

The magazine of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan



# NUMBER 1 SHIMBUN

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## SAFE?

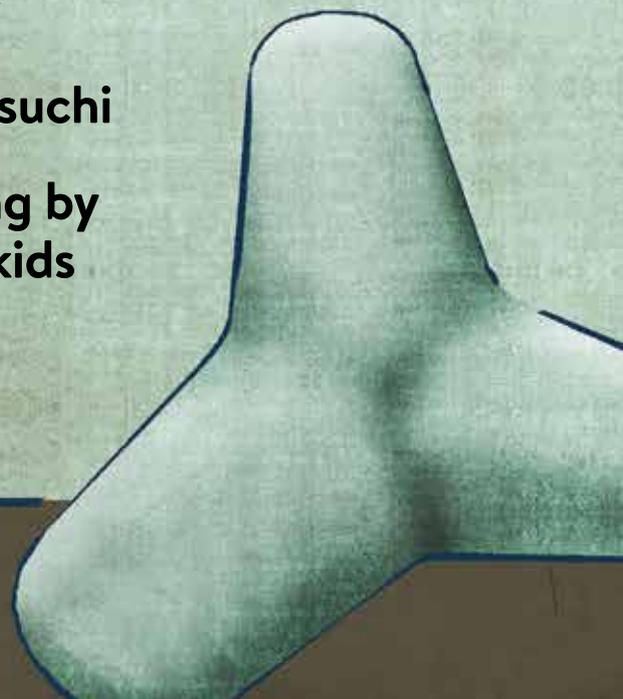
**FIVE YEARS ON:**

**Seawalls and the  
changing coastline of Tohoku**

**Coal vs Nuclear**

**The rebuilding of Otsuchi**

**Radiation monitoring by  
Fukushima school kids**





> THEME.10

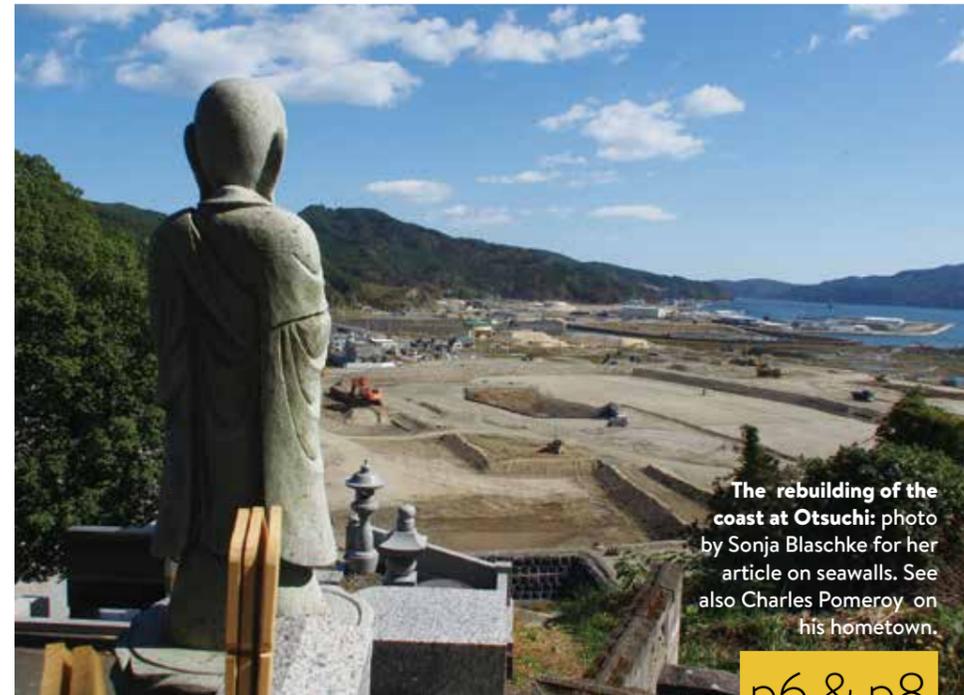
> WIND TURBINE

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The rebuilding of the coast at Otsuchi: photo by Sonja Blaschke for her article on seawalls. See also Charles Pomeroy on his hometown.

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Cover design by Andrew Pothecarry



From the President

LET ME START OFF my column this month with an important reminder for Regular Members. The next General Membership Meeting, a crucial event for Club business, has been scheduled for March 8. Members will be asked to vote on the fiscal 2016 budget and business plan, a labor union settlement that represents the end of the contentious legal suit that has dogged FCCJ finances for many years and other important motions that will affect our upcoming move to the new location in Marunouchi. The Board has worked hard to find solutions to these important issues and if members agree with our recommendations, we believe the officers will be able to work hard toward making progress over the next few months.

I know many of our Regular Members are busy and have little time to devote to Club business. In fact, at the last GMM – though it was a Special GMM and not on the regular annual calendar – a quorum wasn't reached, leaving important Club issues on the back burner. So let me also point out that under the present *koeki* status, GMMs are now held only twice annually, making them even more decisive dates for members.

On the other hand, members are now permitted to read the motions and background prior to the GMM, so that they can send in their votes and proxies without being physically present. I understand that devoting a valuable evening to the FCCJ's rather raucous GMMs can be demanding, so if you'd rather do it remotely, please send in your vote electronically – by email or fax. Also, if some members do not have the time to study the details of the issues facing the FCCJ this March, please feel free to send in your queries to Board officers. The FCCJ is your club – and participation is vital for its longevity.

Another date to remember is March 17. Some well-known former correspondent Members – Bill Emmott from the *Economist*, William Horsley from the BBC and Fernando Mezzetti from *La Stampa* – have timed a visit to the FCCJ where they will be speaking on their latest activities. All were based in Tokyo in the 80's and 90's and have covered Japan and East Asian issues widely. I have reserved a corner of the bar that evening for members to meet the journalists and share a drink at lowered prices. The event highlights our ties to the past, when journalists mingled with other journalists and associate members, giving the Club its vitality of open exchange and networking, the hallmarks of our character.

I also want to take this opportunity to offer kudos to the Food and Beverage committee for their fantastic February wine-tasting events. The four sessions, which were organized by the committee this time, showed great results – with total ticket sales of 329, the highest total since 2008 and overwhelmingly higher than recent years. Moreover, wine sales surpassed ¥2.5 million. This revised and revived wine tasting program will mean increased income for the FCCJ in the coming months.

– **Suvendrini Kakuchi**

COLLECTIONS

FUKUSHIMA BY THE NUMBERS

Percentage of Fukushima rice which tested above 100Bq/kg limit

0%

Fukushima Prefecture, inspection period: 08/20/2015-02/22/2016, 10,431,307 items



Percentage of seafood which tested above 100Bq/kg limit

- 2011: 39.8% of 1,972 items checked
- 2012: 16.5% of 5,580 items checked
- 2013: 3.7% of 7,641 items checked
- 2014: 0.9% of 8,722 items checked
- 2015: 0.05% of 8,577 items checked

www.jfa.maff.go.jp/e/inspection/index.html  
www.fukushimaminponews.com/news.html?id=618

How much land area has been "decontaminated" at least once

As of Jan. 2016.  
In Fukushima Special Decontamination Area (original evacuation zone) 11 municipalities total (213 km<sup>2</sup>)  
Decontamination completed: 6 (68 km) 32%  
TAMURA, NARAHARA, KAWAJUCHI, OKUMA, KATSURAO, KAWAMATA, IITATE..., MINAMISOMA..., NAMIE..., TOMIOKA..., FUTABA...

Progress of decontamination

As of Nov. 2015. (Decontamination undertaken at least once; based on areas designated, not actual totals of what exists)



Number of evacuees

Dec. 2015  
(56,463 in Fukushima Pref., 3,497 outside)

June 2012



www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/01/09/national/fukushima-nuclear-evacuees-fall-100000/#.VpIFy5N96CW

www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/uploaded/attachment/151947.pdf



Number of Fukushima children diagnosed with thyroid cancer

From 1st round (preliminary baseline screening):

116 malignancy or suspicion of malignancy  
100 CONFIRMED CANCERS

from 2nd round (full-scale screening):

51 malignancy or suspicion of malignancy  
16 CONFIRMED CANCERS

116 CONFIRMED  
(Total out of 167 suspected)

1st round target population: 367,685 screened: 300,476, results: 300,476  
2nd round, 381,261 eligible 236,595 screened, 220,088 results

http://fmu-global.jp/survey/proceedings-of-the-22nd-prefectural-oversight-committee-meeting-for-fukushima-health-management-survey/

FROM THE ARCHIVES

SADAKO OGATA, HUMANIST EXTRAORDINAIRE



Sadako Ogata, two years after becoming U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), voiced her opinions at the Club on June 23, 1992, while FCCJ President David Powers (BBC), in the foreground, and Clayton Jones (Christian Science Monitor) listen attentively. She was to appear again at the FCCJ as a guest speaker in 1999.

Sadako Ogata's life story is extraordinary. Born in 1927, she came from an illustrious family, with a former prime minister, Tsuyoshi Inukai – assassinated in 1932 by Japanese Navy officers – as her great-grandfather and a former foreign minister, Kenkichi Yoshizawa, as her grandfather.

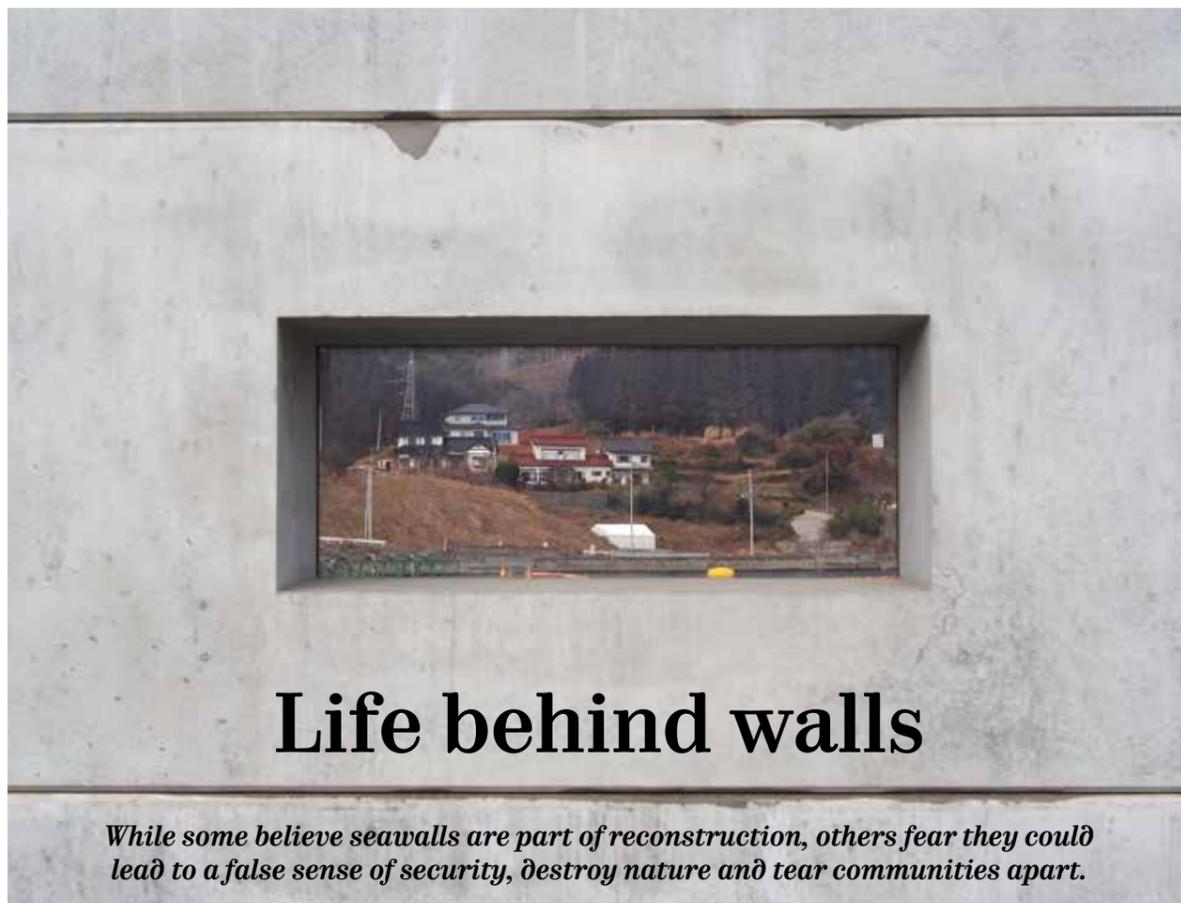
Dedicating her early life to an academic career, Ogata followed up on her BA from Sacred Heart in Tokyo with graduate study in the U.S., earning an MA in international relations from Georgetown in 1953 and a doctorate in political science from the University of California in 1963. Returning to Japan, she lectured at Sacred Heart and the International Christian University, becoming an Associate Professor of Diplomatic History and International Relations there in 1974. In 1980, following a move to Sophia University, she became a professor, then Director of the Institute of International Relations, and in 1989 the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies.

Ogata's scholarly work led to stints from 1968 onward with Japan's U.N. mission, and in 1978 she became envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. During this time she also served as Chairman of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, and from 1982 to 1985 she was Japan's Representative on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. She assumed leadership of UNHCR in January of 1991, which she held until she retired in 2012.

Ogata contributed greatly to making this a better world, including writing books addressing refugee problems. She also raised a family, a son and a daughter, with husband Shijuro Ogata, a senior official of the Bank of Japan and a key person in opening the Japanese bureaucracy to the foreign press.

Sadako Ogata has been a dedicated tennis player since her student days and still plays at age 88, as attested to by Kazuo Abiko. A former president of the FCCJ and retired AP stalwart, Kaz recently partnered with her to win a doubles match at the Tokyo Lawn Tennis Club.

– **Charles Pomeroy**



## Life behind walls

*While some believe seawalls are part of reconstruction, others fear they could lead to a false sense of security, destroy nature and tear communities apart.*

PHOTOS: SONJA BLASCHKE

Keiko Sugawara is smiling as she talks about seawalls. Standing in Kesennuma harbor in front of the recently constructed wall of concrete that

soars four times her height, she seems unaware of the ice-cold winds strong enough to pierce the skin on this cold February Sunday. Her pleasant expression, however, is disconcerting; her speech is agitated, and there is something else behind her smile: sadness, frustration, maybe even despair. She is afraid that the walls might ruin the future of the children of Kesennuma by destroying what she sees as the city's biggest asset – its natural resources and beautiful natural surroundings. “I really don't like adults pushing decisions onto children,” says the stylish, young-looking 49-year old. “It hurts my heart.”

Driving along the east coast of Tohoku, where a magnitude 9.0 quake unleashed a towering tsunami which devastated over 400 kilometers of coastline on March 11, 2011, it is easy to get lost. It has become hard to judge when to rely on car navigation and when to ignore it. In Otsuchi, for example, the system shows our car traveling on a railway track, when we're actually on a dirt road. In Minamisanriku, the empty frame of the disaster prevention center, which used to be a sort of landmark, can now easily be missed in its location among several huge pyramid-like embankments of bare earth, meant to eventually host industrial and public facilities.

What will even further change the landscape is the decision of many communities to build large seawalls. Proponents say these will keep citizens safe and allow reconstruction to speed up. “We only get money from the government for reconstruction if we build this wall,” was a statement heard coming from many local politicians' election campaigns.

by SONJA BLASCHKE

But Sugawara and other opponents fear that these concrete bulwarks might destroy what little is left of the assets of the area, like the picturesque rugged ria coast. They worry about potential negative effects on tourism and the fishing industry, which could hamper job prospects for young people in particular. Another fear is that people could develop a false sense of security behind the walls and delay their escape after a strong earthquake – especially since the walls will block any view of the sea. This could lead to an even higher death toll next time a tsunami hits.

**SUGAWARA EMPHASIZES THAT SHE** is not against seawalls per se. “Walls of a certain size are necessary to protect harbor areas from high tide and high waves in stormy weather,” she says. “But I am against such gigantic concrete walls.” On average, they will measure about 10 meters high.

Initially on the side of the walls' supporters, she had a change of heart after realizing that the walls would not be effective against a tsunami of the same scale as five years ago – an event said to occur only once in several hundred years. They would only hold back the smaller, though more frequent, ones. Also, little to no maintenance of the walls was planned, meaning they would only be taken care of after the next disaster.

But vocal opponents like Sugawara seem to be few and far between, and some fear the seawall issue might even tear the communities apart. There is always the risk of being ostracized by the tightly knit local communities and labeled as someone holding up reconstruction. “When I talk with people in private, many agree,” Sugawara says, “but they are afraid to speak up in public.”

Sugawara did find backing from Setsuko Komatsu, a former local assemblywoman. Komatsu's house, close to the riverbank, was swept away by the tsunami. Now the 68 year old shares two units in temporary housing with her extended family in Oya, half an hour south of Kesennuma. Sugawara sometimes visits Komatsu, exchanging ideas over coffee in a crammed 4.5-square-meter living space. Now Komatsu and her 70-year-old husband are planning to move to an elevated spot. “People moved to higher ground after previous inundations, too,” she says. In her opinion, one of the biggest obstacles in their fight against the walls is that people cannot really imagine what these tall walls will look like. Sugawara suggests building a model to help understand the concept.

Much to their surprise, the two women received support from an unexpected source: Shigemitsu Sato is in charge of CSR activities at Sugawara Industry, a company of 30 employees that is building the seawall in Kesennuma. “There are only few jobs here, and I need to live off something,” the 40-year-old father of two explains. “I had hoped I could influence the process from the inside.” Dressed in jeans and a stained blue-down jacket, he joined Sugawara for an impromptu meeting at the seawall section close to the prefectural government office in Kesennuma.

“The walls will destroy the value of our town,” he says. “It is my mission to destroy them.” Later he clarified his statement, saying he wants to build more innovative ones. Sato's criticism is that the walls were mostly designed at the corporate level, without considering the surroundings. More research should have been done, he says – and he also expresses doubt about the calculations behind the strength of the walls. He points to the small window slits in the walls. “The only reason they were added was so the report would be accepted by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism,” he says. “Isn't that ridiculous?” Both he and Sugawara criticize the wall's shape: Once water spills over, the structure will block it from flowing back out to sea, thereby creating a huge lagoon.

In neighboring Minamisanriku, Yutaka Tabata, a pensioner in his seventies, is aware of the debate going on in Kesennuma. He is sitting with several elderly women at a table in a new recreation room next to a newly built apartment block, making dolls from pieces of cloth and Q-tips. “The walls are built for safety and to feel safe,” says Toshiko Sato, one of the women. While Tabata agrees with her, he also wants broad escape routes built and disaster drills held. Like activist Sugawara, he fears that the walls could lead to people delaying escape.

“THERE ARE NO SIMPLE truths when it comes to the seawall issue,” says Dr. Christian Dimmer, a German urban studies scholar architect and assistant professor of urban design at Tokyo University. He says that what Japan lacks most is a cul-

ture of openly discussing pros and cons of a project, without a predetermined outcome. Sugawara confirms that this is what happened, that explanatory meetings were only held to report a decision already made.

“Good leadership and a strong sense of community are key,” says Dimmer, before mentioning the town of Onagawa. Despite losing 570 of its then 10,000 citizens and 80 percent of the town's buildings, Onagawa quickly decided against building a seawall. Some say that is why reconstruction in the town has progressed so rapidly and so well. “We live from the sea and with it,” is what one often hears from locals in Onagawa.

Despite the setbacks, clearly represented by the towering walls at her back, Sugawara does not want to give up her campaign against the walls. “I will do what I can, tirelessly,” she said, “to combat the false information that is being spread.” She is afraid that once the walls in Tohoku are finished, it will set a precedent for the rest of the country, and even more



### Another brick in the wall

Keiko Sugawara stands before the seawall under construction in Kesennuma; the changing coastline; former local assemblywoman Setsuko Komatsu at home in her temporary housing.



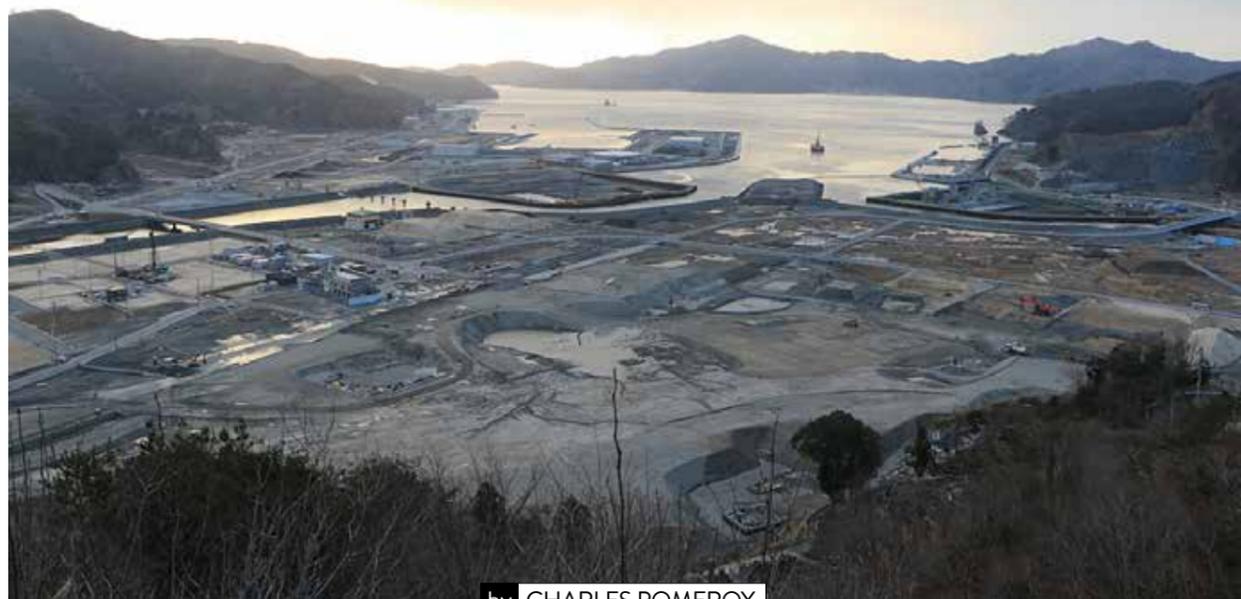
walls will be built. She hopes people can be inspired to reconsider the value of their hometowns.

While she remains passionate in her beliefs, Sugawara has not been immune to social pressure. Once, during an information session, she was asked to leave by the organizer, who was aware of her position on the issue. She also fears that her activities might hurt her family's business, a small electronic appliances store. She tries to fly under the radar, but is still in the fight, belonging to two local opposition groups and frequently posting on Facebook. “I have not told my family about what I'm doing,” she said with a somewhat sad smile, “but maybe they already know.” ●

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

*The story of a tsunami-battered town trying to get back on its feet is a tale of struggle, conflict, bureaucracy and, yes, hope.*

## Return of a perilous beauty



by CHARLES POMEROY

ALAN WOCKRIDGE

Not all has gone smoothly in the town of Otsuchi as it struggles to recover from the tsunami devastation wreaked upon it five years ago. (See my story, “The Perilous Beauty of Otsuchi,” in the April, 2011 edition of *No. 1 Shimbun*.) For starters, the loss of its mayor, Koki Kato, together with key department heads and the more than 30 experienced staff that made up a quarter of the town’s civil servants meant that there was no one to immediately get to work on a master plan for recovery. It wasn’t until January 2012 that a draft was finally completed, under a new mayor, Yutaka Ikarigawa.

Mayor Ikarigawa was faced with a number of tough issues, from organizing housing for survivors to sorting out land problems for the dead and missing. And over the next several years some progress was made, including a partial revival of the fisheries industry and construction of new residences to replace the temporary structures housing survivors.

But two key projects in the master plan led to discontent, as the long-range view of those who had forged the plan clashed with the more immediate desires of the survivors. One was a plan to raise the ground level in central Otsuchi by 2.5 meters; the other, to build a huge seawall 14.5 meters high.

The plan to raise the ground level, intended as a safeguard against smaller tsunami and future rises in the sea level, will bring it up to the level of the entry road from National Highway 45 and the new town offices, formerly the burned-out elementary school. It is a six-year project, started in 2012 with debris clearing, followed by incremental landfill scheduled through 2016, and finally ending with a year of waiting for it all to settle before rebuilding can begin in 2018. But after months of uncertainty following the tsunami, many displaced townspeople could not wait another six years and departed for other locales.

### The changing landscape

Above, a March 2015 view of the progress of the incremental landfill operations in central Otsuchi that began in 2013 following debris-clearing. To the left is the district of Ando, with its fishing jetty protruding into the harbor; across the Kozuchi River to the right is Nobematsu, now connected by a temporary span that replaced the original bridge and its six-meter high floodgates.

THE PLAN TO BUILD the huge seawall – favored by Tokyo bureaucrats, but with the responsibility in the hands of the prefecture – has yet to get underway. Strong doubts have been expressed about its usefulness in protecting the town against future, perhaps even larger, tsunami. Critics also say that any concrete structure of this kind will deteriorate and require replacement in 50 years, which will mean another huge outlay of tax money. They prefer an enhanced system of tsunami alerts and evacuation routes, which are already included in the master plan for central Otsuchi.

In particular, opposition was voiced by the fisheries folk in Akahama, which is also home to Tokyo University’s International Coastal Research Center (ICRC). Akahama also has a walkway to Horaijima, an islet known to most Japanese from a popular 1960s NHK puppet program *Hyokkori Hyotan-jima* that featured a popular theme song. Many of its residents were lost in the 2011 tsunami, opponents said, because the earlier seawall at 6.5 meters had blocked their view of the “drawback” – receding water from the harbor that preceded the onslaught – that would have alerted them to seek higher ground. In their opinion, a seawall 14.5 meters high would just make such future situations even worse.

Opponents had their point made for them with the release

in April, 2015, of a documentary by director Haruko Konishi, titled *Akahama Rock’n Roll*. The film makes a strong case for the more traditional fishery environment rather than a high seawall. Even Akie Abe, the prime minister’s wife, expressed sympathy for the opponents’ cause at a UN Disaster Prevention Conference in Sendai last year, according to newspaper reports.

After losing almost 10 percent of its 15,239 citizens to the tsunami (one of the largest losses among the affected towns), Otsuchi’s population continues to drop. In fact, it had fallen by 23.2 percent by the end of 2015, according to a report in *Asahi Shimbun*. This is far and away the largest decrease among the coastal communities affected by the tsunami, with the next highest being Rikuzentakata at 15.2 percent. The reasons were various. Some former residents who had evacuated to inland towns just opted not to return to the gutted community. But the biggest hit came from the post-tsunami exodus of younger people looking for work or schooling elsewhere.

Aside from cleanup and landfill work and rebuilding, long-term jobs

that can help persuade locals to stay are in short supply to this day. Although the partially recovered fishery industry continues to offer opportunities, these jobs seem to offer little appeal for the younger generation. And though MAST – Otsuchi’s major shopping center that attracted many residents of surrounding communities – reopened in December 2011, its consumer base began eroding after 2013 as a result of increasing competition from shopping centers in nearby towns, especially the Aeon shopping center in nearby Kamaishi.

Driving home the reality of a shrinking population was the merger of three elementary schools in April 2013. Today, Otsuchi has become a town occupied mostly by retirees and transient workers.

TO ENCOURAGE REBUILDING IN Otsuchi, government subsidies totaling ¥5 million are on offer to qualifying families. But no rebuilding can take place in the town center until 2018, and those who want to build in other areas face escalating construction costs. That is assuming, of course, that a construction company can be found, for even local governments are having difficulty in obtaining bids for their projects. Costs have been rising not only from demand in the stricken areas of Sanriku, but also from the general upgrading of the national infrastructure by the Abe administration, a situation further aggravated by the decision to hold the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

These developments have fed growing cynicism among survivors all along the Sanriku coast. Many sense they are being abandoned, or at least having their futures downgraded in favor of other government projects. These feelings have only increased following the decision to hold the Olympics. And when the central government recently announced an end to the intensive five-year phase of Tohoku recon-



### Before and the aftermath

Top, the author’s wife Atsuko and sister-in-law, Noriko, hiking in 2009 with Otsuchi harbor and bay in the background. Above, Charles’ *No. 1 Shimbun* feature on Otsuchi in the April 2011 earthquake special.

struction and a reduction in such funds for the next five-year phase from fiscal 2016, this only added to their pessimism.

Despite these negatives, one of our family members, a brother-in-law in his mid-60s who spent most of his adult life in Tokyo, returned to Otsuchi after retiring in 2015. He now works part time to supplement his retirement income while looking for new opportunities in his hometown. So far he has found none.

Still, all is not lost, and perhaps the long-range planning of Ikarigawa’s experts, representing central and prefectural governments as well as academia and knowledgeable locals, will see a new dawn in Otsuchi. But he won’t be in a position to lead it. Difficulties with his master plan’s implementation eventually led to his defeat in the August 2015 election. His victorious opponent, Kozo Hirano, ran on a platform calling for a review of the planned reconstruction projects.

In addition to the slow but ongoing recovery of the fisheries, positive signs include the revival of the old railway line by Sanriku Railways in 2021 and the completion of the new Sanriku coastal

expressway in 2022. Both will make Otsuchi more accessible for commerce and tourism as well as much easier to live in, especially for students who had pleaded for a return of the railway to enable commuting to schools in other towns. This should also increase the town’s attraction for families with school-age children.

OUR HOME WAS AMONG the 3,359 in Otsuchi destroyed by the tsunami. My wife Atsuko and I plan to begin rebuilding in 2018 on our small parcel of land at the southern edge of the central district, which will allow us to continue our retirement that began there in 2004. It will again put us within a five-minute walk of the family gravesite at Dainenji, and give us easy access to that mountain’s scenic hiking trail.

Sadly, we will no longer be joined on these hikes by our favorite companion, Atsuko’s elder sister, Noriko, who had lived nearby. She and her husband, Yuji, were both lost to the tsunami. Her remains were not identified until August of 2011 and his were never found. The addition of her ashes to the family gravesite has made our visits for the annual Obon Buddhist observances even more poignant.

Half of our neighbors were also lost to the tsunami and, apparently, none among the surviving families will return. So we will start afresh with new neighbors, but bedrock support from Atsuko’s brother and other relatives as well as friends dating back to her childhood.

And with any luck, some of our favorite local shops will restart their businesses. In particular, I would like to see the reappearance of Akabu Sakaya, which made it a point to keep my favorite gin and vermouth in stock. ●

Charles Pomeroy retired from journalism 12 years ago. He is the author of *Tsunami Reflections—Otsuchi Remembered*.

*The government's energy policy is in the midst of a sea change, as it shifts away from nuclear-generated power to a coal-based industry.*

## Is coal the answer to Japan's nuclear aversion?

by GAVIN BLAIR

The five years since the triple meltdowns at Fukushima Daiichi have seen a major shift in Japanese energy policy. While some had hoped that shift would be one toward a brave new world of safe, clean, renewable energy, the reality has been an inching back to nuclear and a rush in the direction of old king coal.

Though international pressure has recently grown for a move away from coal due to its high carbon emissions, the reality is that it is still responsible for generating 40 percent of electricity globally. Coal's share of total energy supply is just under 30 percent, though being the most carbon-intensive fossil fuel means it is responsible for 44 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Coal mining also leads to thousands of deaths worldwide each year through accidents and lung disease, with tens of thousands more attributed to its burning for heat and electricity generation.

While the U.K. has announced it will eliminate coal from power generation by 2025 and the U.S. has plans to drastically curtail it, Japan is building dozens of new coal-fired power stations and investing heavily in overseas mining and generation projects. The deregulation of the domestic electricity industry that is coming into effect in April will increase competition and looks set to give coal a further boost.

With most of Japan's nuclear reactors likely to remain offline for years to come, the government has made a deliberate policy shift in favor of coal, which – according to environmental groups – means it will fail to meet its targets for carbon emission reductions. The government and major power utilities point to the efficiency and relatively lower emissions of new Japanese coal technology, which they are also promoting for export, and claim there is no alternative given the nuclear-generation shortfall.

On Feb. 9, in a move that drew fire from opponents, Japan's Ministry of the Environment (MOE) approved the construc-



tion of new coal-fired power plants on the condition that emission standards are met. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of the Environment,

which will set standards and assess emissions, said they will require stricter controls, but it is clearly a huge policy U-turn.

The environment ministry had previously rejected applications for a series of coal-fired plants. The Basic Energy Plan announced last summer called for a cut in the amount of coal-generated energy from 30.3 percent to 26 percent by 2030. The plan also called for an expansion of power from renewables to around 23 percent, with a similar percentage to come from nuclear; power from Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) was meant to fall from 43.2 percent to 27. Now, however, with both the restart of reactors and the development of renewables moving slowly, an upwards revision of coal's share seems unavoidable.

Last year saw record imports of more than 114 million tons of coal, up 4.8 percent from 2014 and almost double the amount recorded at the turn of the century. Meanwhile, LNG imports dropped 3.9 percent to 85 million tons, the first decline since the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant mothballed the nation's nuclear reactors.

According to Japanese NGO Kiko Network, there are now 47 new coal-fired plants at various stages of planning and construction across the country, with more likely in the near future. This is ushering in "the beginning of a new era for coal power plants," says Kiko's international director Kimiko Hirata. Contrary to the ministries' statements about raising emission standards, Hirata maintains that "environmental assessments have been weakened" and that incentives have been created to stimulate the building of new coal plants, in

what she calls "a clear reversal of government policy."

Current state-of-the-art Japanese coal power plants produce around 800 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity generated – an industry standard measurement – says Hirata. The newer IGCC plants, which gasify coal, cut that to around 700gm/kWh, but that is still "around double that of LNG plants," according to Hirata. "Using coal is incompatible with the long-term goals of the recent Paris climate agreement, and these plants will be in operation for 40 years."

Along with most other commodities, the price of coal has collapsed, almost halving over the last five years, increasing its appeal to the utilities and the government. "It is true that the drop in fuel prices is one of the reasons why we are making a profit recently," says a spokesperson from Tepco, which currently operates four coal-fired generators and is building more. "While all of the nuclear power plants are shut down, coal power plants are in operation at full capacity except during inspections or repair because they are more fuel-efficient than natural gas-fired or oil-fired power plants."

Environmental campaigners point out that the price of lower-emission LNG has fallen even more dramatically than coal.

Aside from straightforward price considerations, Japanese companies are deeply involved in the coal industry overseas, through both mining joint ventures and supplying equipment and technology, programs that are often backed by government loans. "There are long-standing supply relationships with overseas projects – and the trading houses are heavily invested in coal," says Tom O'Sullivan, a Tokyo-based energy consultant at Mathyos. "They probably won't get off that unless they're pushed."

Japan invested around \$25 billion in overseas coal plants, technology and mining between 2007 and 2014, according to a report issued jointly last year by The Natural Resources Defense Council, Oil Change International and the WWF. That accounts for around a quarter of international funding in the coal power sector and makes Japan by far the biggest overseas supporter at a time when other countries are continuing to disinvest.

Japanese policy is aimed at both securing supply for the domestic market and selling advanced coal technology overseas. "They are targeting developing countries – Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia – to export clean coal tech. Abenomics is predicated on exports, so this is one area of opportunity," says O'Sullivan.

Last November, OECD countries reached agreement to severely restrict export financing of coal power plants, despite objections from Japan. However, the restrictions only cover around 10 percent of Japan-funded projects, according to Yuki Tanabe, researcher at the Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES). "About 90 percent of Japan's financing is in joint-venture projects, which are not affected. That's why the government went along with the deal," says Tanabe.

Most of the funding is done through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the form of loans, risk guarantees and insurance, which are effectively public subsidies for coal, suggests Tanabe.

JACSES has an ongoing dialogue on the issue with the Ministry of Finance, but the official line is that rather than facilitating the use of fossil fuels, Japan is helping reduce emissions. "Because Japanese coal technology is more efficient than Chinese, the government's position is that it's being pro-environment by exporting it," says Tanabe.

JBIC is also developing plans to support the export of Japanese nuclear-power technology, according to Tanabe, after a hiatus following the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi disaster. In December, Shinzo Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a memorandum on cooperation between the two Asian nations on nuclear energy. Environmental organizations, including JACSES and Kiko Network, oppose the development of nuclear power plants, whether in Japan or abroad, arguing the risks of accidents and issues with disposal of spent fuel outweigh the benefit of close-to-zero emission electricity generation.

The target of 22 percent of domestic electricity generated via nuclear by 2030 would require around 20 plants in Japan coming back online, according to O'Sullivan of Mathyos. He predicts that while there will be no new reactors built, the present reactors' lives will be extended, despite safety concerns.

Tepco is currently working toward the restart of Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, the world's largest nuclear-power station, its seven reactors being the company's only remaining operable units. "For the restart, we will accurately respond to the review [by regulators] with safety as a top priority, while proceeding by putting our best efforts into sincere explanations about safety concerns from local residents," said the Tepco spokesperson.

This April will see a shake-up of Japan's ¥7.5 trillion electricity retail market – with similar plans for the gas market scheduled for next year – designed to end the monopoly of the 10 regional utilities. Tepco expects "tougher competition in the Kanto region . . . the most attractive area for electricity suppliers." Globally, long-term results have varied for deregulation, pushing up prices in some countries, reducing it in others. In the short term though, fiercer price competition looks inevitable. Approximately 200 companies and entities (including

local municipalities) have applied for licenses related to generation and distribution, according to O'Sullivan.

Surveys of Japanese customers have found they will be overwhelmingly focused on the price of electricity when choosing new suppliers, with little interest in how it is generated. Kiko Network's Hirata notes that "there are no mandatory mea-

asures to make new companies disclose their power source" and says the "political signal is to reduce prices."

So, in spite of public concerns over restarting reactors and climate change, consumer choices after deregulation look set to increase generation from nuclear and coal-fired plants. The falling population and workforce, along with the ongoing offshoring of manufacturing, mean electricity demand in Japan is likely to continue falling. Power generation in 2015 fell to 866.26 billion kilowatt hours, the fifth straight year of decline and lowest level since 1998. However, a shrinking market full of new players will likely be even more competitive on price, driving up demand for coal-fired power and increasing pressure to restart idled nuclear reactors.

Kiko Network's solution calls for a mix of energy efficiency, increasing the share of renewables and a shift from coal to LNG. The Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan (FEPC) has a target of a 35 percent cut in the nation's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030, though many of its member companies are involved in building new coal-fired plants. The FEPC didn't respond to a request for comment on how it aims to achieve this. ●

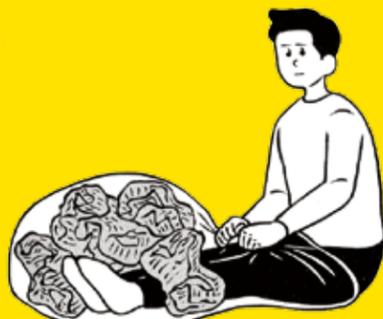
Gavin Blair covers Japanese business, society and culture for publications in America, Asia and Europe.

The Tokyo government is preparing residents for a major earthquake – with some sage advice and a little help from a rhinoceros.



## When the big one comes

by GEOFF TUDOR



A FRIEND WHO LIVES in a village close to my home in the Vale of Chichibu, some 80km northwest of Tokyo, was recently approached by a real-estate agent who had a client seeking a country retreat: “Would she be interested in selling her house?”

It transpired that the client was looking for a safe haven in case of a future Tokyo earthquake. Chichibu’s mountainous geological formations are rock solid, unlike the wobbly parts of reclaimed Tokyo prone to liquefaction. Although quakes are not unknown in this scenic valley, the risk of major damage is considered to be slight. Just how serious was this house-hunting?

There was no need to look far.

“It is predicted that there is a 70 percent possibility of an earthquake directly hitting Tokyo in the next 30 years. Are you prepared?” So reads the introduction to *Tokyo Bosai – Disaster Preparedness Tokyo* – a 340-page manual from the city government’s Disaster Prevention Division published last September.

It is a comprehensive guide to how to react to disasters striking Tokyo, including typhoons and volcanic eruptions. (A little-known fact is that there are 21 active volcanoes in the Tokyo Metropolitan area.) But the emphasis of the bright yellow paperback volume is on earthquake preparedness, survival tips and essential information you should know before the event.

Geoff Tudor writes for *Orient Aviation*, Hong Kong.

A staggering 7.35 million copies of *Tokyo Bosai* have already been distributed to Tokyo citizens, including about 30,000 copies in English.

Of special value are sections covering four basic essentials including stockpiling supplies, preparation inside the home,



preparation outside the home and preparation through communication with neighbors.

There are lists of recommended items for stockpiling at home and for preparing emergency bags for individuals, plus tips on how to make emergency toilets and adapt the size of batteries to fit different appliances. Newspapers can be useful too, to make bedding. Journalists might be glad to find another use for newsprint, apart from wrapping fish and chips.

Inevitably, I suppose, there is a Disaster Preparedness Tokyo character – Bosai the rhinoceros. *Bosai* is Japanese for disaster preparedness and *sai* is the word for rhinoceros. He appears throughout the manual, and

**The disaster preparedness mascot, top; ways of using newspaper to keep warm post-disaster, above; and a frame from the book’s manga, below.**

if you flick the pages in the bottom right-hand corner, you’ll see an animated Bosai reminding people to be prepared.

In general, the tone of the text is very straightforward and almost reassuring. But two sections in particular caught my attention.

On pages 72 through 76 are moving interviews given by survivors of the earthquakes in Kobe in 1995 and Tohoku in 2011, conveying their experiences and in some cases, recommendations. And the back of the book features a 14-page manga treatment of Tokyo X Day, by writer/artist Kaiji Kawaguchi,

which depicts the great quake to come in dramatic drawings.

Ominously, the caption on the title page reads: “This is not a ‘what if’ story. One of these days, this story is sure to become reality.”

So, be prepared. Chichibu, anyone? ●

PDF versions in English, Chinese and Korean can be downloaded free of charge from these sites:

[www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/GUIDE/BOSAI/index.htm](http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/GUIDE/BOSAI/index.htm)

[www.metro.tokyo.jp/CHINESE/GUIDE/BOSAI/index.htm](http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/CHINESE/GUIDE/BOSAI/index.htm)

[www.metro.tokyo.jp/KOREAN/GUIDE/BOSAI/index.htm](http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/KOREAN/GUIDE/BOSAI/index.htm)

The book is also available in the Club library

Some Tohoku high school kids began radiation monitoring of their daily surroundings – and got some surprising results.

## Fukushima students turn to science, shun hysteria

by JULIAN RYALL

HARUKA ONODERA MAY ONLY be a teenage high-school student, but an experiment that she initiated has convinced her that when it comes to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, scientifically proven facts trump panic-stricken proclamations that we are all doomed.

A pupil at Fukushima High School, Onodera is one of a group of students who set out to monitor their exposure to radiation in the aftermath of the crisis.

With the subsequent assistance of Ryugo Hayano, a professor in the Physics Department at the University of Tokyo, the investigation took on an international dimension

as students in France, Belarus and Poland were also invited to record their daily exposure levels.

In results that may come as a surprise to some, the research by the 216 students showed that the individual external doses that students in Fukushima Prefecture are currently being exposed to are “well within the terrestrial background radiation levels of other regions.”

“There have been various opinions among the students about our investigation, but the one thing that we share is the importance of basing our judgments on objective facts,” Onodera said at a February press conference at the FCCJ. “With this information, I believe that each person can evaluate their own risk and take measures,” she said. “But making a judgment based on scientific facts is the best way of improving the situation.” That is not, however, to play down the severity of the situation at the plant, 225 kilometers northeast of Tokyo, she said.

Some 160,000 people were initially

forced to leave their homes within a 20-kilometer exclusion zone imposed around the plant, turning communities such as Naraha and Tomioka into ghost towns. Five years on, the government has declared its efforts to decontaminate many of the villages around the plant to be a success and is encouraging people to return.

There is understandable reluctance to trust the word of the authorities, however, which makes independent,

peer-reviewed studies – such as the one by Onodera, which has been printed in the journal of the Society for Radiological Protection – more important.

Conducted over two weeks in 2014, students at six high schools in Fukushima Prefecture and a further six schools across the rest of Japan were issued personal dosimeters known as D-shuttles. Worn around the neck or placed beside the students’ beds at night, the devices measured hourly dose rates and, combined with personal activity journals, permitted the students carrying out the study to determine hourly and total exposure to radioactivity, as well as locations where they were exposed to the greatest amounts of radiation.

On closer examination, the figures showed that Onodera was exposed to greater amounts of radiation at her home – a largely wooden structure – than at her school, which is made of reinforced concrete and serves to shield her. The devices were later provided to 40 students in Paris, 28 pupils in Poland and 12 in Belarus.

“The data shows that the dose rates were almost equal in all areas,” Onodera said, exhibiting the team’s research in a series of diagrams. “The

results show that the distribution of the exposure is almost the same within Fukushima Prefecture as elsewhere in Japan and overseas.”

The data showed that results were similar for the extrapolated annual doses, meaning that students in Fukushima Prefecture – although, significantly, the study was not able to monitor rates in the exclusion zone around the plant – are exposed to the same amount of radiation as students in Nara and Kanagawa prefectures, as well as in Paris, Corsica, Warsaw and the Belarusian city of Gomel.

When a group of the European students travelled to Japan to visit Fukushima Prefecture, the dramatic spikes on their dosimeter readings were due to passing through airport security scanners and the flight to Japan.

So why, nearly five years after the disaster, are radiation levels in the vast majority of northeast Japan back within normal levels? “Mostly, this is due to the decay of cesium 134, which has a half-life of two years and was the dominant contributor in those early stages,” said Prof. Hayano. “Decontamination work must have contributed to some extent, but the decay of the cesium 134 is the biggest factor. The remaining contamination is from cesium 137, which has a half-life of 30 years, so this will be there for many more years.

“Fortunately,” Hayano pointed out, “the natural background levels of radiation in Fukushima from potassium, uranium and thorium are naturally low, so even with the added contribution from the cesium, overall levels remain at about the same level as other parts of the world.”

The professor also displayed a hint of irritation in response to a question about his optimism. “It is unfortunate that the power plant carries the Fukushima name because any time that anyone used that word, it has come to mean the power plant,” he said. “The situation there is not the same as in the high schools, the cities, the rest of the prefecture. We need to be careful how we use the word Fukushima.”

“We are not declaring that the whole of Fukushima is completely safe, but I would say that people living in areas outside the 20-kilometer exclusion zone can lead a normal life,” he added. ●

[The study can be found at <http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/0952-4746/36/1/49>]

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



Haruka Onodera and Ryugo Hayano at the Club

# Shiuan Sheng Fang

by SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI

As with many Tokyo-based foreign correspondents, it was a strong interest in Japan that led Shiuan Sheng Fang and his journalism career to this country. Born in Taipei, Shiuan attended Taiwan's World Journalism University, a leading school that has produced many of Taiwan's best scribes. He took a landmark step when – instead of taking the normal path of getting a job in Taipei – Shiuan applied to Sophia University in Tokyo. “I wanted to study Japanese journalism because I had a strong interest in the media,” he says. “My friends in Taiwan were going to the U.S. for further study but I decided to stay in Asia and learn something different.”

At Sophia, Shiuan gained a deep insight into the Japanese media, an industry he feels is “unique.” He refers to the press-club system for gathering news, something that he finds starkly different to other countries. He also points to the marketing strategy where the newspaper companies, representing some of the world's most lucrative circulations, maintain these figures mostly because of their links to professional baseball teams.

Shiuan also views the way Japanese journalists are treated as salarymen – faithful servants to a company where loyalty and seniority are deeply entrenched in the management systems – as unique.

After completing his four-year degree in journalism, Shiuan returned to Taipei to join China TV, the country's largest broadcaster. While learning the ropes of journalism in the field, Shiuan – who had an edge over his colleagues because of his Japanese knowledge – was soon recognized by his bosses as the best reporter on East Asia. In 1990 he achieved his lifelong ambition to be sent to Japan as Tokyo correspondent. The big topics he covered were the April 1994 China Airlines crash in Nagoya and Japan's tense East Asia relations.

“The work was quite grueling because of the investigative work I had to do,” recalls Shiuan. “When I look back now I realize I was covering a different Japan

to what I see now.” At first, his coverage focused on Japan as a much-admired economic leader in Asia. Later, however, his reporting began to focus on how the country was struggling with the long recession and the problems that marked the end of Japan's much-admired postwar growth. Telling this story to readers in Taiwan who had so much respect for Japan required a sensitive analysis, says Shiuan. In 1995 he returned to a desk job at his company's Taipei headquarters.

IN 2001 HE ARRIVED here once again as Tokyo correspondent, and still remains. The biggest story filed after his return was the triple disaster of March 2011. He travelled to Fukushima

two days after the disaster scrambling for news in the chaos, realizing how ill-prepared he was to cover such a major disaster. As the radiation threat spread, he was ordered to return to Tokyo by his company and stayed in the city while collecting information. “Getting real data and quotes was a problem for foreign reporters in Japan during that time,” he says. He emphasized that the FCCJ was a beacon for him at that time.

Still, for Shiuan, the most important angle in his stories was the huge donations that had begun pouring in from his homeland. In fact, tiny Taiwan, along with the U.S., topped the list of foreign contributions to Japan – pouring almost US\$3 billion in humanitarian aid through the Red Cross and other organizations.

He was determined to give the generous Taiwanese public as much information as possible about how their money was spent in the disaster areas, and a regular theme in Shiuan's stories was the deep appreciation expressed by the disaster survivors who had received the aid. “Their sincerity and smiles when I interviewed them touched me deeply,” he explains. He continued to find and file positive stories, contrasting with the tragedy and despair that surrounded him. His reports from

Iwate, Fukushima and Sendai where he spoke to Taiwanese doctors, volunteers and organizations, conveyed the struggle for survival that he found all around him. “Taiwanese people, who also face natural disasters in their country, are spontaneously willing to help others. Reaching out to each other during a tragedy is a natural social trait. Yet even I was surprised at how much they were willing to give to help,” says Shiuan.

The story he told his audience in Taiwan during the first year after the disaster was the importance of foreign aid to resilience and recovery. “In my reporting I learned an important lesson which I made sure was expressed in my stories – people were

coming together in Japan and were working together to help the survivors and rebuild the devastation. I felt the world was one,” he says.

Now Shiuan is collecting survivor viewpoints on the recovery progress and efforts to overcome the drastic changes in their lives, especially in areas close to the Fukushima nuclear plant. As a journalist, his stories will have to reach an audience saturated with glossy popular themes. Taiwanese youth love Japanese ramen, pop stars and fashion. Shiuan competes against this trend. “I want to tell in-depth stories on the

Tohoku disaster on television that make people think for themselves. This is the mission of true journalism,” he said. ●



**“When I look back now I realize I was covering a different Japan to what I see now.”**

Suvendrini Kakuchi is a correspondent for the UK-based University World News, with a focus on higher education issues. She is president of the FCCJ.



I LIVE IN THE town of Kamaishi in Iwate Prefecture, in the Tohoku region of Japan. When the great earthquake struck on 3/11, five years ago, I grabbed a camera and fled towards the evacuation center located in the grounds of the local junior high school, with the tsunami close on my heels.

From that day on, my family and I began life as refugees.

Also from that day, I started to slip out from the evacuation center early in the morning while most people were still asleep, and walk through the devastation wrought by the earthquake and tsunami, photographing the various sights until dusk fell. This became my daily routine.

Five years have now passed since I began to record everyday life – the turning of the seasons, various traditional events and the gradual changes that have taken place. Even today, the situation is such that for various reasons a large number of disaster victims are forced to remain in temporary housing.

I intend to continue to photograph the people as they strive to rebuild their towns and communities, showing them as they come together to enjoy local festivals and folk entertainments, in order to ensure that memories of this catastrophe do not fade away. ●

## Road to Recovery: Five Years and Counting by Shinpei Kikuchi



**Shinpei Kikuchi** graduated from the Tokyo College of Photography and studied under Tadashi Fujiwara at Photo Studio Fujiwara in Tokyo for 5 years. He returned to Kamaishi in August 1975. After the death of his father he took over the Kikuchi Photo Studio. His house/studio escaped total destruction on 3/11, but all his photographic data was carried away by the tsunami. Since that time he has devoted himself to producing a photographic record of the changes in the disaster area.

### SEEING GREENS



The FCCJ's 70th Anniversary Year Golf Tournament was held last Nov. 20 at the U.S. Army's Zama course (at a much more reasonable fee than comparative courses in Japan). First Vice President Peter Langan led a group of 29 around the links on a beautiful fall day. Winner in the Regular Member category was Duke Ishikawa, with Kiyotaka Yoshida taking the overall crown. In the women's category, Sachiko Mori walked off with the prize. The participants toasted the winners at a later event at the Club.

### JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE ...

... on Thurs., Mar. 17 for *Lowlife Love*, Eiji Uchida's blackly comic exposé of Japan's no-budget film industry. In a recent *Japan Times* article about the real-life travails of SMAP and Becky, Mark Schilling wrote: "Eiji Uchida's scabrous new comedy about the struggles of a down-and-out indie film director, *Lowlife Love*, confirms what I have known for years: Japanese show business can be brutal to the weak or clueless. They end up used and discarded, like so many human Kleenexes." He went on to call the film "required viewing." Based on some of the more extreme incidents told to and witnessed by the acclaimed writer-director, the film was produced by Adam Torel (*Fukuchan of Fukufuku Flats*). *Lowlife Love* focuses on the desperate, misogynistic subculture of cinematic strivers, and features another indelible performance by indie star Kiyohiko Shibukawa, who will join Uchida and Torel for the Q&A. (*Japan*, 2016; 110 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles)



### HEARD AT THE CLUB

*"Looking at corporate income and the environment of household income, we still have grounds to say that the economy is gradually recovering."*

*Masahiko Shibayama,  
Special Advisor to the  
Prime Minister,  
on the negative growth  
of the Oct.-Dec. quarter.  
Feb. 24, 2016*





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



CLUB NEWS



REGULAR MEMBERS

JUNO KONDO is currently the executive director of Kyodo News in charge of international strategy, digital services, sports data and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Kondo joined the company in April 1979 after graduating from Waseda University. Much of his career has been in positions at bureaus overseas, including stints as bureau chief in Nicosia, Phnom Penh, Bangkok and London. Prior to assuming his present position in June 2013, he was deputy head of the Organizational and Systemic Reform Implementation Headquarters, chief of the Audio-Visual News Center, and one of the deputy managing editors of the News Section.

KAKUYA OGATA is the managing director of the International Department of Kyodo News, which is in charge of Kyodo's foreign-language news services and global strategy. He joined the company in April 1984 after graduating from Keio University. Ogata was the Bonn bureau chief, concurrently serving as head of the Berlin and Warsaw bureaus, and later served as correspondent at the Washington bureau, where he covered the White House and the State Department. He assumed his present post in June 2015 after stints as deputy managing director of the Digital Operations Department and deputy managing director of the Strategic Planning Office.

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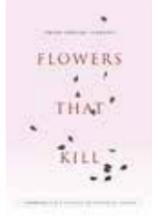
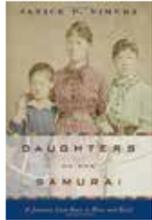
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Ogata Taketora to CIA: Amerika kobunsho ga kataru hoshu seijika no jitsuzo

Noriaki Yoshida Heibonsha Gift from Noriaki Yoshida

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Kyodo Tsushinsha Henshukyoku Yotei Senta ed. Kyodo Tsushinsha Gift from Takeshi Fujita (Kyodo News)

The Republic of China Yearbook, 2015.

Department of Information Services, Executive Yuan (Comp.) The Executive Yuan, Republic of China (Taiwan) Gift from Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (Japan)

Daughters of the Samurai: A Journey from East to West and Back Janice P. Nimura W.W. Norton & Company

Flowers That Kill: Communicative Opacity in Political Spaces

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney Stanford University Press

A Handbook for Travellers in Japan (reproduction of the 3rd ed.)

Revised and for the most part re-written, by Basil Hall Chamberlain and W. B. Mason. John Murray

Rediscovering Rikyu and the Beginnings of the Japanese Tea Ceremony Herbert Plutschow Global Oriental

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New dimensions in manufacturing — Ricoh 3D printing technology speeds product development by enabling manufacturers to quickly and economically create molds and prototypes.

All-around optical innovation — From advanced vision systems for self-driving cars to RICOH THETA cameras, Ricoh continues to be a leader in optical innovation.

Environmental sustainability — The Ricoh Eco Business Development Center at the foot of Mt. Fuji is just one example of an expanded commitment to environmental sustainability.

Celebrating 80 years of innovation.



Innovation  
that excites

# "I JUST FLOAT ALONG."

Pat M, USA, LEAF Owner



**100% ELECTRIC NISSAN LEAF.  
ELECTRIFY THE WORLD.**

Model may vary by country.

#NISSAN