the design of the first capsules, as developed by Kotobuki Seating, Co. Ltd.

An increase in taxi fares is said to have played a key role in opening the original capsule hotel, the Capsule Inn Osaka.

In 1979, taxi companies in all major cities increased their start-up fares from ¥50 to ¥380, meaning both overtime workers and late-night revelers with homes in the distant suburbs faced higher outlays if they missed the last train. For an affordable ¥1,900 per night, the Capsule Inn offered thrifty Osakans a sensible option to taking a cab or spending the night in a regular hotel.

The story behind the story

From 1978, working as an in-house copywriter for Aiwa, a manufacturer of stereo equipment, I began contributing to the *Weekender*, a weekly foreign community freesheet distributed around the Kanto region.

The *Weekender* had some wonderfully entertaining regular columnists, not least society editor Bill Hersey (c.f. “glitter people”), entertainment editor James Bailey, desk editor Bob Cutts and Carl Hansen, who contributed using such nommes de plume as Danny Callaghan and W. Somerset Watanabe. Appearing each Friday, *The Weekender* was a great read. And you couldn’t beat the price.

To his everlasting credit, Corky ran the *Weekender* as an open shop – anyone with a good story was welcome to contribute, and lots of aspiring young writers did just that. Working with then-editor Cathy O’Brien in 1978 I covered the establishment of Japan’s first antismoking organization, described my experience of fasting for 10 days at a Buddhist temple in Hachioji and flew down to Okinawa to cover the prefecture’s July 30 changeover to driving on the left.

My offerings competed with those of a young New Zealander named Martin Roth, an unintentionally funny and fearless scribe who had covered the marriage-swapping phenomenon in Japan and many other esoteric topics.

One day I was taking lunch at the coffee shop in the basement of the Aiwa office in Bunkyo Ward where I worked, flipping through *Shukan Gendai* magazine as I downed a humongous dish of spaghetti when I came across a photo essay introducing Japan’s first capsule hotel, the Capsule Inn Osaka. I hadn’t seen it covered anywhere in the English-language press. Opportunity came knocking and I heard it loud and clear.

The triple finagle

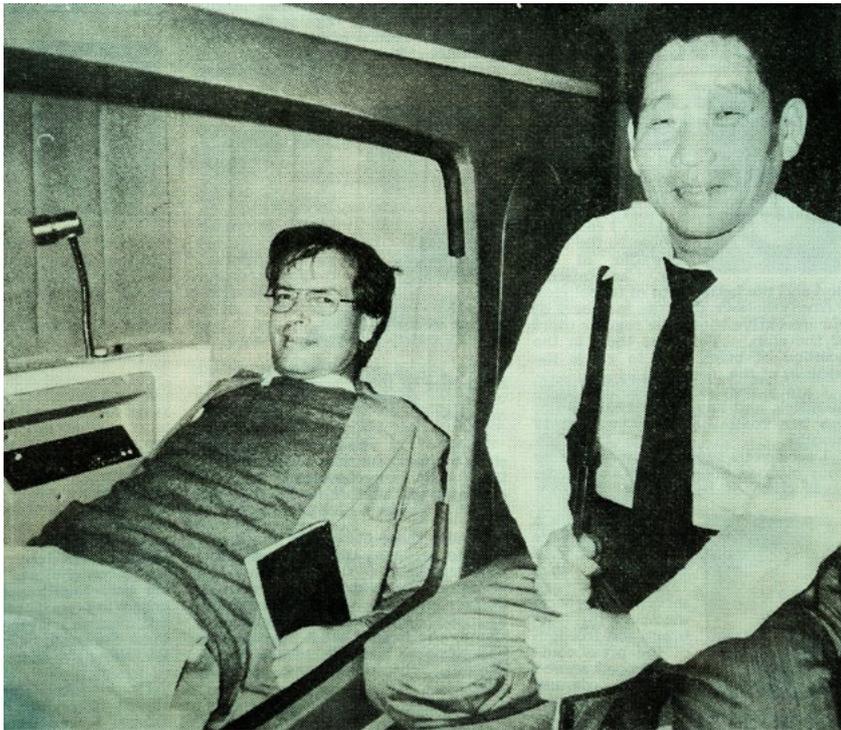
But to put out a free publication Alexander was forced to run a tight ship. Maximum remuneration for articles was ¥30,000, and out-of-pocket expenses were almost never reimbursed. So to rustle up expenses for my round trip shinkansen to Kansai, I agreed to produce three articles: on the upcoming Portopia Exposition in Kobe; the Capsule Inn Osaka; and a visit to an obscure company in Kyoto called Nintendo to learn more about an odd, hand-held electronic game it had recently launched.

Knut Netz, a congenial German friend, came along for a ride in the capsule. Kimiya Ohara, an Osaka-based CPA who did the book-keeping for the retail concessions that Knut and I managed at the Osaka World Exposition, reserved our spaces escorted us to the the Capsule Inn Osaka, a short walk from JR Umeda Station. Kimiya also shot the photographs of Knut and I that you see in these pages.

Interviewing the Inn’s manager, I scribbled pages of notes and snapped dozens of photos. The story wrote itself, especially Capsule Inn Osaka’s unique check-in procedure:

First, you lock your shoes in a little numbered shoebox at the entrance. The shoe key is exchanged for your locker key. Then you undress (putting on an orange bathrobe) and swap the locker key for a numbered plastic wristband. When you take a bath, you exchange the wristband for a key you wear around your neck on a string. Bath attendant returns the wristband in exchange for the locker key upon exiting, and so on, ad infinitum. [So] ...you either pay the charges and return your locker key, or

FORTY YEARS ON: THE MARCH OF THE CAPSULE



▲ Capsule entrepreneur Kuniyase Ase shows FCCJ's Don Kirk how to make his expenses go further at the First Inn, Mitaka, 1981.

tiptoe out into the clammy Osaka morning in your stocking feet.

The tone of the article was greatly augmented by Knut's impressions of his night in the capsule, such as this exchange:

"How'd you sleep?"

"Ach, not so vell. They shut off der air-conditioning. I'm then almost suffocating. Und it wasn't any two meters long. I'm vun meter 86 und I couldn't all der vay my leks stretch out."

Going viral

It's hard to say exactly why some stories grow legs and go viral while others do not, but the sleep capsule story was preceded by two major Japan-related developments in the fields of international diplomacy and mass entertainment.

First, about two years before the article's appearance, the infamous memo referring to Japanese as being "a nation of workaholics living in rabbit hutches", ascribed to the late EU commissioner Sir Roy Denman, was still fresh in people's minds.

Next, in September 1980, the TV miniseries *Shogun* was broadcast in the United States on NBC TV. Boasting the distinction of being the only American television production to date to have been filmed on location entirely in Japan, it scored an average rating of 26.3, the second highest in U.S. TV history after "Roots".

Sales of the James Clavell's novel in paperback rocketed to 2 million copies before the end of 1980, and *Shogun* was credited with bringing about a general shift in American awareness of Japanese culture.

Gaining traction

One of the first of the "hordes" of newsmen to follow up on my story was Urban Lehner, then-Tokyo bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*. With the kind assistance of *Asia Times*' Bradley Martin I tracked down Mr. Lehner, who was happy to recall the story. In addition to the WSJ it later appeared in Lehner's 1997 memoir, *Let's Talk Turkey (About Japanese Turkeys) And Other Tales from the Asian Wall Street Journal*.

"Not only did Mark's piece give me a terrific story idea for the Journal," Lehner recalled in an e-mail, "it gave me an irresistible quote - that bit about giving 'this pillbox Hilton four stars for cleanliness, three stars for efficiency and one meteorite for comfort.' I could have kissed Mark. The capsule-inn saga was one of my first front-page stories from Tokyo and it got me off to a great start."

Among the others I recall giving credit were Hong Kong's *Asia Week* magazine and Germany's *Suddeutsche Zeitung*. The U.S. edition of *Newsweek* (June 22, 1981) namechecked both this author and the *Weekender*, and also quoted the manager of the New Rubia, another capsule hotel in Osaka, as saying "I haven't heard any complaints, maybe because most of the guests come in quite drunk and just collapse on the bed."

The *Number 1 Shimbun* assigned Don Kirk ("a freelancer with more strings than Mantovani") and Hamish McDonald of the *Sydney Morning Herald* to cover another establishment, the First Inn, located in the Tokyo suburb of Mitaka.

Prodded about rabbit hutches, First Inn's operator Kuniyase Ase offered the FCCJ team a remarkably prescient view that foresaw the bubble economy that would inflate remorselessly as the decade went on: "The way land prices are going, if we are living in rabbit hutches now, we will be living in rat cages in the future."

FUN FACT

An unscientific search shows that Tokyo alone boasts some 110 capsule-type hotels, or approximately one-third of those in the country. Faced with a long, late train journey or taxi ride, members and guests seeking inexpensive overnight accommodations in easy proximity to the FCCJ might consider the Capsule Value Kanda, located at 1 Chome-4-5 Kanda Kajicho, Chiyoda-ku or the Hotel Owl Tokyo Shinbashi at 3 Chome-15-7 Shinbashi, Minato-ku.

● Mark Schreiber currently writes the "Big in Japan" and "Bilingual" columns for *The Japan Times*.

BOOK REVIEW

Saul J. Takahashi (ed.) *Civil and Political Rights in Japan: A Tribute to Sir Nigel Rodley*

(ROUTLEDGE, 2019)

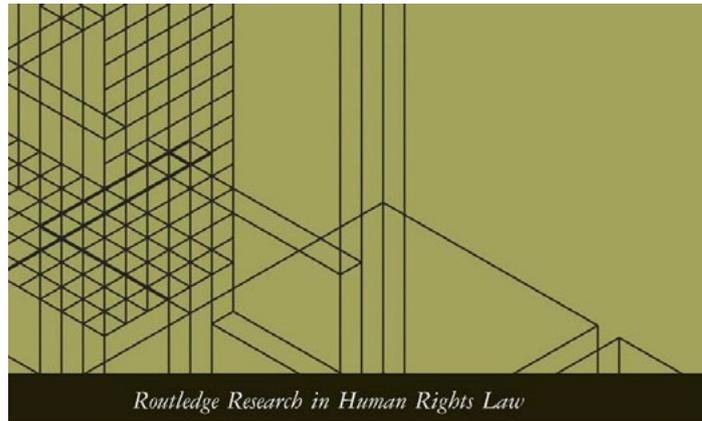
LAWRENCE REPETA

Month after month, year after year, throughout the long rule of Shinzo Abe, we constantly read of LDP plans to revise Japan's Constitution. As a fan of individual rights protections, I was especially shocked back in 2012 when an LDP pamphlet declared "The current Constitution includes some provisions based on the western theory of natural rights. We believe these provisions should be revised." The LDP prescribed a regime in which individual rights would take a distant back seat to expanded government power. Fortunately, none of the changes were adopted. Now that Abe is gone, maybe it's time to move on.

Putting aside the revision debate for a moment, we might take a look at another body of law nearly as important to Japan as the Constitution itself. This is a series of international human rights treaties ratified by the Diet beginning in 1979. Protections for individual rights by Constitution and international treaty are both grounded in the "western theory of natural rights" and key language is nearly the same, but no one can claim the treaties were "imposed" on Japan: all were ratified by Diets controlled by the LDP itself. These treaties constitute binding law in Japan.

This new collection of essays edited by Saul J. Takahashi places treaty rights at center stage and shows how they can be applied to controversial topics. Each of the twelve essays given here addresses a core human rights issue. This rich collection relies on the deep expertise of the authors, many of whom have worked in international organizations that investigate human rights issues, including United Nations bodies. Takahashi himself has served in such roles in Tokyo, London and the Middle East. Combining scholarship with experience, the authors show how specific rules of international law can be applied to concrete problems.

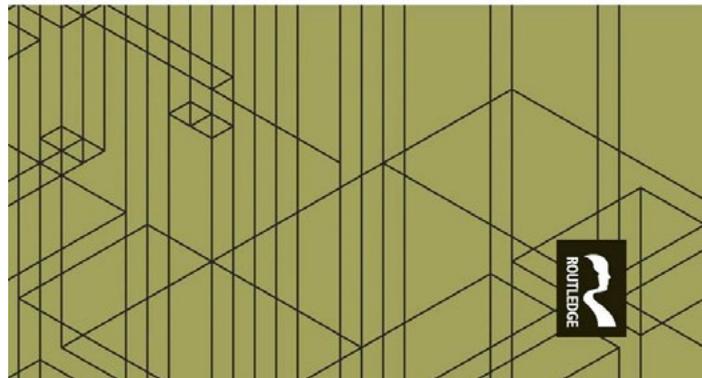
Three of the book's twelve chapters concern women's rights. One author poses the

*Routledge Research in Human Rights Law*

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS IN JAPAN

A TRIBUTE TO SIR NIGEL RODLEY

Edited by
Saul J. Takahashi



fundamental question "Why is gender equality advancing at such glacial speed?" Her disappointment is rooted in laws that feature shining rhetoric that call for equal treatment but fail to create mandatory rules with penalties for non-compliance. Another chapter reports on discriminatory rules embedded in the Meiji-era Civil Code which the LDP-dominated Diet refuses to change. A third chapter traces the long and difficult fight to gain recognition, apology, and compensation for the victims of wartime sexual violence who were labeled "comfort women".

BOOK REVIEW



ASIACENTRE.ORG

▲
Saul J. Takahashi
is Professor of
Human Rights
and Peace
Studies at
Osaka Jogakuin
University.

“It is ironic that though the 2016 criminal justice reform was triggered by a series of cases of wrongful convictions as well as prosecutorial misconduct, the reform ended up strengthening prosecutors.”

We all know of the special burden shouldered by the Okinawan people, unwilling hosts to a vast US military presence for more than seven decades. In this volume, readers learn of claims of excessive force by the police against protesters and of the “rules of engagement” established by international law. We also learn of the ordeal of Hiroji Yamashiro, leader of demos against the Henoko base expansion, who spent five months in a Naha jail after serial arrests on trivial charges. Lengthy detentions like this, including such conditions as the complete denial of visits by family members, clearly violate Japan’s international law obligations.

Two other chapters also feature aggressive police action. One describes the hijack of reforms attempted in the wake of several heavily reported wrongful convictions and the infamous Muraki case, in which a prosecutor was caught altering evidence in his attempt to secure a conviction. The original intent of the reform effort was to limit coerced confessions, but the result was a mixed bag. The author concludes, “It is ironic that though the 2016 criminal justice reform was triggered by a series of cases of wrongful convictions as well as prosecutorial misconduct, the reform ended up strengthening prosecutors.” Many were especially dismayed to see that the “reforms” included expanded wiretapping authority for the police and new plea-bargaining powers for the prosecutors.

Another chapter describes comprehensive police surveillance of Japan’s Muslim community as “an operation of colossal proportions.” Secret police actions were exposed in documents released online after the 2008 G-8 meeting in Hokkaido. Police agents were stationed at mosques, halal shops and other places, followed individuals to their homes, obtained names and addresses from alien registration records and personal information from commercial sources, and compiled all this in databases that profile more than 70,000 persons.

The list of individual rights violated by such a blatant program of ethno-religious profiling is lengthy, but it begins with the most fundamental rule of human rights laws, “non-discrimination”, one guaranteed by several human rights treaties as well as by the Constitution. Seventeen surveillance victims sued the police, but the courts turned them away, their final appeal rejected by Japan’s Supreme Court on May 31, 2016. The Court’s failure to rein in the police is a shocking black mark on its human rights record.

Other chapters describe international standards for compensation of people displaced by disasters, like the “Fukushima diaspora,” measures adopted to address discrimination against Burakumin, the forbidding legal structure that confronts refugees and other non-elite foreigners who seek to reside in Japan, hate speech, and other important issues.

This volume should become a standard reference for writers concerned with the plight of women, minorities, and others who do not enjoy the favored status of mainstream members of Japanese society. It is worth noting that this collection is dedicated to the late Sir Nigel Rodley, a lifelong champion of human rights who served as a member of the UN Human Rights Committee from 2001 to 2016.

● Lawrence Repeta is a former law professor at Meiji University and a member of the Washington State Bar Association. He is best known in Japan as the plaintiff in a suit that expanded court reporting beyond press club members and has spoken at the Club on multiple occasions. An excerpt from his chapter in the volume “Press Freedom in Japan” (Kingston ed.) was published in the February 2017 edition of *Number 1 Shimbun*.

RECOLLECTIONS 1

Two seasons in 1970 with Takashi Oka, 1924-2020

BARRY SHLACHTER

If any general statement can sum up Takashi Oka, who died December 9, aged 96, it would be that his was a long life well lived. A man of many talents, all cloaked by a gentle modesty, Tak spent six decades chronicling some of the most consequential developments of the second half of the last century in Asia, the Middle East and Europe for *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The New York Times*, and was instrumental in launching the Japanese-language edition of *Newsweek*.

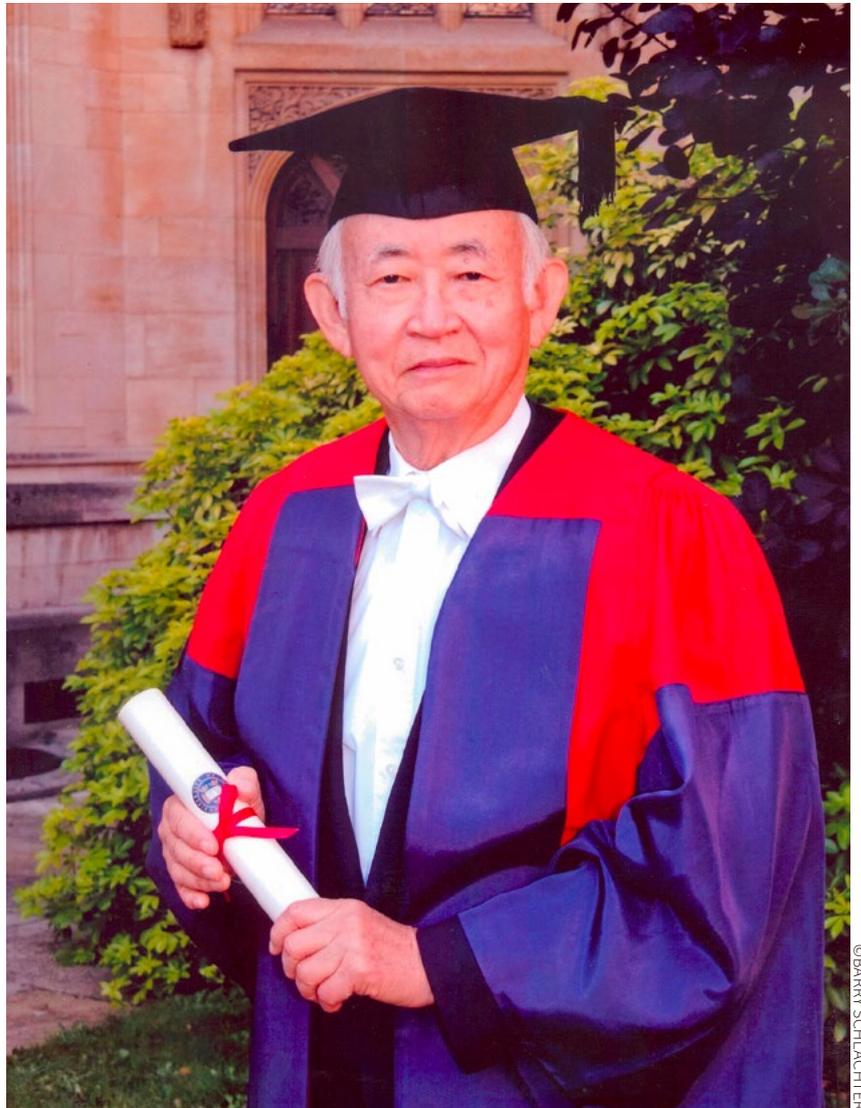
At ease in different cultures, he navigated rapidly changing, often dangerous situations, and then deftly explained them in a way that American readers could grasp. A singular human being, Tak had been the youngest interpreter at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, aged 21, taught English to Americans at a Midwestern college, earned a Masters in Chinese studies from Harvard and, at age 84, completed a long-postponed DPhil from Oxford University.

Early days

Tak had his first encounter with Tokyo foreign correspondents during the early days of the U.S. occupation, when *The Christian Science Monitor's* Gordon Walker took him on as an interpreter on reporting trips. It was Walker who filed the scoop on the 1947 Constitution, with a dispatch telling the world that Japan's pacifist postwar constitution had been dictated by a secret committee on MacArthur's staff. History repeated itself in less spectacular fashion in June 1970 when Tak, by then the *New York Times* Tokyo bureau chief, hired me - a 21-year-old exchange student on summer break - to run errands while the office manager was on maternity leave. I had been doing some freelance work for the *Japan Times* and the *Associated Press*, and I'd always wanted to be a reporter, and now Takashi Oka was making it happen.

Listen and learn

This was a crash course in working journalism. I listened and learned to this master of the craft interviewing in English and Japanese, noted his



©BARRY SHLACHTER

careful accumulation of information and the way he fashioned and polished everything for the final dispatch. Eavesdropping as he built rapport with a source, Tak would repeatedly but very casually interject, "Really?" letting the interviewee know that while Tak was listening intently, he was not completely clear on a particular detail. In this way he kept people talking, kept them in their story.

Tak's ease in shifting from English to Japanese gave me a whopping inferiority complex, and I told him so.

"Barry," he said, "don't you know I was raised bilingually?"

And he was, Tak's mother was the daughter of a career diplomat with postings in Canada



In his 84th year, Takashi Oka was awarded a DPhil from Oxford University for his doctoral thesis on Ichirō Ozawa.

TWO SEASONS IN 1970 WITH TAKASHI OKA, 1924-2020



©BARRY SCHLACHTER

▲
Takashi Oka,
(standing, middle)
and other interpreters
at GCHQ, ca.1947

Tak's ease in shifting from English to Japanese gave me a whopping inferiority complex, and I told him so. "Barry," he said, "don't you know I was raised bilingually?"

and elsewhere: multilingualism was in his DNA. Takashi Oka had a working command of French, Mandarin and Russian, and enough Vietnamese and Thai to get around and chat people up.

Tak trusted me enough to share his frustrations with editors, handy preparation for the far-flung postings that were to come my way. One day, he showed me a cable from the foreign editor, Jim Greenfield, admonishing him for using "too many Japanese names." Tak had cited just three: the leader of the Japanese Socialist Party and the heads of two rival factions. It would have been impossible to have written the piece without the major players.

June to November

As that summer stretched into fall, I was being sent all over Japan to take photographs or do spade work and set up interviews. The *Times* ran my photo of Leonard Bernstein and Seiji Ozawa cheering their respective orchestras as they played baseball. One night I was dispatched to watch Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland perform an anti-war play near the Tachikawa Air Base. A fuming, half-naked starlet threw me out of her dressing room after Sutherland pranked me by insisting Fonda was expecting to be interviewed.

Tak had covered the Soviet Union in the mid-1960s for the *Monitor* as its Moscow correspondent. I remember on one trip he began talking about what he could have become if he had been born a Soviet, speculating on what sort of career he might have pursued that would have been fulfilling, while allowing

him to retain some intellectual honesty. His conclusion? "I think I would have become an anthropologist." To a twenty-something from Cleveland, Ohio, the very fact that he would even consider such matters, let alone share them with me, broadened my horizons. Tak made me think.

Another unexpected move by Tak was to organize my first (and only) geisha party, thinking to broaden my cultural horizons. We were in the town of Fuji covering a pollution problem caused by a huge paper mill. Needless to say, my geisha night in Fuji came nowhere close to the Hollywood ideal. I had not realized till then that geisha got old. These women in heavily silk brocaded kimono had a good decade on Tak, who carefully translated their seemly chatter and their songs over a pleasant, chaste, *ryokan* dinner.

Passing the story

Tak was the consummate professional but he could always surprise. In *The Memoirs of Takashi Oka*, published privately just weeks before his death, he did something that I could not imagine a competitive reporter would do, especially in the restricted environment of Moscow. A Dutch writer/translator named Karel van het Reve had managed to get hold of an essay on intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union by the famed physicist-turned-dissident Andrei Sakharov. Reve, Tak explained, wanted him to get his paper to run it. "I recommended the *New York Times* - over my own newspaper - because I knew the impact would be greater than if the story had run in the *Monitor*..." And so it was. Tak gave the report and background to a very pleased *Times* correspondent, Henry Kamm.

The episode didn't surprise me. I learned a great deal from Tak that summer and autumn, growing to appreciate how he never seemed to lose his naturally courtly manner, his calm mien. I might never have emulated that, but I learned how the tough-guy or know-it-all approach of some colleagues never seemed to work as well in the field. If he had one failing, it was his inability to see through some of the outwardly charming but extraordinarily spiteful personalities at the FCCJ, most notably the one-and-only ABC correspondent-turned-lobbyist Craig Spence, of whom Tak remarked, "Nice guy. Knew him in Saigon."

TWO SEASONS IN 1970 WITH TAKASHI OKA, 1924-2020



©BARRY SCHLACHTER



▲
Top: Yukio Mishima, taken on a day off in Shimoda with his family and the author, summer 1970. Right: Mishima's Shield Society (Tatenokai) followers, stunned and leaderless on hearing the news of his *seppuku* November 25 1970 (*New York Times* November 26 1970).

“The insights absorbed from Tak that extended summer would never have come to me in a classroom, nor his example as a gentlemanly, consummate journalist – an example I have always tried to emulate.”

Spence, who would occasionally spew racism at the correspondents' table, [ended it all through self-defenestration from the Boston Ritz Carlton after being exposed for running a gay escort service that offered clients after-hour visits to the White House.](#)

Directions to the unforgettable

That summer of 1970, the British *Sunday Times* magazine ran a cover profile of the novelist Yukio Mishima, perennially speculated as a Nobel Prize choice. Mishima kept bugging the office to ask when his 50 copies were arriving. When they did, Tak sent me to a resort in Shimoda with a stack of magazines, and I ended up spending a long day with the disarmingly charismatic, seemingly cosmopolitan writer and his family, leaving me with a completely erroneous impression of this phenomenally gifted novelist, but fanatical nationalist.

In late November, on the eve of my return to college, I stopped at the *Times* bureau to say goodbye. Before I got a word out, Tak instructed: “Grab your camera, Barry. Mishima has taken over the *Jieitai* [Japanese Self-Defense Force] base in Ichigaya.”

Perhaps it was adrenalin, but my Japanese comprehension soared over the next few hours as I grasped nearly everything, from shouts to whispered asides and rumors, and relayed what I heard by phone while Tak dictated the story on deadline to New York. He relates in his memoir that I kept jumping up to see over the frosted

glass partition to the room where Mishima held a general hostage. After his attempt to mount a coup was met by soldiers' jeers, the novelist performed the samurai's supreme sacrifice, disemboweling himself followed by decapitation by a follower, a final chapter perhaps more dramatic than any of his fiction.

Tak writes in his memoir that he was grateful for not having to witness the gruesome scene. I myself had mentally buried much of the detail until reading the book. Clearly remembered, however, is my photographing Mishima's gray-uniformed, Shield Society student protégés at the moment they were told of his death.

It made the *Times* front page. A week later I was an ordinary undergraduate again, but with a difference. The insights absorbed from Tak that extended summer would never have come to me in a classroom, nor his example as a gentlemanly, consummate journalist – an example I have always tried to emulate.

Survivors of my extraordinarily gifted, generous mentor include Tak's wife Hiroko (“Hiro”), his daughters Megumi (“Mimi”) and Sakuya (“Saya”), and his grandchildren Kazuma Makihara, Miyé Lamprière and Morio Lamprière.

● Barry Schlachter was a foreign correspondent in Asia and Africa for The Associated Press, returning on a Nieman Fellowship to Harvard. He then worked as a reporter and editor for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. <https://www.barryschlachter.net>

RECOLLECTIONS 2

Takashi Oka, 1924-2020: a true friend, a great mentor

DANIEL SNEIDER

It was my good fortune to become a colleague of Takashi Oka in what turned out to be his final stint as a foreign correspondent.

I arrived in Tokyo in September of 1985 in the wake of the Plaza Accord, a young reporter with a handful of stringer deals in hand, among them to write for *The Christian Science Monitor*. The *Monitor* did not have a Tokyo bureau: Takashi parachuted in now and then from Beijing. But in 1985, he had become editor of the newly launched Japanese-language edition of *Newsweek*.

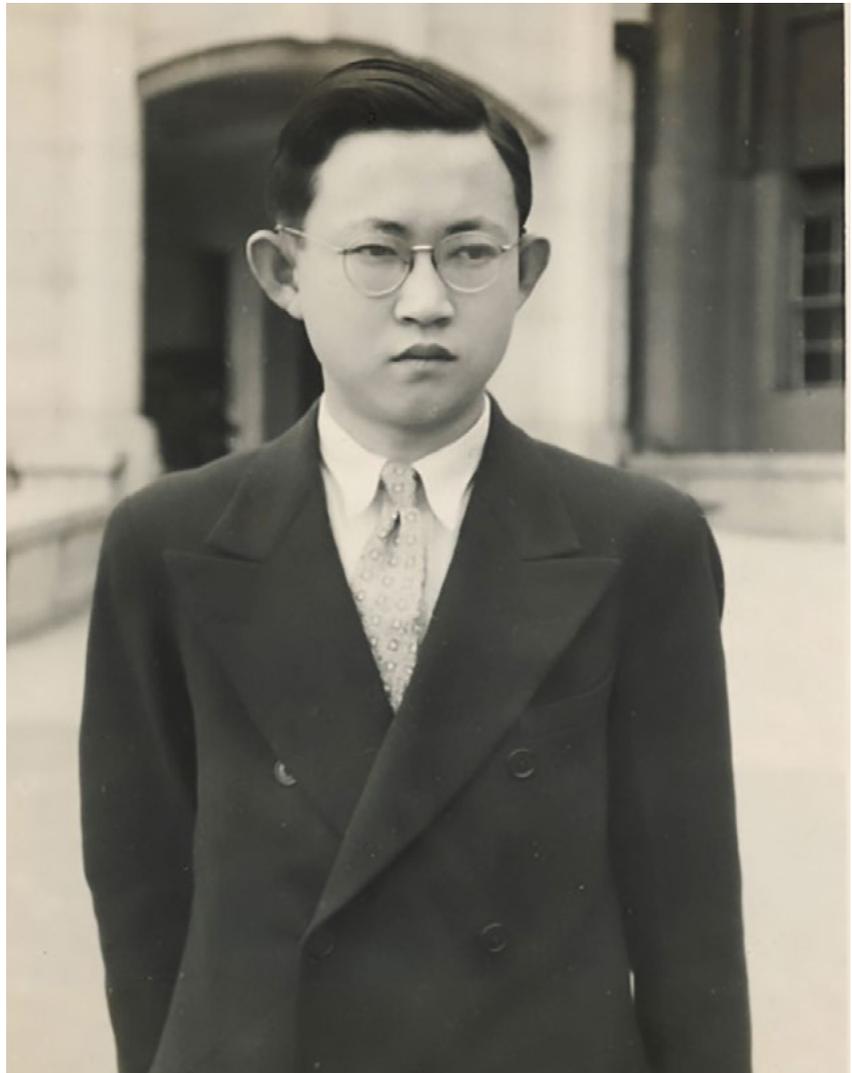
Takashi Oka was a legendary figure in the world of the *Monitor*, hailing from a Japanese family that embraced the exotic faith of Christian Science in the pre-WWII period. From an early age, he was given an American education and throughout his life remained dedicated to acting as a bridge between the land of his birth and what became his adopted country.

The man from *The Monitor*

As a journalist, Takashi was a devoted supporter of the *Monitor*, a national daily founded in 1908 by Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist, in response to the sensation and scandal-tainted 'yellow' journalism of the day.

The paper had a well-deserved reputation for providing accurate and balanced reporting, with a bias toward explanation and a deep hostility to sensationalism. While the Church rarely directly interfered in the content of the paper, it did reflect the theology of looking for solutions rather than problems, what it called 'purposeful reporting'. *The Monitor* was a uniquely global paper, reflecting the worldwide membership of the Church, which did not filter news reporting through the narrow lens of what might or might not interest Americans, although they were the largest part of its readership.

As a Christian Scientist, Takashi Oka remained loyal to the *Monitor* even while pursuing an illustrious career as a foreign correspondent. In the late 1960s, he left for a stint at the *New York Times* as their Tokyo bureau chief, but returned to the *Monitor*, drawn back by its more reflective approach.



©OKA FAMILY

Takashi's venture with *Newsweek* proved equally brief, and somewhat turbulent, as he was caught between the competing demands of the Americans and their Japanese partners. After two years, he returned to *Monitor*, where he re-established a full bureau, staffed by the two of us (by then I had become a staff correspondent, unusual for a non-Christian Scientist).

Monitoring Japan and Korea

Takashi and I covered both Japan and Korea, and I ended up spending the greater part of my time in Seoul, covering the uprising against the military regime, the first free elections and the 1988 Olympics. Takashi loved the drama of Korea but found much to write about in Japan

▲
At the main entrance to the International Military Tribunal Far East, ca.1946, just graduated and now an official interpreter, Tak Oka at 22.

TAKASHI OKA, 1924-2020: A TRUE FRIEND, A GREAT MENTOR



©BARRY SCHLACHTER

▲
With *Monitor* editors
Charlotte Saikowski,
John Hughes, Geoffrey
Godsell, John Allan May.

in a newsy era packed with trade tensions with the U.S., Japan's bubble economy, and what looked at the time like the beginnings of real political change.

The foreign media in Japan in those days, particularly the Americans, were split between those who saw Japan mainly as an economic superpower and rival and those who were more absorbed by a country in the midst of rapid change as it re-emerged as a leading global actor. Some were prone to lecturing Japan on the failures of its society, writing stories about outrageous supermarket prices for fruit and Japan's plot to buy up America. To many, Japan seemed stuck, incapable of real change, locked into a rigid hierarchy.

Takashi did not share that view, taking a longer perspective, reminding me of how Japan had evolved from the prewar period, through the war years, the Occupation and the post-war recovery. It was a perspective I easily embraced from my own childhood in Japan during the 1950s and 60s as the son of an American diplomat. But Takashi had seen

enough of the dark side of Japanese history to be wary of its flaws as well.

More broadly, Takashi approached foreign reporting with the goal of putting the reader in the shoes of the other and avoiding the perils of mirror imaging. He warned me against the confrontational style of interviewing. Takashi preferred to let his subjects tell their stories, not just to seek a quote to affirm a pre-conceived idea. He was a practitioner of the craft of writing, a lover of a great lead and a strong kicker.

Escaping the bonds of print

During the late 1980s, Takashi and his wife Hiro became involved in what proved to be an ill-fated but, in retrospect, prescient attempt to leap into the digital age. The Christian Science Publishing Society, the corporate parent, wanted to escape the limits of the printed paper, which was distributed nationally through the postal system, forcing us to have early deadlines. It meant we could not cover late breaking news easily, though that also

TAKASHI OKA, 1924-2020: A TRUE FRIEND, A GREAT MENTOR



©BARRY SCHLACHTER

▲
With Hiro in Tibet in front
of the Potala Palace.

gave us a more analytical approach. Before most other papers, they began to explore electronic text delivery systems and decided to create a television channel and MonitoRadio, broadcast both on public radio networks and by shortwave globally.

Our leadership championed the power of 'synergy,' imagining reporters operating in multiple media at the same time. A large television bureau was set up in Tokyo, managed by Hiro, with Takashi as the chief correspondent. I had the radio beat and we divided newspaper coverage between us. The concept was ahead of its time.

Takashi jumped into television despite having a charmingly low-key personality. But the execution proved daunting: Takashi and I learned that reporting for a visual medium, or for an audio one, required different approaches than for print. Crossing between media was sometimes impossible, although print and radio worked together more smoothly than

TV. And most of all, television required massive amounts of money and personnel. In the end, the experiment crashed before it could prove economically viable - television only lasted four years, radio somewhat longer - and the Church's publishing arm never fully recovered from the huge losses.

These recollections would be very incomplete if they were to neglect two other parts of Takashi's life. First, he was a passionate gourmet, with a highly developed taste for wine - his only visible departure from his Christian Science faith. And as a devoted husband to Hiro and father to his two daughters, Mimi and Saya, Takashi never let his work get in the way of family ties.

Takashi and I parted ways when I left Tokyo in 1990, heading to Moscow where I lived and worked in the same apartment and office that Takashi himself had occupied back in the 1960s. Around the same time, Takashi reinvented himself yet again, true to the spirit of his upbringing and sense of mission as a bridge between people and nations. He became a translator for and aide to Ozawa Ichiro, who had just broken with the Liberal Democratic Party, bringing conservative rule to an end and enacting an electoral reform that Ozawa hoped would lead to a two-party system in Japan.

Takashi became a valued aide to Ozawa, assisting him for a decade. Then, in his final incarnation, Takashi earned his DPhil at Oxford University, where his thesis was published as the first political biography of Ozawa in English. When he showed me the manuscript in its early stages, it was heavy with academic theory - write like a reporter, I told him. The book is a bit of a compromise on that front, but it offers still valuable insights into the politics of Japan.

In his last years, Takashi compiled a personal memoir, published just before his death with the Christian Science Church, telling the story of his remarkable life, beginning in the Taisho era. I count myself lucky to have shared just a summer and an autumn of that life, and to have learned from them.

● Daniel Sneider was a correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor* in Tokyo, Moscow and San Francisco, an editor and foreign affairs columnist for *The San Jose Mercury News*, and Associate Director of the Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University. He currently lectures at Stanford University.

CLUB NEWS

New members

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



HARUKO WATANABE is Representative Director, President and CEO of American Home Assurance Co. Ltd.



AKIKO MATSUSHITA is President of ConocoPhillips, Japan.



KIYOTAKA OKUMOTO is Executive Vice-President of Nomura Co. Ltd.



TATSUYA SUDO is Officer & Division Director of the Global Business Division of Nomura Co. Ltd.



SHOICHI WATANABE is President of Nasu Bessou Keibi Hoshu.



TATSUYA YOSHIDA is General Manager of the Corporate Communications Department of Mitsubishi Corporation.

REGULAR MEMBERS



YASUHIRO IHARA has been with Kyodo News since 1983. He is now their Executive Director.



FUMIHIRO KITAYAMA joined the *Yomiuri Shimbun* in 1990, specialising in economic affairs.



TAKAAKI TAKAI is the Managing Director of NHK WORLD-JAPAN, with a background in TV documentaries for NHK.

CLUB NEWS

New in the library

1



Against the Storm: How Japanese Printworkers Resisted the Military Regime, 1935 - 1945
 Masao Sugiura; ed. by Kaye Broadbent;
 trans. by Kaye Broadbent; Mana Sato
 Interventions

2



Lockheed gigoku: Kakuei o homuri kyoaku o nogasu
 ロッキード疑獄：角栄ヲ葬リ巨悪ヲ逃ス
 Mikio Haruna
 KADOKAWA
 Gift from Mikio Haruna

3



The View from Breasts Pocket Mountain: A Memoir
 Karen Hill Anton
 Senyume Press
 Gift from Karen Hill Anton

4



Japan
 Hans Sautter
 Frederking & Thaler
 Gift from Hans Sautter

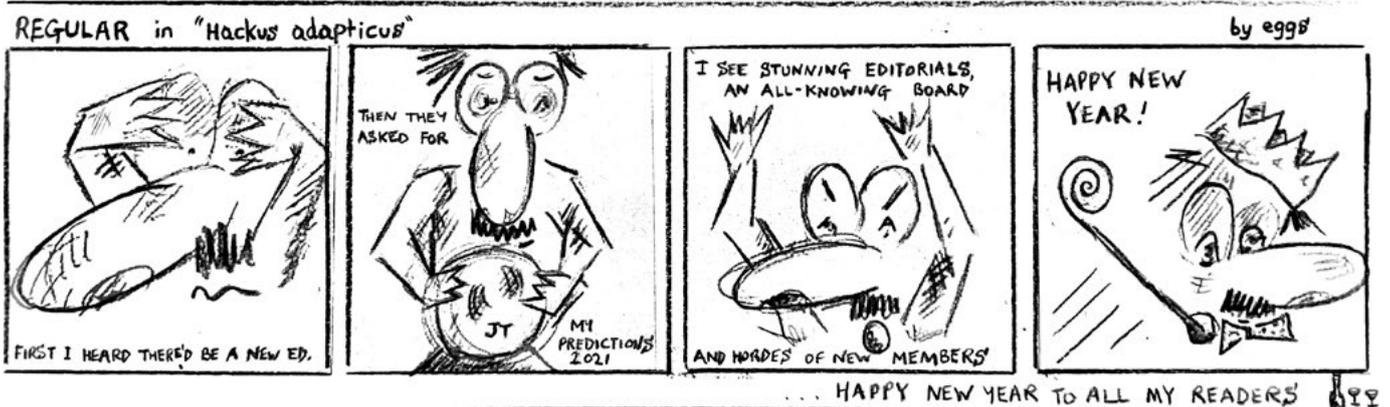
Join the Film Committee...

On Wednesday, January 13 at 6:30 pm for a sneak preview of *The Pledge to Megumi*, a timely docufiction about Megumi Yokota both before and during her abduction by North Korea, with scenes recreated based on information provided by returnees, as well as scenes of Shigeru and Sakie Yokota's non-stop efforts through the years to raise consciousness among the Japanese public as well as the government. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has made the abductions of the 1970s/80s his administration's "top priority", and vowed to do whatever it takes to reunite the remaining abductees with their aging parents as soon as possible. Sakie Yokota, who has discussed the issue with three US presidents, has graciously consented to join us for the Q&A session, along with director Sho Nobushi. (*The Pledge to Megumi*, Japan, 2020, 102 minutes. In Japanese with English subtitles).



©THE PLEDGE TO MEGUMI Film Production Committee

● Karen Severns



PHOTOGRAPHY

THE YEAR OF THE COW

GROUP EXHIBITION – JAN. 9 - FEB. 5, 2021

Welcome to the Year of the Cow, the 2nd in the 12-year cycle of animals. As the rat scurries away, the cow is faced with many unresolved challenges from the previous year. 2021 is the year of the White Metal Cow which is considered to be gentle and responsible, but also stubborn. We hope our knight in shining armor, I mean cow, will help save the day and lead us to greener pastures. Starting off this year's exhibitions on a bright note, we hope you'll enjoy seeing our cow show.

Wishing everyone a safe and Happy New Year!

● Bruce Osborn, FCCJ Exhibition Chair



artist: Hiroshi Sunto

title: Non Title

<https://note.com/2235>

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Year of the Cow - Group exhibition: Jan. 9 - Feb. 5, 2021



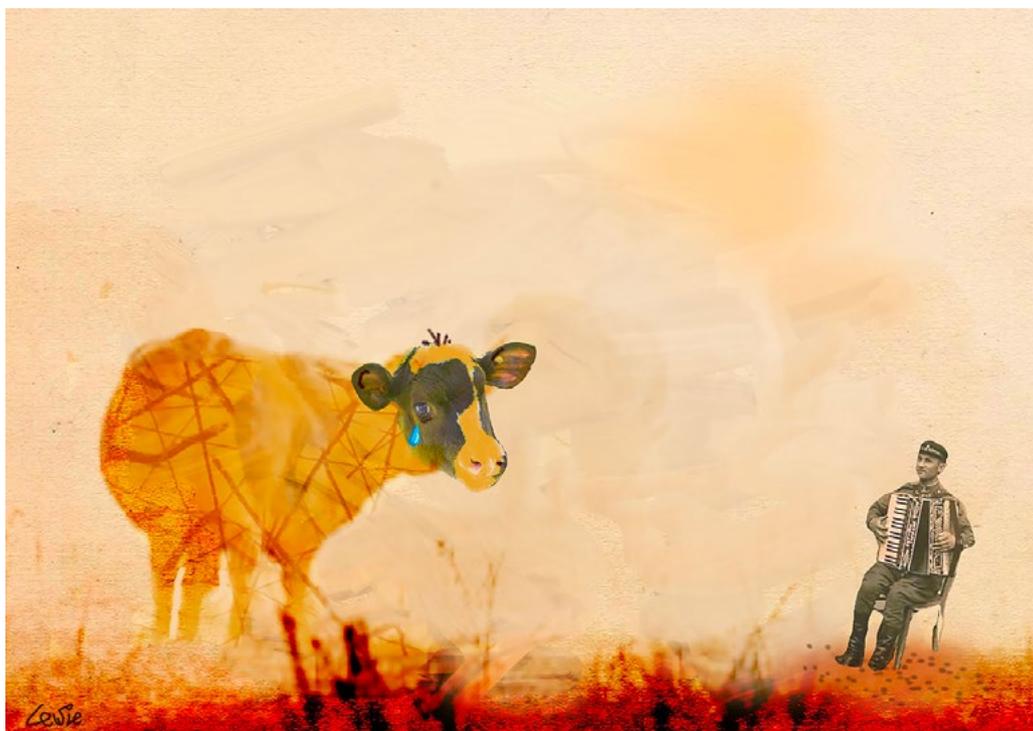
artist: Kozo Chiba
title: Omi-ushi
www.kept.jp



artist: Jimmy Park
title: Genki Cow
<https://jimmyspark.com>

PHOTOGRAPHY

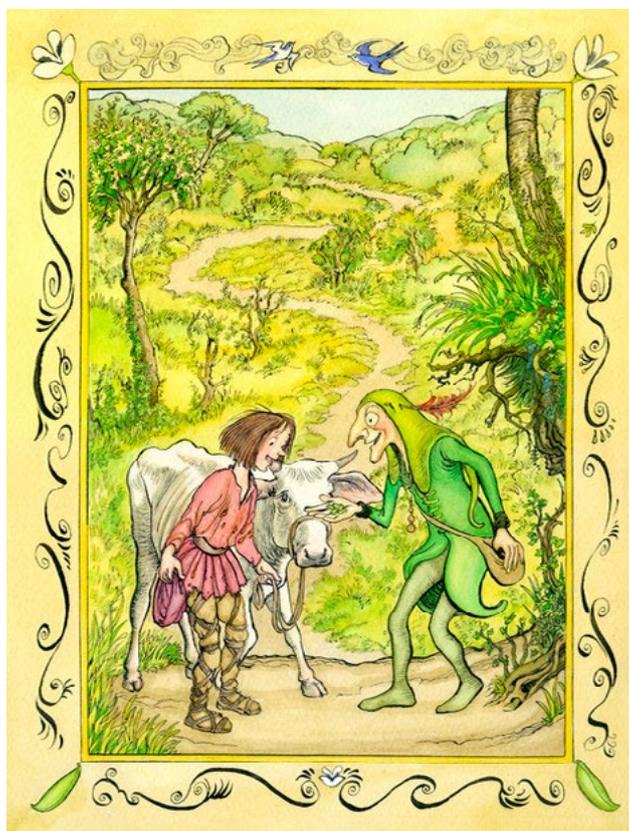
The Year of the Cow - Group exhibition: Jan. 9 - Feb. 5, 2021



artist: Lewie Denton

title: Woke

<https://www.instagram.com/lewiejpd>



artist: John Shelley

title: Jack & the Beanstalk

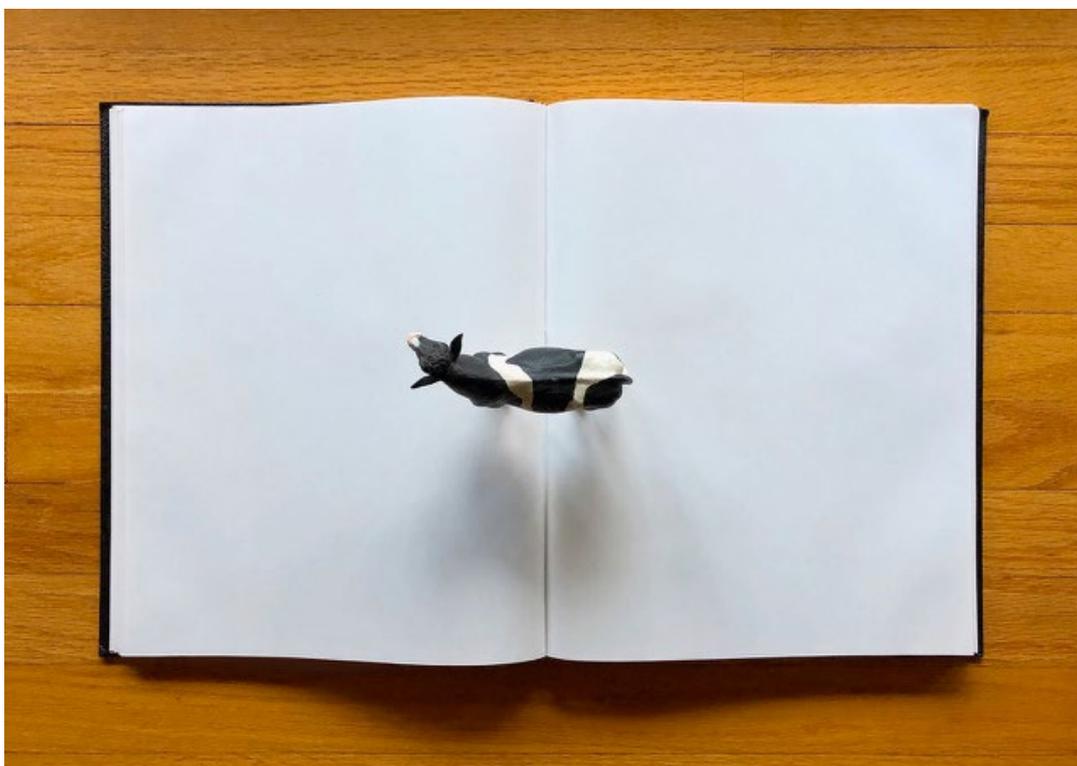
www.johnshelley.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Year of the Cow - Group exhibition: Jan. 9 - Feb. 5, 2021



artist: Lou Beach
title: Belle, Stories & Pictures
www.loubeachart.com



artist: Mike Fink
title: CLEANslate
<https://mikefink.myportfolio.com>



artist: Eric Jones
title: Invisible Ox
www.jonesstudio.com



artist: Pui-Pui Li
title: OXOX
www.jonesstudio.com



Sushi with Mieko Kawakami or lasagne with Shiori Ito?

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