

The magazine of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

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DISASTER TOURISM

9 YEARS AFTER

**Bringing people—
and income—back
to the areas hit by
the 3/11 tsunami**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Members,
The *Diamond Princess* cruise ship, after years of roaming the world to provide rest and recreation to its passengers, was effectively placed under “port arrest” in Yokohama, becoming a news magnet for international media including FCCJ correspondents as a result of the coronavirus scare.

On February 27, I hired a boatman to take a news crew for a closer look at the ship from the Pacific side. The one way trip took about 20 minutes from Minato Mirai. The wind was very cold, although it was a sunny and beautiful day.

I was joined by veteran FCCJ member cameraman Ito Tomoo and Dubai-based Al Arabiya News Channel reporter Laith Bazari. We did live TV grids of the ship, from up close, while Japanese Coast Guard personnel watched us and our vessel from another small boat.

Al Arabiya had dispatched my colleague Laith to join many reporters from around the

As so often has been the case throughout our Club’s history, bad news made FCCJ correspondents busier

world who flocked to Japan to cover the news of the *Diamond Princess*. A sudden surge in demand for TV camerapersons, fixers, reporters, etc., revived the market in Japan for media personnel.

As so often has been the case throughout our Club’s history, bad news made FCCJ correspondents busier even as it provided welcome introductions to parachuting practitioners of our trade.

Laith visited the FCCJ during his one-week stay in Tokyo. He told me he was deeply impressed by what he saw in the Club: high class location in Marounouchi, delightful ambience in the several dining facilities including the Bar, great library and news-gathering facilities and a big room for news events.

He compared what he’d seen here with other press clubs he’d visited all over the world and told me our Club stands high in terms of status and quality. He thinks journalists are “lucky” to have such a facility in Tokyo.

I badly needed to hear such enthusiastic remarks and to see the Club through the eyes of a surprised and impressed journalist visiting it for the first time. What he said made me feel very proud of being a member of the FCCJ and his words charged me with some extra positive energy of the sort that we could all use in order to look at our Club through a wider lens.

As it happened, the boat ride and those welcome compliments from Laith came at the end of a seven-day period that other Board members and I had begun by hearing a

series of mostly downbeat assessments from both journalist and associate members speaking at the Club’s February 21 town hall meeting.

The general sense of that town hall meeting was that the “club” atmosphere of the FCCJ has suffered as a result of the move to new premises. “It no longer feels like a club,” and the FCCJ has lost its “family atmosphere,” members complained. There were complaints about the prices of food and drinks at the Club since the move. Members seemed to be expressing as much sorrow as anger at the changes in the Club. There was obvious concern about the current state of FCCJ finances and anxiety about whether current trends toward declining membership will continue.

There was a feeling that the Club should come up with concrete measures to woo back members who have resigned following the move as well as bringing in new blood.

Widening membership categories to allow Japanese journalists working for Japanese media in Tokyo to join the Club as Regular Members was one suggestion, a pet idea of long-term member Greg Clark. (This would be practicable in many cases under existing rules.)

There was also a view expressed that the FCCJ urgently needs to focus on generating more revenues from professional activities rather than relying so heavily on initiation fees and donations.

On balance, members in attendance seemed satisfied that the current

board is fully committed to coming up with constructive solutions to the FCCJ’s challenges. Members seemed prepared to be patient while the Board and Committees do their best. That’s gratifying since, in fact, we are indeed going all out to meet our responsibilities.

Back to the scare over coronavirus, eventually it will wash away with the Pacific waves. I enjoyed riding in the small boat and having the occasion to reflect that the big ship, the *Diamond Princess*, sooner or later will return to creating happy memories for new passengers.

Meanwhile, I hope and believe that our own big ship, the FCCJ, will sail on with its leading mission of supporting all the media, local and international, in reporting the real picture in Japan.

– **Khaldon Azhari**

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

China revokes press credentials from three WSJ journalists

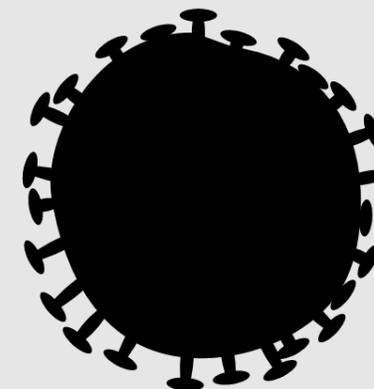
TAIPEI, FEB. 19, 2020 — Chinese authorities should immediately restore the press credentials of three *Wall Street Journal* journalists and allow the media to report freely in the country, the **Committee To Protect Journalists** said today.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said at a daily news briefing today that the government was revoking the press credentials of three *Wall Street Journal* journalists in retaliation for what he called a racist headline on an opinion piece titled “China Is the Real Sick Man of Asia.”

Deputy bureau chief Josh Chin and reporters Chao Deng and Philip Wen are required to leave the country within the next five days, according to the newspaper. The column, written by Hudson Institute scholar Walter Russell Mead, was about the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on China’s economy, and was published on Feb. 3.

“China’s expulsion of three accredited correspondents in reaction to what it sees as an offensive headline in the opinion section of the *Wall Street Journal* makes the country appear less like a confident rising power than a thin-skinned bully,” said Steven Butler, CPJ’s Asia program coordinator, in Washington, D.C. “During a global health emergency, it is counterproductive for the Chinese authorities to be limiting the flow of news and information. The press credentials of Josh Chin, Chao Deng, and Philip Wen should be restored immediately.”

In a statement, *Wall Street Journal* parent company Dow Jones said that the organization was “deeply disappointed” by the decision, and noted that the newspaper’s opinion section publishes separately from its newsroom, and that none of the expelled journalists had “any involvement” in the column sparking their expulsion. The statement called for the journalists to be allowed to



stay in the country.

Chin and Deng, both American citizens, and Wen, an Australian national, are all based in Beijing, according to the newspaper. Deng has been reporting from Wuhan, the city where the coronavirus outbreak originated, according to that report.

In a statement posted on Twitter, the Beijing-based Foreign Correspondents Club of China said that the government had not expelled an accredited journalist since 1998.

CPJ has documented previous instances of Chinese authorities refusing to grant or renew journalists’ press visas, as happened with *BuzzFeed News* reporter Megha Rajagopalan in August 2018, Agence France-Presse reporter Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian in June 2019, and *Wall Street Journal* reporter Chun Han Wong in August 2019.

CITIZEN JOURNALIST DISAPPEARS

TAIPEI, FEB. 10, 2020 — Chinese authorities must immediately account for the whereabouts of journalist Chen Qiushi, and ensure that the media can cover the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan without fear of retribution, the **Committee to Protect Journalists** said today.

Chen, a freelance video journalist, traveled to the city of Wuhan in Hubei province from Beijing on Jan. 24 and

began filming and reporting on the health crisis in the city, according to his posts on YouTube, where he has 440,000 followers, and Twitter, where he has more than 250,000 followers. His videos reported that local hospitals were short of resources and were struggling to handle the number of patients who needed treatment.

On Feb. 6, he told his family that he planned to report on a temporary hospital, and has not been seen since, according to news reports and a video message from Chen’s mother.

“Authorities in Wuhan must disclose whether they are holding journalist Chen Qiushi. If they are, then he should be released immediately,” said Steven Butler, CPJ’s Asia program coordinator, in Washington, D.C. “China does not seem to have learned the clear lesson that bottling up the truth about a spreading illness will only make matters worse.”

On Feb. 1, Chen uploaded a video from journalist Fang Bin, depicting Fang’s encounter with local authorities who claimed to be conducting virus inspections. Wuhan police briefly detained Fang and asked him to stop uploading videos about the outbreak after he filmed his visits to local hospitals, according to news reports.

When CPJ messaged Chen’s Twitter account, which has continued posting since the journalist disappeared, the person running the account identified themselves as Chen’s friend and said they wanted to maintain anonymity. They told CPJ yesterday that they had received no information on Chen’s whereabouts since he disappeared.

In August 2019, Chen flew to Hong Kong to report on the anti-government protests taking place there, and authorities summoned him back to the mainland for questioning, he said in a video posted in October.

CPJ called the Wuhan Public Security Bureau for comment, but no one answered.

The bright side of Dark Tourism

Increasing numbers of travelers are unsatisfied with simply going to distant, exotic destinations. As this visit to tsunami-battered Iwate prefecture attests, Disaster Tourism done well can be an opportunity for visitors and the visited.

By Sonja Blaschke

“No access for unauthorized persons,” read the big red letters on the sign. In our white helmets, we walk past, ignoring the warning as we follow our tour leader Kanako Sasaki. We are on a guided tour and have permission to enter the yard of this former high school on the outskirts of Rikuzentakata in Iwate prefecture, just a few hundred meters away from the Pacific coast.

The high winter grass is rustling under our steps as we cross the grounds. For years, there has been no laughter of children echoing through the hallways, no chalk screeching across black boards, no words of admonishment from impatient teachers. Instead, cables hang like curtains from the sagging ceiling paneling, a broken keyboard sticks out of a shattered window on the upper floor, below are piles of rubbish.

On March 11, 2011, all of the students at this particular school safely escaped to nearby hills before the tsunami swept through the town. The fact that nobody died here was the only reason why the ruined school building was kept, to serve as a memorial. The results of the incredible force of nature are still visible, shocking and fascinating at the same time. “In case you are ever near a tsunami,” says Sasaki, “don’t just run as far as possible.” Instead she recommends finding a solid, high place—even one nearby, like the former roadside information station called Topic 45 that stands right next to the shore. Three people survived there, she recounts, because the building was made from reinforced concrete and tall enough. Today it serves as the Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum.

Some might feel uneasy about visiting disaster-struck regions as tourists, wondering whether such trips are ethically acceptable, morally questionable, or simply too depressing. Others argue to the contrary, saying it can bring meaningful reconstruction aid. Disaster Tourism—a variety of Dark Tourism, which involves travel to places associated with death and suffering—is an increasingly popular trend in the travel industry. Whether it’s about visiting the damaged nuclear power plant in Chernobyl or the Tuol Sleng genocide museum in Cambodia, the more authentic it feels, the better.

The streaming service Netflix has been catering to such desires: Since 2018, dark tourists to-be can enjoy getting



Miracle Pine
Possibly the most famous tree in Japan, the reconstructed pine that survived the tsunami



the creeps second-hand from the safety of their own sofa, through the documentary series “Dark Tourist.” Protagonist and journalist David Farrier started off the series by booking a tour to the area close to the damaged Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, packing a nervously beeping Geiger counter. Further episodes promised Farrier would travel to meet with murderers, or to experience being tortured.

Dark tourism does not have to be along such sensationalist lines. Conducted with care, empathy and ethics, it can make visitors better people, and give them the emotional impulse to reduce prejudices and traumas, explained tourism researcher Professor Dorina-Maria Buda from Leeds Beckett University in a TED talk.

Never a tourist magnet

Exactly 1,759 people lost their lives in Rikuzentakata in the 3/11 tsunami, and Sasaki relates the precise figure on purpose to honor each person. Sasaki is young, with shoulder-length black hair, her fringe falling over her eyes. She is wearing a black down jacket, black jeans and black sneakers on this cold winter day. She is one of a number of young people who left after the disaster, later returning to help rebuild and breathe new life into their ravaged regions. Sasaki’s Disaster Tour, organized by the start-up Marugoto Rikuzentakata which she co-founded, is one of several new tourism products. I was invited to experience the itinerary by Iwate prefecture, together with several other foreigners, to test and give feedback.

In country . . .

A former Rikuzentakata high school that was fully submerged in the tsunami; a beautiful inlet in Miyako; Otsuchi from above; Rikuzentakata’s sea walls. *Top right*, a clock in the school, stopped at the minute of the earthquake.

Even before the disaster, that corner of Japan had been anything but a tourist magnet, far from the “golden route” from Tokyo to Kyoto and Hiroshima. The only reason people went to northeast Japan was for some specific purpose—like visiting friends, or if

between the river and the derelict school. The American has offered to take pictures for us, and is juggling our cameras and phones, trying to get the perfect shot, as Sasaki holds tight so she doesn’t fall off. “The things I do for you guys!”, she says laughing. Her effort pays off: She gets a shot of a clock on the wall in one of the former classrooms. The hands are stopped at 14:46—the time of the 9.0 quake offshore, and 35 minutes before the deadly tsunami arrived. A sign on the roof of the high school indicates the height of the tsunami: 14.20 meters, which is actually higher than the school.



Across the recently fortified banks of the Kesengawa river and between a turquoise-colored crane and the monstrous slab of concrete that makes up the new tsunami wall, we can see what is possibly the most famous tree in Japan. There were once 70,000 pine trees along the shore, a sight for which Rikuzentakata was famous. This 200-year-old tree, standing 27 meters tall, is the only to remain after the tsunami. Known as the “Miracle Pine,” it has become a symbol of tenacity and the power of endurance.

The high salt content of the sea water, however, damaged its roots so much that the tree was at risk of dying. It cost ¥150 million to preserve it, Sasaki explains as we return to the heated bus. “There’s been lots of fighting about this,” she says. “It’s so much money, so shouldn’t that be given to the people affected by the disaster instead?” The issue almost cost mayor Futoshi Toba his re-election. Only five votes made the difference, according to Sasaki. But she believes that the tree helps people remember her town. “Visitors make a difference to us,” the mayor said in an interview. “In many ways, you are our sustenance—economically, morally and socially.”

Tears for a friend

We are on our way back to the newly built town center, a small

they wanted to experience nothing but nature in solitude. Forestry, agriculture, fishing, oyster and kelp cultivation are the defining characteristics of this rural region, then and now.

Since the disaster, new offerings for tourists have popped up here and there, but mostly only for Japanese speakers. However, with high-level events like the recent Rugby World Cup in 2019 and the up-coming summer Olympics in Tokyo, the affected regions are hoping to “divert” some of the expected foreign tourist streams to northern Japan.

Sasaki and an American participant climb onto a wall

collection of less-than-charming buildings close to a new bus and coach stop. The ground of the floodplain had been raised by a few meters in a massive project that razed nearby hills and transported that earth via huge conveyor belts to the plain. Theoretically, everything is set: “However, for about 80 percent of the area there are no plans for rebuilding,” Sasaki says. “Many people could not wait any longer and in rebuilt on higher ground elsewhere.”

Passing the area where the old town hall used to be, her eyes suddenly fill with tears. “This happens every time,” she says,

ALL PHOTOS: SONJA BLASCHKE

apologizing. A friend of hers used to work there. On the day of the disaster, his job was to give instructions to residents who had just arrived at the emergency shelter next door.

Dozens of people died in the building which was too low to protect them from the waves. “He put his own life on the line because he wanted to save the lives of the residents,” she manages to squeeze out, her eyes red. To this day, she says she has kept in touch with her deceased friend’s parents: “They have gotten older, of course, but since then, time has stopped for them.”

Sasaki tears are real, her sorrow raw, so many years later. “Only you can save your own lives,” she goes on to warn her guests. “Make yourself the priority! After that, you can proceed to help others,” she says while wiping away more tears. Her emotions stay with me long after we have left the region.

Share lessons, save lives

Operators of such tours of course need profitability to sustain their business, but that is obviously not the most important goal. The team of Marugoto Rikuzentakata want to inform, to share lessons, to save lives, to reinvigorate their hometown, to effect change. A former nurse, Mio Kamitani in Otsuchi, 60 kilometres north of Rikuzentakata, agrees. She also organizes disaster tours, but in combination with workshops, whose goal is to increase disaster awareness and problem-solving.

We start off on the ground floor of the rebuilt town hall in Otsuchi, a two-story building of wood and glass. Standing next to a three-by-three-meter model of the former town with little houses made from colored paper, all of them with signs indicating the former owners, Kamitani shows the high-water mark where the tsunami wreaked havoc.

Touring

The area is famed for its shellfish; tour operator Kanako Sasaki; hills, the sea, and fishing

An exhibition on the second floor of the town hall chronicles what happened in Otsuchi on March 11

excellent English skills acquired in the US, she says she has been frustrated by watching how decision-making processes have been dragging on forever, as residents are put in front of insolvable dilemmas. “If you had to decide between building a playground for children and temporary housing, which would you choose?” she asks us, and a quick survey shows the answer is far from straight-forward.

Kamitani says that there have been too many such “either-or” decisions. Instead, she suggests that residents should have been given several options. She wants to sensitize visitors to such issues for them to take these lessons home, but at the same time hopes that such outside input might effect change in the village itself: “Sometimes you not only have to change the hardware, but also the software.”

In her talk, Professor Buda said her research confirms the positive effects such types of tourism can have on both sides. While tourists leave such places with a higher emotional awareness, improved cultural understanding and empathy for the people affected, the locals enjoy having their reality witnessed and validated by visitors. “It gives residents the chance to tell their side of the story, and a platform to make their voices heard,” she said.

Sasaki and her Marugoto Rikuzentakata team combine their mission of passing on the lessons of 2011 with unrelated, entertaining activities. In addition to tsunami area tours, they organize homestays with local fishermen or farmers. Guests are invited to participate in field work, splitting wood, or trying their hand at traditional woodcarving. So far, both Sasaki and Kamitani have not only had Japanese on their tours, but also groups from abroad, including students of elite US universities like Harvard and Princeton, and corporate employees.

Only between 12 and 14 percent of the world’s population can afford to travel just for pleasure, and most of them are people from developed countries. “Tourism is a privilege,” Buda said. This increases the responsibility to build bridges



with time-stamped photos. It took less than a minute for the water to swallow everything, including the old town hall, most of its employees, and the mayor. They had ignored disaster plans which had directed them to run to a nearby hill, where a graveyard escaped the disaster unscathed.

Kamitani, a lively 40-year old in short black hair, jeans and a ripped black sweater, came to Otsuchi via a charity organization to help people during the immediate aftermath. Now, years later, she has put down roots and founded a family, much to her own surprise. A former globe trotter with

and make connections through empathic tourism. “Next time you travel, do not only open your eyes and cameras, but also your hearts.” Tour leader Sasaki agrees: Everybody in Rikuzentakata was affected personally by the disaster, having lost friends, family, colleagues. “There are so many different stories,” she says. “Get in touch, learn, and take what you have learned home with you.” ●

Sonja Blaschke is a Japan-based German freelance journalist and TV producer. Her travel to Iwate was sponsored by the prefecture.

THE FCCJ ONLINE: www.fccj.or.jp





Telling scenes . . .

Emperor Hirohito meets the UK's Queen Elizabeth II who told the emperor that monarchy is a difficult thing to deal with; and Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew who told him he considered Japan open to the world while China was closed.

voiced largely private concerns, which can be perceived as putting themselves in the same boat as Japan's emperor.

Among the guests the emperor received from abroad were a few with whom the subject matter touched upon extremely delicate political topics. One such person was Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who met with the emperor on Oct. 22, 1979.

Masaki, who interpreted the exchange, told Krisher in the tapes: "Lee Kuan Yew mentioned the effect of Japanese and Chinese civilization on the Korean peninsula. He considered Japanese civilization is open to the outside world and Chinese is closed, and said it was better for Korea to be occupied by Japan."

According to Masaki, "[His Majesty] was entirely silent, as he didn't say anything. He couldn't say yes or no. The Lytton Commission Report (which investigated the causes of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria) [mentioned] Japan's successful efforts for reforestation in Korea but we can't say that. They [South Korea] dislike whatever we may say about Japan's contribution."

BUT WITH OTHER GUESTS, the subjects of conversation took on more political tones. According to Article 1 of the Japanese Constitution, which was drafted by the Allied occupation just after WWII, the emperor of Japan is defined as "symbol of the State." His role is ceremonial, and he is not allowed to influence the government. Based on the contents of the Masaki tapes, however, that did not negate Emperor Hirohito's deep interest in world affairs, particularly the threat of communism.

For example, on Oct. 18, 1962, in an audience with the UK's Commissioner for Singapore and Commissioner General for South-East Asia, the Earl of Selkirk, one of the main topics of discussion was communism in Asia.

The emperor asked, "I understand the communist party of Malaya has generally been suppressed. What is the present situation?" To which Selkirk explained that the communists were scattered in the jungle or border areas and suppressed by troops of Malaya, Australia and New Zealand.

The commissioner also touched on the situation in Laos and Vietnam, and the emperor was said to have responded, "It is good that people of these countries are conscious of the peril of international communists."

On March 9 of the same year, the emperor was visited by David Rockefeller, president of Chase Manhattan Bank, who was on a world tour. Rockefeller is said to have remarked, "If the US, Europe and Japan should closely cooperate, then we can contain the advance of the Soviet Union and China," to which the emperor showed his wholehearted agreement by responding, "I also believe so."

Two months earlier, on Jan. 11, Dean Acheson, former US Secretary of State and advisor to President John F. Kennedy, called at the palace. Acheson said he would be meeting Prince Norodom Sihanouk in Cambodia, and provided



Eiiichiro Tokumoto is an author and investigative journalist. The "Masaki Tapes" and Hideki Masaki's diary are included in his new book *The Emperor's Files*, which was published by Bungeishunju-sha in February.

a detailed explanation of the US policy toward Thailand and Cambodia.

As events were to transpire, 1962 turned out to be an eventful year. Construction of the Berlin Wall had begun the previous August. Then in October came the Cuban missile crisis, during which the US and Soviet Union narrowly avoided nuclear conflict.

Amid the escalating tension of the Cold War, Japan's emperor, relegated to being a "symbol of the State" with no role in politics, nevertheless harbored a sense of crisis, and encouraged foreign visitors to discuss the international situation with him, while energetically conveying his own message in return. None of these exchanges were ever divulged by the Imperial Household Agency.

THE EMPEROR'S VIEWS, AS recorded by Masaki, turned out to be consistent with information I chanced upon earlier. At the National Archives in London, I accessed a declassified British Foreign Office document that underscored the emperor's personal views.

In June 1952, the British embassy in Tokyo dispatched a report to London concerning the defense minister's audience with the emperor. According to the document, "after enquiring after the health of the Queen and the Royal family, [the emperor] asked a number of questions about the international situation which included China, the Soviet Union, Malaya, Persia and Egypt. We returned suitable replies. Grand Master of Ceremonies explained afterwards, that while the Emperor is very interested in international affairs, under the present constitution he is not kept informed by the Government and is consequently unable to express any views of his own."

But it is clear that he had his own views, and equally clear that he was interested in world affairs despite his distance. He could surely recall the 1930s, when the Japanese military and government had failed to provide the young emperor with full and accurate information, while the conflict between Japan and China stalemated, and relations deteriorated with the Western powers.

After the war's end, the drawing up of a new constitution by the Americans made little difference in the information blackout, effectively making the imperial palace akin to an isolated island. It's highly possible that the emperor, who was deeply concerned about risk of repeating the mistakes of the 1930s, was not content to rely only on the government's briefing, but resorted to gathering whatever information he could glean from foreign guests.

According to Masaki, while Hirohito was known to the world as a marine biologist, from his various comments, it's clear that the emperor's worldview was based on his study of history, including that of the Roman Empire. After observing coups that took place in Iran and Afghanistan in the 1970s, the emperor cautioned imperial family members, saying "It was always the people surrounding a monarch who brought about downfall."

Thanks to the dedicated record keeping by these two men,

I was able to get a look at something that is rarely shared with the public: the emperor's discussions with foreign dignitaries, and his thoughts on world politics. Hideki Masaki passed away in 2001. Bernard Krisher died last year at the age of 87. ●

The Emperor's Files

Diaries kept by the imperial translator of the Showa emperor offer insight his post-war thoughts, personal and political

By Eiiichiro Tokumoto

This story began with a chance encounter in the spring 13 years ago. On Apr. 10, 2007, I was at the FCCJ to attend a professional luncheon for Asia Development Bank President Haruhiko Kuroda. During the meal, I exchanged courtesies with an American gentleman who happened to be seated on my left. He appeared to be in his early 70s, with a piercing look, and wore black-rimmed eyeglasses. His business card read "Publisher, *Cambodia Daily*." Seeing his name, I did a double-take.

He was Bernard Krisher, the former Tokyo bureau chief of *Newsweek* magazine, and I was very aware of his reputation. In September 1975, he had achieved a rare, one-on-one interview with the Emperor Hirohito, who was about to embark on his first visit to the United States.

At the time of our meeting, I was about to publish a book about Emperor Hirohito, known posthumously as the Showa Emperor. Krisher kindly invited me to lunch at a café near his home in Hiroo on several occasions, during which one of the main topics of our conversations was anecdotes about the postwar US-Japan relationship.

One day, Krisher mentioned offhand that he had a collection of audio cassette recordings of interviews with Hideki Masaki, Emperor Hirohito's long-serving interpreter. Masaki had a stellar career. Following his graduation from the Tokyo Imperial University, he entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early 1930s. Following postings to the UK and

US, he served as ambassador to Afghanistan.

From 1959, he served as interpreter for the emperor for two and a half decades. During this period, Masaki kept a diary in English, in which he wrote down the contents of conversations between the emperor and foreign guests.

In January 1989, just after the emperor's death, Masaki sat down with Krisher for a series of interviews, during which he read out the contents of his diaries. It was enough to fill 20 cassette tapes. I was surprised to learn that the tape's contents had yet to be published, and Krisher was kind enough to lend me the tapes for my own use. The "Masaki Tapes" turned out to provide fascinating insight into the Showa Emperor's thoughts and beliefs.

Some of the emperor's conversations with foreign leaders and dignitaries were deeply personal.

On May 28, 1963, for example, King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, accompanied by Queen Sirikit, visited Japan and met with the emperor at the palace. According to Masaki, Thailand's monarch aired concerns about the education of his children.

King Bhumibol told the emperor, "I believe it is important to give education to my children as members of the royal family. But they are very idle and lazy and don't like studying. But my 12-year-old eldest daughter is a hard worker and she likes science. Thailand will need scientists in the future . . . and she wants to be one herself."

The weight of royalty seems to have concerned Britain's Queen Elizabeth II on a visit to Tokyo. On May 7, 1975, when she and her husband Prince Philip visited Tokyo, the queen told the emperor, with what may have been a sigh, that monarchy is a difficult thing to deal with. "You've been Emperor for 59 [sic] years. I've been Queen for 23 years."

At that time, the queen was making plans to visit the US the following next year, in observation of America's bicentennial celebrating its independence from Great Britain.

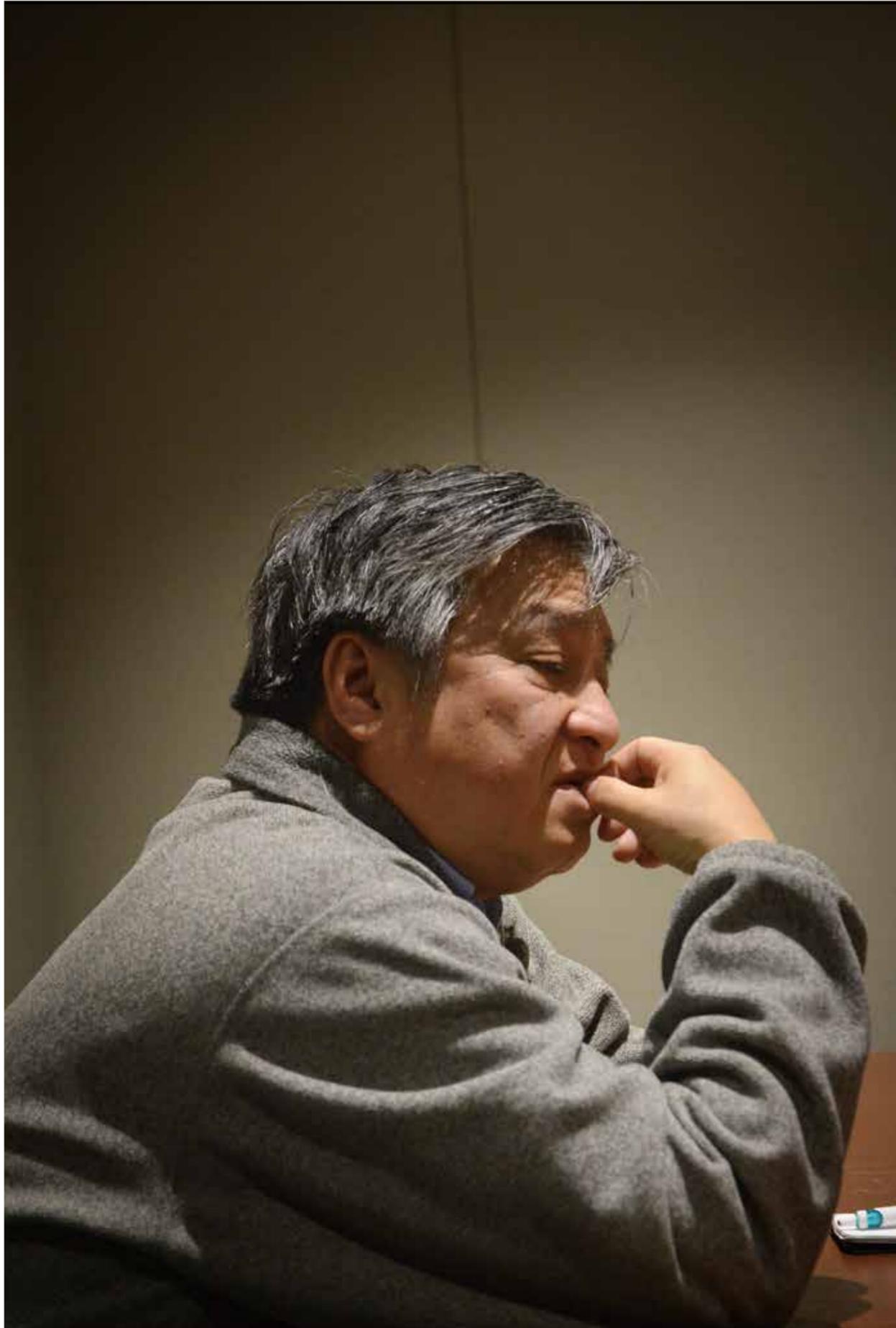
According to Masaki, she said to the emperor, "It seems funny for me to visit the US that rebelled against us." But she seemed resigned to it, however, stating, "After 200 years, it will be all right."

Thailand's King and Great Britain's Queen, known for charismatic presence and widely respected by their subjects, both

Yoshikazu Tsuno

Freelance photographer

By Gavin Blair



ANDREW POTHECARY

Watching old Hollywood movies at cheap screenings as a junior high school student, Yoshikazu Tsuno had dreams of becoming a film director. But his fascination with news pushed him to choose a career behind a different kind of camera.

Born in Dogenzaka in the heart of Shibuya in 1959, Tsuno went to Chiba University to study photo technology in the faculty of engineering. Although many on the course went to work for Japan's many camera makers, it also produced a number of notable photographers, including the controversial Nobuyoshi Araki, known for his prolific output of photo books which are variously seen as either high-art erotica or exploitative pornography.

Working as a freelancer for magazines while still a student, Tsuno was offered a job as a staff photographer in 1984 at the newly-formed international photo section of Agence France-Presse (AFP), the world's oldest news agency. Although he had also taken the test for *Tokyo Shimbun*, the young Tsuno was excited by the potential of AFP's new venture. However, despite the offer to begin immediately, he decided to wait until graduation, starting work there in March 1985, straight from university.

In February 1986, he was given his first overseas assignment: covering Pope John Paul II's visit to India. His first experience of the world outside his native Japan other than a two-week family vacation to visit an uncle in Hawaii, Tsuno recalls being shocked at the stench of Kolkata when he wound down the window of the taxi he was traveling in. "I could see Kolkata was one of the worst cities in the world and I understood why Mother Theresa had chosen to work there," says Tsuno.

Other assignments around Asia took him to China, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea. But it was a trip to North Korea in 1995 that left the biggest impression. "North Korea was inviting a lot of Japanese people there at that time because they wanted Japanese yen. It was very interesting to photograph what I thought was ordinary life there, but I realized it was like Disneyland, everything was a performance," he recalls.

Slipping away from his handlers one morning, he was surprised to see a group of people who had built a fire underneath a truck. "Can you imagine why? It was so cold in North

"I'M CURIOUS ABOUT EVERYTHING. I WANT TO SEE SOMETHING BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE DOES."



Korea that the fire was to warm up the oil in the truck. When I started taking pictures, they all ran away. The same thing happened when I started shooting a young man marching military-style over a bridge, he ran off as soon he spotted me shooting him," says Tsuno.

However, most of his 31-year career at AFP was spent covering nearly every major event in Japan during that time, from politics to sport, including the World Athletics Championships and the 2002 Japan-South Korea football World Cup.

But his real passion has always been seeking out the new, particularly in science and technology. "I'm curious about everything. I want to see something before everyone else does, new products or robots," he explains.

From 1995 until 2016, he managed the Tokyo AFP photo bureau as the chief photographer, but became disillusioned with changes at the agency. "AFP used to be very good for photographers; we could make suggestions about something we wanted to shoot and were often able to go and do it. But then everything was just assigned to us and we had no choice," rues Tsuno.

He left to join another Paris-headquartered agency, Gamma Presse Images, a dedicated photo agency, where he remains. Although he says there are fewer assignments than his days at AFP, there is enough work to keep Tsuno as busy as he would like to be. "Yesterday morning I was at Mitsubishi Electric to cover some new product launches, then in the afternoon off to that ship [the quarantined *Diamond Princess*] in Yokohama," he says.

Even with a reduced workload, Tsuno says the work of a news photographer is more frenetic than it used to be in the pre-digitization days. "You used to shoot the pictures, then go back to the office to develop and after that transmit the images. There was time to rest, have some food and relax a little. Now you don't have that kind of time when you're on assignment," he says.

Nevertheless, he appears to have found a work style that suits him after three and a half decades in the business. "I can decide what I want to do. I look at the newspaper and choose what I want to go and shoot," says Tsuno. "I'm happy with my life now." ●

Gavin Blair writes for publications in Asia, Europe and the US.



Not at the Club
Kentaro Iwata held a press conference at the Club from self-isolation

Covering the coronavirus in Japan

YOSHIKAZU TSUNO

By Julian Ryall

THE DEEPENING CRISIS OVER the over COVID-19 outbreak—including its inexorable spread around the world and the apparent inability of health authorities to get to grips with the problem—has dominated the news cycle since early January and, as of the time of writing, shows no sign of slowing down.

And while the vast majority of infections and fatalities are still in China, Japan found itself very much in the spotlight after the virus was confirmed among a handful of the 3,700 passengers and crew aboard the cruise ship the *Diamond Princess*.

In order to help journalists grasp the situation and learn about the virus, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan hosted three press conferences with medical professionals in February, with comments by each of the professors sufficient bombshells to grab the global headlines.

Hiroshi Nishiura, a professor in Hokkaido University's Graduate School of Medicine, spoke at the FCCJ on Feb. 4—relatively early in the crisis, when there were fewer than 10,000 confirmed cases and around 200 deaths. His message, however, was far from optimistic and he warned that simply isolating people who had recently traveled to China might not be sufficient to stop the spread of the virus in its tracks. Three weeks later, it is clear that prediction was on the mark.

"WE MAY FIND THAT containment is not feasible," said Nishiura, who heads a team set up quickly at the university

to study the path of the virus. "Countries may have to switch from containment to mitigation." Part of the problem, he said, is that it was already becoming apparent that people with no symptoms of the illness but who had been infected were passing it on to those they came into close contact with.

Nishiura's studies indicated that risk of death in confirmed cases at the time was between 3 percent and 6 percent, but that as many as half may not have any symptoms of being infected and may not even become sufficiently unwell to require hospital treatment. He did warn, however, that the peak of the disease may not come until April and called on health authorities to prepare more hospital beds and ventilators for people who develop pneumonia.

Fifteen days later, concern around the illness had become significantly more acute and Hitoshi Oshitani, a professor of virology in Tohoku University's Graduate School of Medicine, set the cat among the Olympic pigeons by suggesting that the upcoming summer Games are under threat from the rapidly spreading virus. "We need to find the best way to have a safe Olympics," he said. "Right now, we don't have an effective strategy and I think it may be difficult to have the Olympics. But by the end of July, we may be in a different situation."

The organizers of the Tokyo games, the Japanese government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government had then all been at pains to reassure the world that the city will be completely ready for

the occasion by the time the opening ceremony takes place on July 24.

Oshitani, who previously served as an adviser to the World Health Organization and helped combat the outbreak of SARS in 2003, said his greatest concern was a "Wuhan-type" outbreak elsewhere in Asia or Africa that would lead to more cases coming into Japan. In that scenario, he said, "It may be difficult to have" the Olympics in Tokyo.

"What we have to do is try to prevent such a thing from happening," Oshitani said. "Nobody can predict whether we can contain the virus or put an end to this outbreak before the Olympics starts—that's anybody's guess."

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST BOMBHELL came from Kentaro Iwata, a professor of infectious diseases at Kobe University, who was only able to address members of the club through a video link as he had voluntarily placed himself in quarantine after going aboard the *Diamond Princess*—where he had previously described infection control efforts as shambolic.

On Feb. 19, Iwata uploaded two YouTube videos, in Japanese and English, which quickly attracted attention for his first-hand account of what he saw on a visit to the vessel. He said the situation on the ship was "chaotic," with bureaucrats in charge instead of experts in viral diseases. He added that there was no distinction between "red," or infected areas, and "green" zones that were free of the virus.

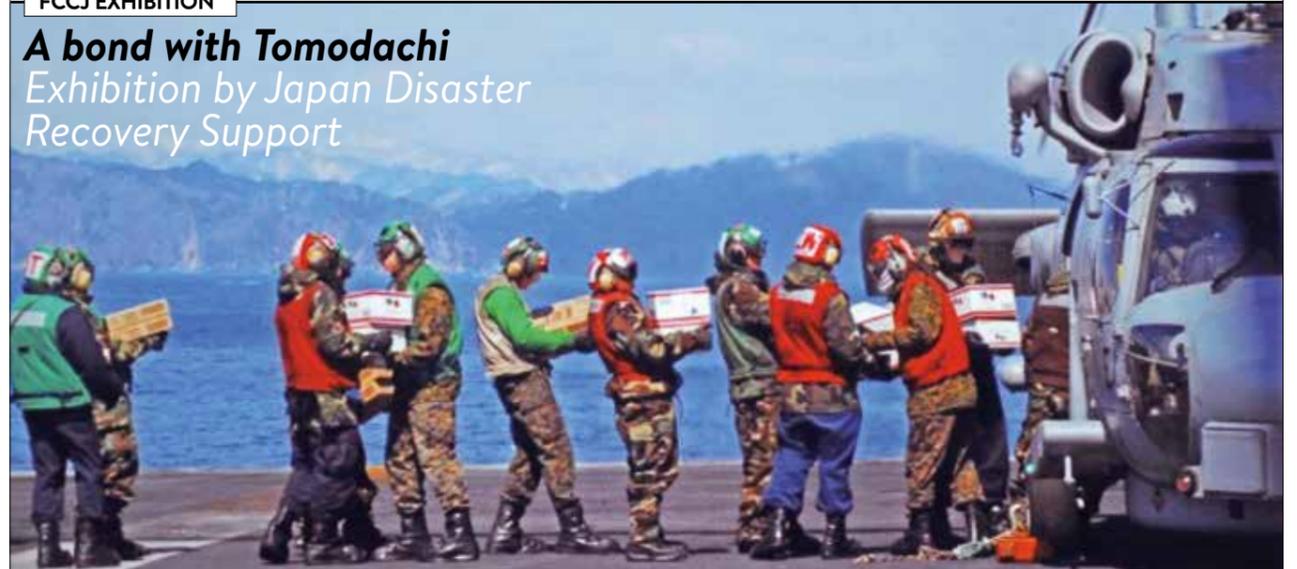
The day of the FCCJ press conference, Iwata took the videos off the site, saying the situation aboard the cruise ship had improved. "The post became so viral and viewed by many people and yesterday I was informed that significant improvement was done inside the cruise ship," he said. Iwata denied that he had been pressured by the government to remove the clips as they were so critical of the response to the situation on board.

Iwata insisted that the YouTube clips had achieved their aim, including emphasizing that bureaucrats have no experience in how to prevent infections from spreading. "We have to be prepared," he added. "We have to be extremely cautious, but we should not panic. That is my opinion." ●

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

FCCJ EXHIBITION

A bond with Tomodachi Exhibition by Japan Disaster Recovery Support



To commemorate the ninth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan Disaster Recovery Support (JDRS) is exhibiting photographs selected from over 2,000 images from the relief activities records of Japan Self-Defense Forces and U.S. Forces in Japan taken in the devastated areas.

Through this exhibition, we would like to express our gratitude to those who joined the relief efforts and also remind ourselves of the importance of disaster preparation in hopes of saving future lives.

We would like to thank the US Embassy Tokyo, Reconstruction Agency, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Defense for supporting this exhibition.

Japan Disaster Recovery Support (JDRS) was set up in the prefectures of Shimane, Osaka and Hiroshima eight years ago for the purpose of holding photo exhibitions showcasing the relief activities and volunteer support for people living in the disaster-stricken areas. The JDRS has held 42 exhibitions at various venues, including prefectural and municipal government buildings, department stores and cultural facilities mainly in Osaka, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, and Ehime prefectures, alongside other cities in western Japan.

At each venue, volunteer groups and local fire departments provided photos of their activities so people in the community could learn about their support.

Contributions for the disaster-stricken areas recovery left in the donation boxes at the exhibitions were given to Japanese Red Cross.

In March 2019, JDRS was authorized as a non-profit organization and opened its headquarters in Osaka. It currently has 25 members, ranging in age from 22 to 84, living in areas from Tokyo and Kyushu and planning the exhibitions. In addition, we have the support of over 500 volunteers.

This exhibition at the FCCJ is our first show in eastern Japan. Members of the Tokyo Junior Chamber and university students helped to prepare the exhibition.



JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...

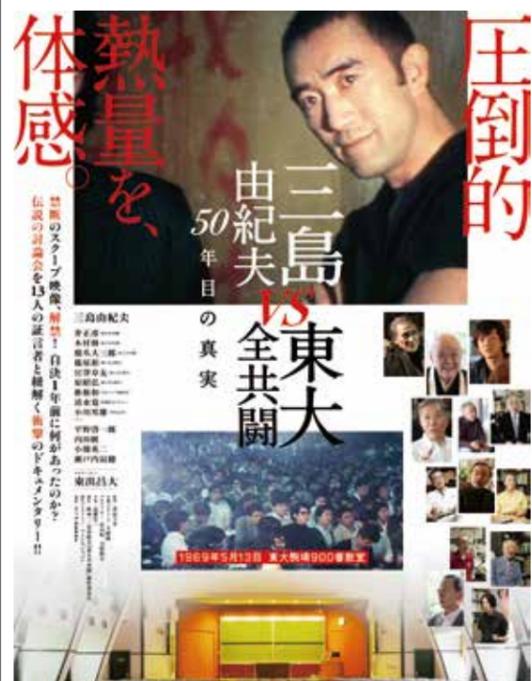
... on Tues., March 17 at 7:00 pm for a sneak preview of **Mishima: The Last Debate**, a documentary featuring long-lost footage of Yukio Mishima's controversial appearance at the University of Tokyo in 1969, as he addressed 1,000 revolution-minded students who had come to "see him get beat up." Instead, the acclaimed writer-actor-director engaged his audience with the mental agility of a gold-medal gymnast, nearly pulsating with intellectual energy and wit, beating back each counterargument with poetic logic, never once condescending, antagonizing, or treating the students with disrespect. Director Keisuke Toyoshima surrounds the centerpiece of his film with heartbreaking images of Tokyo under siege and interviews with former Todai students, former Shield Society members and

others, and reminds us that words, wielded judiciously and meaningfully, will always triumph over swords; that there is always a common ground even when arguing political ideologies at opposite extremes.



Toyoshima and award-winning novelist Keiichiro Hirano will join us for the Q&A session. (Japan, 2020; 108 minutes; in Japanese with English subtitles)

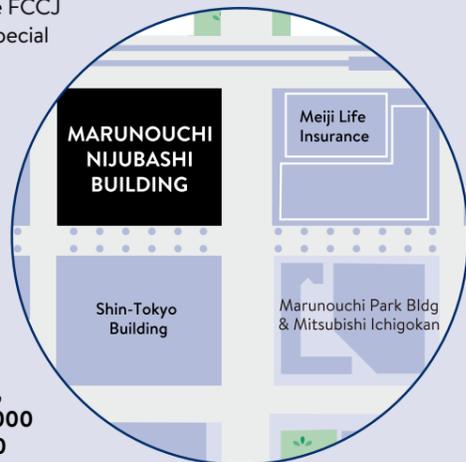
— Karen Severns



NEW LOCAL MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Save ¥100,000s!

For a limited period in 2020, the FCCJ will be offering very attractive special discounts on new individual Associate Members working in our home, the **Marunouchi Nijubashi Building**, as well as in the neighboring **Meiji Life Insurance, Marunouchi Park, and Shin-Tokyo buildings.**



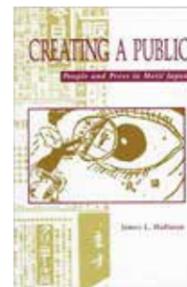
New individual applicants for Associate Membership will receive a one-time discount on the existing ¥400,000 joining fee. With the one-time discount, **the joining fee would be ¥200,000 for those over 40 and ¥100,000 for those between the ages of 35 to 40.** Monthly dues of ¥17,500 and the relocation levy of ¥1,000 for Associates over 35 years of age will remain unchanged.

Existing members who introduce an accepted Associate applicant who joins the FCCJ will receive a credit of up to ¥25,000.

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan

James L. Huffman
University of Hawai'i Press

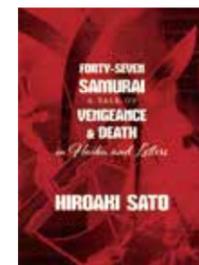


The Korean War: An International History Updated Edition

Haruki Wada
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Sustainable Investment – Impact in Asia

Asia Asset Management
Asia-Pacific Media
Gift from Anthony Rowley



Forty-Seven Samurai: A Tale of Vengeance & Death in Haiku and Letters

Hiroaki Sato
Stone Bridge Press

NEW MEMBERS



REGULAR MEMBER

Kana Nishizawa is Bloomberg's new Tokyo bureau chief, driving coverage of Japan's biggest stories in a global context. She studied broadcast journalism in Canada after completing a degree in political science, philosophy and religion at the University of Toronto. Kana joined Bloomberg in 2009, covering the rise of Abenomics and its impact on markets as well as the March 2011 earthquake. Later, she was based in Hong Kong for eight years, spearheading news including China's opening of its capital markets, the burst of the equity bubble, and was reporting during the umbrella protests that rocked the city state in 2014.

REGULAR MEMBER, REINSTATEMENT



James Rocky Swift covers healthcare and pharmaceutical companies in Japan for Reuters. A native of Florida, Rocky first came to Japan with the JET Program in 2000 to teach English in Nagano Prefecture. After getting an MBA at the University of Hawaii, he worked at Bloomberg News in Tokyo and New York for eight years covering financial markets. In 2014, he joined the U.S. State Department and did stints in West Africa, Washington DC and Tokyo. He made his return to journalism with Reuters in 2019.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Tsuyoshi Takemura, *Burson Cohn & Wolfe Japan Inc.*

CLUB EVENT

Hagi Night festivities



The Club played host to some fascinating visitors from the city of Hagi in Yamaguchi prefecture on the evening of Friday, Feb. 7. Hagi is a former castle town on the coast, known for cherry blossoms and quaint narrow streets. Joining a large group of Members was Mayor Kenji Fujimichi, who introduced us to Hagi's local food delicacies, such as Kenran beef, red tile fish and Mutsumi pork, along with local brews to wash them down. Guests were also given live demonstrations of some of Hagi's traditional folk handicrafts. Tomoaki Kaneda, a ceramic artist, gave a Hagi pottery throwing demonstration, while Yoshiko Okano, a local doll maker, showed her skills at making Hagi-style traditional dolls.



WHICH TWO COUNTRIES' FLAGS ARE EXACTLY THE SAME?

That was one of the questions from February's FCCJ News Quiz Night. If you think you know the answer to similar questions, join in—prizes are awarded and there is a Happy Hour at the bar. **QUIZ NIGHTS ARE THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH!**

Answer: Romania and Chad



Lens craft

Departed

People look out from a bus carrying US passengers from the quarantined *Diamond Princess* cruise ship at Haneda airport on Feb. 17.

by Tomohiro Ohsumi

Extinguished

Participants put out a fire during the Disaster Preparedness Drill for Foreign Residents in Musashino, Tokyo on Jan. 28. About 369 people were instructed on how to protect themselves in a disaster by the Tokyo Fire Department with the assistance of volunteer interpreters.

by Rodrigo Reyes Marin

Mauled

Meiji and Waseda Universities compete in the National University Rugby Championship at the new National Stadium in Tokyo, Jan. 11.

by Yoshikazu Tsuno



FCCJ
The
Foreign Correspondents' Club
of Japan

*Wish you were **here***