

the japan times On Sunday

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Golden age

- Hanyu becomes first male skater to defend title in 66 years
- Japan celebrates first gold at Pyeongchang Games
- Uno earns silver in repeat of 2017 world championships

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Labor pains

Workers denigrate Fukushima nuclear plant cleanup **PAGE 17**

Majestic moment: Yuzuru Hanyu celebrates after winning gold in the men's figure skating competition at the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics in South Korea on Saturday. REUTERS

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Fujii topples shogi master Habu

Teen genius breaks record for youngest champ and sixth dan

KYODO

Sota Fujii, Japan's youngest professional shogi player, blitzed a quick-play tournament on Saturday, defeating a field of much more experienced players that included master Yoshiharu Habu, holder of one of the most prestigious titles in the traditional game of Japanese-style chess.

At the finals of the Asahi Cup tournament in Tokyo, Fujii, 15, beat Akihito Hirose, earning him an instant promotion to sixth dan from fifth. That made him the youngest player in shogi history to win both a championship and elevation to sixth dan.

Fujii toppled 47-year-old Habu during the semifinals, bringing down one of the most talented players in the game's history.

Before Saturday's match commenced, Fujii said Habu was a player he has admired since he first began playing.

"I did my utmost to win the game and now I'm very happy," Fujii said after besting the ninth-dan master. "It was a difficult game and I couldn't tell if I could win" until near the end of the match, Fujii told reporters.

Last year Fujii became a shogi sensation by stringing together a record of 29 consecutive professional wins.

The Asahi Cup is a quick-play tournament where each player is given 40 minutes. It is open to all ranks of players, including amateurs.

Before Fujii, the youngest person to ever win a tournament organized



by the Japan Shogi Association was Hifumi Kato, who won the Roku Go Yon Dan tournament, predecessor of the Kio title, in 1955 at the age of 15 years and 10 months.

The teen phenom's race to claim the all-time record for consecutive wins captivated the country last year, inspiring brisk sales of children's books about shogi and enticing more young people to play it.

The feat was achieved on June 26 as he extended his unbeaten record since his December 2016 debut to 29, breaking the record of 28 wins set in 1987 by Hiroshi Kamiya.

The run sparked a level of interest unseen since 1996, when Habu

made a clean sweep to claim all seven top shogi titles at once.

After Saturday's game, Habu said he felt Fujii was "very composed" and moved his pieces "in a very level-headed manner."

Fujii, who before the tournament held the second-lowest rank of fifth dan, and Habu, winner of the prestigious Ryuo title and a ninth-dan master, had only met in two unofficial matches, taking one apiece.

Fujii earned a spot in the semifinals after defeating Amahiko Sato, holder of the prestigious Meijin master title, in a quarterfinal match on Jan. 14. It was his first official win over any title holder.

Sota Fujii (right) and shogi master Yoshiharu Habu review their match as Fujii beats Habu for the first time in an official tournament in Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward on Friday.

KYODO

Habu reached another high last December, capturing the Ryuo title for the seventh time overall and becoming the first champ ever to earn *eisei* lifetime honors in all seven major titles. Eisei is an honorific title bestowed after retirement.

The honor is only given for each title after one has cleared certain conditions including number of consecutive titles won or overall times for holding a title.

There are eight major titles in shogi, but the condition for receiving the *eisei* for the Eio championship, which was elevated to the elite group last year, has yet to be announced.

The government on Tuesday bestowed the People's Honor Award on Habu, making him the first recipient of the prize in the world of shogi.

Commonly described as Japanese chess, shogi can be more complicated than chess. The players, given 20 pieces each, can reuse those captured from their opponent and bring them back into the game as their own.

View from Osaka by Eric Johnstons

Kansai executives offer advice on diplomacy

"Track II diplomacy" is the official neutral-sounding phrase used to refer to diplomatic efforts by "nonstate" actors. In thriller films and books, it's usually portrayed as a game of shadows between powerful but mysterious groups and individuals who may, or may not, be working to save the world.

Hollywood-style drama aside, Track II diplomacy, at its most transparent, plays a vital role in a country's international relations, and involves businesses, NGOs, academic experts, and others. Certainly corporations in Japan are not shy about Track II diplomacy and The Kansai Association of Corporate Executives is particularly vocal, sending missions abroad to discuss Japan's diplomacy and security.

In a report released last month, the association showed it was capable of outside-the-box thinking. The Kansai region has long had stronger trade relations with East and Southeast Asia than the

Tokyo region. Kansai's political and economic leaders have never made their "Asia First" worldview a secret.

Such views are reflected in the report when they worry Japanese diplomacy may be too America-centric. A potentially dangerous policy, given uncertainties about the mercurial U.S. President Donald Trump and what Kansai (and much of Japan) sees as a more isolationist U.S. Time to put more emphasis on Asia, is the advice.

If the report had stopped there, it would have been dismissed, rightly, as the usual thinking from Kansai. This time, however, the corporate executives offered specific suggestions for more fundamental improvements of the nation's diplomatic structure as it faces the reality of a rapidly aging society, declining birthrate and the prospect of a shrinking traditional diplomatic corps.

The first proposal is to revamp the current national examination system in order to allow more people in the private sector with overseas knowledge and language

The Kansai region has long had stronger trade relations with East and Southeast Asia than the Tokyo region. Kansai's political and economic leaders have never made their 'Asia First' worldview a secret.

skills to become involved with formal diplomacy. Their second proposal is to establish a national graduate school that specializes in training students to think more effectively about diplomatic and security issues, with the hope that graduates go on to a career as diplomatic specialists.

The Kansai business leaders envision classes attended by Jap-

anese with backgrounds in politics and international relations and being tutored by Japanese and international diplomatic and security experts while networking with foreign scholars from international universities and think tanks. The new graduate school would also offer high-level foreign language training, with an emphasis on the kinds of language and communication skills needed in modern diplomatic negotiations.

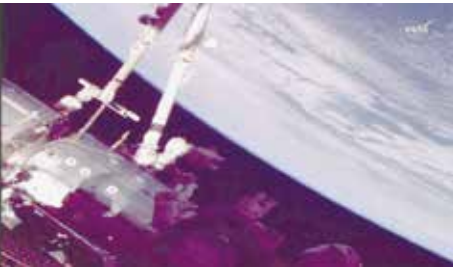
The proposal is to be welcomed for offering sincere answers to very difficult questions about what, exactly, the structure of diplomacy in 21st century should be, and not only in Japan. Nobody would disagree that diplomats everywhere need all the help they can get. Or that Japanese diplomats, notoriously reticent at international conferences and often quite poor at dealing with the international media, would benefit from increased language and communication training.

But the private sector is ultimately responsible only to the

needs of a narrow group of shareholders, not the country. Business is about making a profit this quarter. Diplomacy is, ultimately, about the art of preventing war. A corps of professional diplomats who don't also have complex financial ties and personal loyalties to private firms is a good thing, not a bad thing.

In an age where corporations exercise more influence over our lives than ever, it's easy to assume business types playing a bigger role in official diplomacy is desirable, natural and inevitable. The proposals of the Kansai executives will sound good to many. But attempts by those heretofore involved in Track II diplomacy to jump onto Track I diplomacy without first establishing clear lines of responsibility, high standards of transparency, and strict legal accountability risks running Japan's diplomatic efforts off the rails.

View from Osaka is a monthly column that examines the latest news from a Kansai perspective.



JAXA astronaut Norishige Kanai (left) and NASA astronaut Mark Vande Hei conduct a spacewalk outside the International Space Station on Friday in this NASA photo.

AP

Japan-U.S. spacewalk fixes ISS's robotic arm

Washington
AFP-JJJI

Two astronauts from Japan and the United States have conducted a spacewalk to repair the International Space Station's robotic arm and put equipment in storage.

The spacewalk on Friday was the first by Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) astronaut Norishige Kanai and the fourth for his U.S. counterpart Mark Vande Hei.

The outing began at 7 a.m. when the duo switched their spacesuits to battery power before venturing into the vacuum of space. The excursion was expected to last 6½ hours but ended up lasting 7 hours and 24 minutes, according to NASA's Space Station blog.

Kanai, 41, is a doctor and diver who goes by the nickname "Neemo." The Tokyo-born lieutenant from the Maritime Self-Defense Force became an astronaut in 2009 and is the fourth Japanese to walk in space.

He also spent 13 days in the Aquarius, an underwater lab off

Florida, in 2015 as part of NASA's Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) crew.

The goal of the spacewalk is to move components related to the orbiting outpost's Canadian-built robotic arm, known as Canadarm2, an aging but crucial piece of equipment that has undergone a series of repairs in recent months. The arm is used to move astronauts and heavy equipment outside the research laboratory.

The astronauts must move a spare gadget called the Latching End Effector from a storage spot outside the ISS into the Quest air lock so it can be returned to Earth on a future cargo mission for refurbishment and eventual relaunch.

"This LEE was replaced during an Expedition 53 spacewalk in October 2017," NASA said in a statement.

"They also will move an aging, but functional, LEE that was detached from the arm during a January 23 spacewalk and move it from its temporary storage outside the airlock to a long-term storage location."

That LEE will be kept at the station as a spare.

In brief

Kono, Lavrov agree to hasten isle plan

Munich

KYODO — Foreign Minister Taro Kono and Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov agreed Friday to accelerate work on starting joint economic activities on Russian-held islands claimed by Japan off Hokkaido.

At a meeting in Munich, they also decided to meet again in Tokyo on March 21 to prepare for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Russia in May and his summit with President Vladimir Putin, Japanese officials said.

Kono lodged a protest with Lavrov over a Russian military exercise being held on the isles, as well as over Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's approval of military activities at a civilian airport on the one called Etorofu, which Russia calls Iturup, they said.

The dignitaries are in Germany for the Munich Security Conference, which runs until Sunday.

"I want the two of us to make preparations between ourselves so we can move forward various bilateral projects during Prime Minister Abe's visit to Russia in May," Kono said.

Release of new era name faces delay

JJJI — The government might not announce the name of the new era to be kicked off by Crown Prince Naruhito's accession to the Chrysanthemum Throne in 2019 until the end of the year or later, sources said.

The government wants to release the name early enough to prevent public confusion and disruption to economic activities, but there are concerns that an unnecessarily early announcement could also create confusion and heated debate on the choice for the name.

There are also worries that once the new era name is unveiled, public attention will shift quickly from Emperor Akihito — who is to abdicate on April 30, 2019 — to his successor, who will claim the throne on May 1.

One idea circulating in the government is to postpone the announcement until a Feb. 24, 2019, ceremony is held to mark the 30th anniversary on Jan. 7 of Emperor Akihito's enthronement, the sources said Friday.

Tax bureaus hit by Moritomo protests

JJJI

Demonstrators took to streets in a dozen cities Friday to demand the dismissal of National Tax Agency Commissioner Nobuhisa Sagawa, who is accused of giving false Diet testimony about a shady deal involving a chunk of state land sold on the cheap to a nationalist school entity.

The demonstrations outside tax offices in Tokyo, Sapporo, Nagoya, Fukuoka and other major cities coincided with the start of the 2017 tax filing period. Opposition lawmakers joined the protests.

Opposition parties accuse Sagawa of giving false Diet testimony over a heavily discounted piece of state land sold to Moritomo Gakuen, a school chain linked to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's wife, Akie.

In Tokyo, nearly a thousand people gathered outside the National Tax Agency building in Chiyoda Ward.

Anger at Sagawa "made us take this action," said Satoshi Daigo, an honorary professor at the University of Tokyo who was one of the leaders of the demonstrations.

Opposition parties accuse Sagawa of giving false testimony in the Diet over a heavily discounted piece of state land sold to Moritomo Gakuen.

During Diet meetings last year, Sagawa, then director-general of the Finance Ministry's Financial Bureau, repeatedly claimed the ministry had destroyed the records of its negotiations with Moritomo, which planned to open an elementary school on the plot in question in Toyonaka, Osaka Prefecture.

But earlier this year, when the ministry released internal documents related to contracts with Moritomo on the land sale, Finance Minister Taro Aso claimed that they did not include records of the actual negotiations for it.

The ministry sold the plot at a huge discount, citing the presence of buried waste at the site. Opposition lawmakers suspect the min-

istry offered the unfair discount because of Moritomo's ties with Akie Abe, who gave a speech at the ultranationalist school at the request of Yasunori Kagoike, its president at the time.

Later, the Board of Audit pointed out in a special report that it did not find any factors that would justify the roughly 90 percent discount, giving more ammo to the opposition camp in the Diet.

Abe and Aso are responsible for appointing someone who, as chief of the tax agency, lied to the Diet, said 73-year-old Tokyo demonstrator Tsutomu Watanabe.

In the city of Osaka, where Moritomo is based, about 50 people gathered outside the regional tax bureau to vent their frustration.

"Nobody takes responsibility and the commissioner gave no explanation for selling out the Japanese people's assets at a cut-rate price," said Toyonaka Municipal Assemblyman Makoto Kimura, 53. "This can't be happening!"

"I don't feel like filing a tax return when I feel that taxes will be used for friends of the prime minister," the manager of design company said. "I want to know the truth."

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Mueller's move could set stage for charges against Americans

U.S. special counsel indicts Russians

ANALYSIS

London/Washington
REUTERS, AP

An indictment Friday by special counsel Robert Mueller of 13 Russian individuals and three organizations for allegedly interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election sets the stage for the prosecution of Americans who may have helped the Russian effort, some legal experts say.

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein told reporters there was no allegation in the indictment that any American knew about the alleged scheme. It said Russians did contact "unwitting" members of the campaign of Donald Trump in a bid to support him while denigrating his opponent Hillary Clinton.

The federal indictment represents the most detailed allegations to date of illegal Russian meddling during the campaign that sent Trump to the White House. It also marks the first criminal charges against Russians who are believed to have secretly worked to influence the outcome.

The Russian organization was funded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the indictment says. He is a wealthy St. Petersburg businessman with ties to the Russian government and President Vladimir Putin.

The indictment does not resolve the collusion question at the heart

of the continuing Mueller probe, which before Friday had produced charges against four Trump associates. U.S. intelligence agencies have previously said the Russian government interfered to benefit Trump, including by orchestrating the hacking of Democratic emails, and Mueller has been assessing whether the campaign coordinated with the Kremlin.

The latest indictment does not focus on "the how," but instead centers on a suspected propaganda campaign in 2014 and continues through the election, with the goal of producing distrust in the American political process. Trump himself has been reluctant to acknowledge the interference and any role that it might have played in propelling him to the White House.

The indictment does not allege that any American knowingly participated in Russian meddling, or suggest that Trump campaign associates had more than "unwitting" contact with some of the defendants who posed as Americans during election season. It does lay out a vast and wide-ranging effort to sway political opinion in the United States.

But the indictment said the Russians conspired "with persons known and unknown," which could include Americans.

"While they went to great pains to say they are not indicting any Americans today, if I was an American and I did cooperate

with Russians, I would be extremely frightened to say," said former federal prosecutor Patrick Quinn. The House took a different view, releasing a statement that Trump had been misled on the matter and was misled to see the Special Counsel's investigation further indicates there was NO COLLUSION between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Mueller has been silent on where the probe is headed. It has so far led to guilty pleas from Trump's former national security adviser and a one-time campaign aide to lying to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as indictments of former campaign manager Paul Manafort and Manafort's business partner Rick Gates.

Moscow has denied meddling in the election. Leah Litman, a law professor at the University of California, Irvine, said that means the Russian government is extremely unlikely to turn over any of its nationals for U.S. prosecution. There is no formal extradition agreement between the United States and Russia.

There is no crime called "collusion" in U.S. law, but former federal prosecutor Randall Eliason, now a professor at George Washington University Law School, said the same conduct is often covered by the offense of conspiracy.



Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein speaks to reporters at the Department of Justice in Washington on Friday. BLOOMBERG

"The fact is that collusion is potentially a crime," Eliason said. "This has always been clear, and it is even clearer now."

The indictment alleges a scheme to impede the functioning of the U.S. Federal Election Commission and other government agencies. Prosecutors also accuse the Russians of opening bank accounts under false names and unlawfully using stolen identities of Americans to post on social media in support of Trump.

To charge an American with conspiracy, legal experts said,

Mueller would need to show that person was aware the Russians were trying to interfere in the election and knowingly aided them.

For example, people who participated in activities to support the Trump campaign could be charged if they knew Russians had organized them to help sway the vote. If an American helped direct the Russian acts, that could lead to charges as well, said Harvard Law School professor Alex Whiting.

"If there were meetings between the Trump campaign

and the Russians, and the Trump campaign officials encouraged the Russians or guided them to particular types of work, or provided them assistance so that they could focus their interference, that would be collusion," said Whiting, a former federal prosecutor.

Some experts said Friday's indictment does not indicate Mueller's probe is broadening.

Bill Jeffress, a criminal defense lawyer at the law firm Baker Botts, said he thought it was significant that Mueller made clear that members of the campaign only dealt with Russians unwittingly.

"If they had enough evidence that an American were complicit they would have included it," said Jeffress.

But Cotter said the narrative set forth in the indictment could easily include many more participants. "The net is tightening," he said. "They have moved up a whole other step on the ladder."

In brief

Kelly overhauls clearance system

New York

AP — Under pressure over his handling of abuse allegations against a top aide, White House chief of staff John Kelly on Friday ordered sweeping changes in how the White House clears staffers to gain access to classified information, acknowledging that the administration "must do better" in how it handles security clearances.

Kelly issued a five-page memo that acknowledged White House mistakes but also put the onus on the FBI and the Justice Department to provide more timely updates on background investigations, asking that any significant derogatory information about staff members be quickly flagged to the White House Counsel's office.

The issue has been in the spotlight for more than a week after it was revealed that former staff secretary Rob Porter had an interim security clearance that allowed him access to classified material despite allegations of domestic violence by his two ex-wives.

Dozens of White House aides have been working under interim clearances for months.

Romney announces bid for Senate seat

Salt Lake City

AP — Former presidential hopeful Mitt Romney is running for a Utah Senate seat, officially launching his political comeback attempt Friday by praising his adopted home state as a model for the acrimonious national government in Washington.

Having been one of the Republican Party's fiercest critics of President Donald Trump, Romney didn't mention the administration or Trump himself in a campaign announcement posted online. The closest allusion to Trump was Romney noting that Utah "welcomes legal immigrants from around the world while Washington sends them grants a message of exclusion."

In an interview Friday, Romney said he will continue to speak out when he takes exception to something the president says or does. "I call them like I see them. Neither he nor I are likely to change very much," Romney said, adding that they could work together on policy.

Romney, 70, will be the heavy favorite for the Senate seat being opened by Sen. Orrin Hatch's retirement.

Failure to avert shooting adds to pressure on FBI

FOCUS

Washington
AP

The revelation that the FBI botched a tip on the Florida school shooting suspect is a devastating blow to America's top law enforcement agency at a time when it is already under extraordinary political pressure.

Even before the disclosure that the FBI had failed to investigate a warning that the suspect, Nikolas Cruz, could be plotting an attack, the bureau was facing unprecedented criticism from President Donald Trump and other Republicans.

The agency and its supporters had been able to dismiss past criticism as just politics, but this time it had no option but to admit it had made a mistake.

The FBI's acknowledgment that it mishandled the tip prompted a sharp rebuke from its boss, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and a call from Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott, a Trump ally, for FBI Director Christopher Wray to resign.

Wray, on the job for just six months, had already been in a precarious position defending the bureau from attacks by Trump and other Republicans. They are still dissatisfied with its decision not to charge Hillary Clinton with crimes related to her use of a private email server, and they see signs of bias in special counsel Robert Mueller's probe of possible Trump campaign ties to Russia.

Wray has repeatedly stood up to Trump, defending the bureau's independence and praising its agents. Wray unsuccessfully fought to block the release of a classified Republican memo accusing the FBI of abusing its surveillance powers in the Russia probe — a document Trump wanted aired. Wray also publicly contradicted White House accounts of how it handled recent domestic abuse allegations involving an aide.

The shooting provides fresh grounds to criticize the FBI. First it was revealed that the FBI failed to delve into a YouTube comment posted by a "Nikolas Cruz" that said, "I'm going to do professional school shooting. The FBI said it could not find anyone who made it."

On Friday, the bureau said it had found the "Nikolas Cruz" on the Internet. "He is a very good shot," said Aaron Diener, 20, who gave Cruz a ride to shooting competitions when they were part of the four-member team in 2016. "He had an AR-15 he talked about, and pistols he had shot. ... He would tell us, 'Oh, it was so fun to shoot this rifle' or 'It was so fun to shoot that.' It seemed almost therapeutic to him, the way he spoke about it."

The marksmanship program used air rifles special-made for target shooting, typically on indoor ranges at targets the size of a coin. Records show that the Stone-

Republican, said it was "inexcusable" the FBI did not follow protocols and urged Congress to launch its own investigation. Democratic Rep. Ted Deutch of Florida promised to be in "close communication with the FBI so we can get to the bottom of this."

Wray apologized in a rare statement admitting the FBI's missteps.

This isn't the first time the FBI has been seen as missing an opportunity to prevent a major

violent attack. The white supremacist who killed nine people at a historically black church in South Carolina in 2015 was able to purchase his weapon only because of breakdowns in the FBI's background check system.

Congress in 2009 criticized the FBI for missteps ahead of a shooting that left 13 people dead at Fort Hood, Texas, after finding that agents had failed to act on emails between the gunman and terrorist Anwar al-Awlaki.



Mourners in Parkland, Florida, on Thursday hold a candlelight vigil for the victims of Wednesday's shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in which 14 students and three staffers were killed. AFP-JUP

Suspect's rifle team got grant from NRA

Washington/Boston
AP

The troubled teen who authorities say killed 17 people at a Florida high school excelled at an air rifle marksmanship team supported by a grant from the National Rifle Association.

The shooting provides fresh grounds to criticize the FBI. First it was revealed that the FBI failed to delve into a YouTube comment posted by a "Nikolas Cruz" that said, "I'm going to do professional school shooting. The FBI said it could not find anyone who made it."

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man Douglas JROTC program received \$10,827 in noncash assistance from the NRA's fundraising and charitable arm in 2016, when Cruz was on the squad.

The more than 1,700 high school JROTC programs nationally also receive financial support from the U.S. military and are typically supervised by retired officers from the army, navy, air force and marines. The military collaborates with school systems on the training curriculum, which includes marching drills, athletic competitions and shooting teams.

Authorities say Cruz, who was expelled last year for disciplinary reasons, walked into his former school with an AR-15 and opened fire. He is charged with 17 counts of murder.

Kyle Ramos, who was the executive officer of the JROTC battalion, said Cruz spoke about guns and knives incessantly and liked to wear military-style clothing to school. He also bragged about shooting animals for fun.

"He told me he would attack little animals with pellet guns and stuff, and I was a little weirded out by that," said Ramos, now 20.

Cruz talked of wanting to join the army after graduation and become an elite special forces soldier, a dream potentially derailed by his expulsion.

Arsu Noorali, a former JROTC cadet, remembers talking to Cruz's mother about his behavioral problems. "She told me, 'Look, he's not the best of kids, I really hope this program can change him,'" she recounted. "Because it does teach you a lot of discipline. It becomes fun after a while."

Ex-student activist takes center stage in Korean detente

Seoul
REUTERS

In 1989, a 22-year-old South Korean student caused an uproar when she sneaked into North Korea and was filmed advocating for unification and meeting leader Kim Il Sung.

The unauthorized visit was orchestrated by Im Jong-seok, a prominent student democracy activist who is now chief of staff of South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

Nearly 30 years on, the 51-year-old Im is now playing a pivotal role in an inter-Korean detente fostered by the Winter Games in Pyeongchang, officials and experts say.

The liberal president is banking on Im, and a handful of other key players, to rebuild inter-Korean ties strained by nearly a decade of conservative rule in the South and the North's accelerating nuclear and missile programs.

But for critics in the South, Im is at the center of concern that Seoul may prioritize cross-border rapprochement over an airtight alliance with the United States. Already, they fear, the Winter Olympics has become a propaganda tool for the North.



Im Jong-seok, the chief presidential secretary for South Korean President Moon Jae-in, greets Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, before a banquet at a hotel in Seoul on Feb. 11. PRESIDENTIAL BLUE HOUSE / YONHAP / VIA REUTERS

After North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a surprise invitation this month for Moon to visit Pyongyang, Im is now being floated as a possible special envoy to North Korea to discuss the proposal.

The intelligence service chief, Suh Hoon, and Unification Minister Cho Myong-gyon are among the candidates under consideration, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Suh and Cho both served in an earlier liberal administration that spearheaded the Sunshine Policy of inter-Korean engagement. A beaming Im attended a meeting and lunch Moon hosted for Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, at the presidential Blue House on Feb. 10. Im also hosted a farewell dinner for Kim's delegation.

Back in his student days, Im was imprisoned for 3½ years for violating national security laws for his

role in the unauthorized visit to North Korea by the student, who was also arrested on her return.

Im has hit back at accusations he and his fellow former student activists are pro-North Korea.

"Most of the people you mentioned (former activists) have risked their lives to fight for democracy," Im told a lawmaker in parliament last November. "I have not led a shameful life."

Many student activists during South Korea's military rule in the 1980s studied and even sympathized with the North's ruling ideology of *juche* — a concoction of Marxism and an extreme form of go-it-alone nationalism championed by Kim Il Sung.

"Now we see things with a much more skeptical eye, having been to the North and seen it for ourselves," said Lee In-young, another former activist and now lawmaker of Moon's party. "We're not North Korea sympathizers, as some would put it, but may have a warmer heart and more patience than others toward peace."

Known for his affable character and coordination skills as Moon's chief of staff, Im has deeply engaged himself in everything from policymaking to personnel appointments at the Blue House while shunning the limelight.

Im oversaw Moon's speeches at key anniversaries where the president voiced his opposition to war and said he willing to return to dialogue with the North if it stops nuclear and missile tests.

Officials, however, said they are leaning more toward Suh or Cho, given conservative criticism of Im. "I know there are many names being mentioned, but Suh is an expert and would be the best choice," said Chung Se-hyun, a former unification minister who advises Moon on inter-Korean affairs. "In inter-Korean relations, it is critical to understand the North's ... inner workings."

Suh led a series of talks in the run-up to two inter-Korean summits, first in 2000 and then 2007. Suh, as a top spy official, and Moon, then chief of staff to President Roh Moo-hyun, were instrumental in setting up the 2007 meeting.

The Blue House said Im is playing the "natural role" expected as chief of staff, without elaborating.

But his ubiquitous presence during the Olympics-related detente contrasts with national security adviser Chung Eui-yong, who was only invited to the Blue House lunch, and other top foreign and defense officials who were nowhere to be seen.

In top China broadcast, blackface

Beijing
AP

A comedy sketch that featured a Chinese woman in blackface has drawn accusations of racism after being broadcast on Chinese state television's Lunar New Year variety show, although some people in Beijing were left wondering why it would be considered offensive.

The skit was shown Thursday night on CCTV and depicted the opening of a Chinese-built high-speed railway in Kenya. It featured actors in monkey and giraffe costumes, while the actress in blackface wore an exaggerated false bottom and carried a basket of fruit on her head.

The segment was meant to celebrate Sino-African relations, but many viewers blasted it online for cultural insensitivity.

The performance was part of CCTV's annual Lunar New Year gala, which draws an audience of up to 800 million and is said to be one of the most watched programs in the world.

The 13-minute segment opened with a dance sequence set to Colombian singer Shakira's "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)" featuring Africans dressed in zebra, lion and gazelle costumes, and actresses playing attendants on Kenya's new Chinese-built high-speed rail line.

The skit then began with a black woman asking the show's host to pose as her husband when meeting her mother in order to avoid being set up on a blind date.

A Chinese actress playing her mother then strides in made up in blackface followed by an actor in a monkey costume.

The host's Chinese wife then appears, ending the deception. But the African mother says she can't be angry because "China has



An Asian woman in blackface makes a racist dance sequence from a skit shown on Chinese state television Thursday night. Right: The woman in blackface performs with a person in a monkey costume. CCTV / VIA AP

done so much for Africa."

"I love Chinese people! I love China," the actress in blackface exclaims.

Although the skit, titled "Same Joy, Same Happiness," was meant to celebrate Sino-African relations, many viewers condemned it online, with some calling it "cringe-worthy" and "completely racist."

But the reaction on the streets of Beijing on Friday was muted, with some saying the criticism was overblown.

"It's normal for Chinese actors to dress up like foreigners when performing a foreign play," said Zhou Hengshan, 80. "This wasn't meant to demean any specific ethnic group."

Xue Lixia, 20, said she trusted



CCTV's judgment in assessing whether the skit was racist.

"After all, this is a sketch that was broadcast on the Lunar New Year gala. If there was any racism, then it would have already been cut," Liu said.

Chinese society is overwhelmingly dominated by the Han ethnic majority and racial sensitivities are generally much less pronounced than in the West.

Blackface is considered espe-

cially offensive in the United States because of its strong connections to slavery and bigotry against blacks.

This isn't the first time CCTV's Lunar New Year gala has come under fire. The show is laden with praise for the ruling Communist Party. Its portrayals of China's own ethnic minorities, particularly Muslim Uighurs from the northwestern region of Xinjiang, have sometimes been derided as crude.

U.S. tallies growing costs of cyberwar

Washington
AFP-JULI

Cyberattacks cost the United States between \$57 billion and \$109 billion in 2016, a White House report said Friday, warning of a "spillover" effect for the broader economy if the situation worsens.

A report by the White House Council of Economic Advisers sought to quantify what it called "malicious cyber activity directed at private and public entities," including denial-of-service attacks, data breaches and theft of intellectual property, and sensitive financial and strategic information.

It warned of malicious activity by "nation-states" and specifically cited Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

The report noted particular concern over attacks on so-called critical infrastructure — such as highways, power grids, communications systems, dams and food production facilities — that could lead to important spillover impacts beyond the target victims.

"If a firm owns a critical infrastructure asset, an attack against this firm could cause major disruption throughout the economy," the report said.

It added that concerns are high around cyberattacks against the financial and energy sectors.

"These sectors are internally interconnected and interdependent with other sectors as well as robustly connected to the internet, and are thus at a highest risk for a devastating cyberattack that would ripple through the entire economy," it said.

The report offered little in the way of new recommendations on improving cybersecurity, but noted that the situation is hurt by "insufficient data" as well as "underinvestment" in defensive systems by the private sector.

The document was issued a day after U.S. officials blamed Russia for last year's devastating "NotPetya" ransomware attack, calling it a Kremlin effort to destabilize Ukraine that then spun out of control, hitting companies in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere.

It said Russia, China, North Korea and other nation-states "often engage in sophisticated, targeted attacks," with a specific emphasis on industrial espionage.

"If they have funding needs, they may conduct ransom attacks and electronic thefts of funds."

Threats were also seen from politically motivated "hacktivists," as well as criminal organizations, corporate competitors, company insiders and "opportunists."

The report said more data sharing could help thwart some attacks.

"The field of cybersecurity is plagued by insufficient data, largely because firms face a strong disincentive to report negative news," the report said. "Cyber protection could be greatly improved if data on past data breaches and cyberattacks were more readily shared across firms."

Opinion

letters@japantimes.co.jp

Work-style reform legislation

EDITORIAL

A package of work-style reforms, which Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says is at the top of his agenda for this legislative session, will soon be on the way to the Diet for deliberations. It will feature the introduction of the first-ever legal cap on overtime hours, rules aimed at establishing the "equal work, equal pay" principle by improving working conditions for people with irregular job statuses and a new system that allows some corporate employees to be paid on the basis of their performance rather than hours spent in the workplace. The legislation, expected to be approved by the Cabinet and submitted to the Diet by the end of this month, marks an important first step, but it needs to be backed up by further efforts for the measures to have the intended effects.

The government views work-style reform as a solution to many of the problems that confront Japan's economy. Curbing the chronically long working hours of company employees through tightened regulations on overtime, with provisions for penalties on violators, is hoped to promote a better work-life balance among workers and encourage more

women and the elderly to join the workforce — thus alleviating the manpower shortage as the nation's working-age population declines. Narrowing the wide disparity in wages and other conditions between regular full-time employees and irregular workers such as part-timers and contract workers, who have come to account for 40 percent of the labor force, will hopefully enhance the latter's morale and productivity. Increased wages for those workers will raise their purchasing power and contribute to consumer spending, whose growth remains weak despite an extended growth of the economy.

It would be premature, however, to assume that the legislation alone will realize such a scenario. It is the first time since the Labor Standards Law was introduced seven decades ago that an upper limit will be placed on workers' monthly overtime hours; currently, how much overtime is allowed for workers during busy seasons is left to an agreement between management and labor unions at each firm. The prime minister emphasizes his resolve to "never repeat the tragedies" of *karoshi* (death from overwork) or suicides of over-stressed workers through the reform. But the upper limit under the legislation was set at a maximum of "less than 100 hours" a month — a level at which death can be linked to overwork —

following negotiations among the government and representatives from business and labor circles.

Today, people on irregular job contracts typically earn about 60 percent of the hourly wage of regular full-time employees — compared with 70 to 80 percent in many European economies. To narrow the gap, the government in late 2016 unveiled a draft guideline showing examples of "irrational" discrimination in wages and welfare benefits on the basis of employment status that should be eliminated. But whether such measures will effectively improve conditions for workers with an irregular status will depend on efforts by private sector firms.

The government's work-style reform package also introduces a new "highly professional" work system, under which overtime regulations can be lifted on people engaged in certain jobs requiring specialized skills, such as financial dealers or people in research and development, who earn ¥10.75 million or more a year. Also included in the package will be expanding the scope of jobs that can be covered by the so-called discretionary labor scheme, in which people would be paid a pre-fixed amount for the hours they are presumed to spend on the job — instead of the hours they have actually spent. Both systems, the government says, reward workers on

the basis of performance instead of hours. Proponents of these systems say this makes sense because productivity of white-collar workers cannot be gauged by time in the office and that lifting work-hour regulations can add to efficiency. Opponents such as labor unions and opposition parties charge that people could end up working longer hours without extra pay.

Critics say the legislation is short on steps to protect workers' health and long on measures reflecting the interests of employers. Such criticism has been fueled by the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry's recent move to seek revisions to the planned legislation that would delay implementation of the overtime hour regulations for small and medium-size firms by a year — to April 2020 — in response to a request from the Liberal Democratic Party, which was acting on complaints from such firms that they cannot secure enough labor to run their business if the overtime regulation is imposed amid the tightening labor shortage.

What needs to be done to ensure that the planned reform will have the desired benefits should be sufficiently discussed in the Diet.



Use this QR Code to link to an audio version of this article

Democrats hijack the anti-Trump resistance

Ted Rall
New York

Leftists want to change the world. They want peace, equal income, equal wealth, equal rights for everybody.

Democrats are not part of the Left. If Democrats have their way, the fundamental inequality of American capitalism, a system in which 1 percent of the people "earn" 82 percent of the income, will never change. Democrats apply identity politics as a distraction, in lieu of systematic solutions to class-based discrimination. Democrats demand more women directors in Hollywood, more African-Americans admitted to Ivy League schools, transgendered soldiers in the military so they can join the slaughter of brown people in other countries.

Donald Trump represented a rare opportunity for the Left. After eight years of fascism with a smile, the American system got a figurehead as visually and tonally repugnant as its foreign policy (drones, aggressive wars, coups, undermining popular elected leaders) and its domestic reality (widespread poverty, crumbling infrastructure, no social safety net, for-profit health care and education). "Hey," the Left could finally say, "the U.S. is a disgusting monster headed by a disgusting monster. Let's get rid of that monster!" It has become painfully apparent that

Democrats have hijacked the anti-Trump resistance.

"I feel like the revolution is now," a demonstrator at the second Women's March on Jan. 20 told a New York Times reporter. "I want equal pay," added her 11-year-old daughter, Xenaya, chimed in. "And equal rights."

Definition of "revolution": "a forcible overthrow of a government or social order in favor of a new system."

At those very same marches, however, (establishment Democratic) speakers like Nancy Pelosi and Kirsten Gillibrand urged women to run for office (presumably as Democrats) and to support Democratic candidates (whether they're women or men). Even if you think that is a beautiful and important idea, it is not revolution.

Running for office and validating the status quo by voting for major-party candidates is the exact opposite of revolution. USA Today's take was typical: "Women's March returns, but the real focus now is the midterm elections." The paper quotes Linda Meigs, who is challenging a GOP incumbent in Alabama: "I just feel there's a blue wave coming, and I want women — women who were left out by the Women's March and have been on in Washington in the white house."

Meigs is probably right. Democrats and republicans think so.

Even if Democrats take back the House and the Senate, women resistors who fall

the Dems' co-option game hoping for "equal pay" and "equal rights" will be sorely disappointed. Not because Trump will get in the way — because Democrats won't fight for anything substantial.

Consider the Democrat most Women's Marchers probably voted for. Like the rest of her fellow Democrats, Hillary Clinton (a multimillionaire) supported raising the minimum wage to a pitiful \$12 per hour, but had merely kept up with inflation. It would be \$23 per hour now. Given the increase in worker productivity, it ought to be at least \$25 per hour. Clinton's been in the century-late-than-neo for a while. The long-stalled Equal Rights Amendment. But Democrats continue to use the House, House and Senate as a platform to never mentioned it.

Even on the signature identity-politics issue of abortion rights, Democrats have hijacked a form of psychological terrorism against women. Unless you vote for the Dems, you've been telling women, some of them an president might appoint a Supreme Court justice who might cast the deciding vote to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Women and their partners shouldn't have to rely on a wobbly 45-year-old court decision. Why don't Democrats ever propose a bill legalizing abortion nationwide? Considering that 58 percent of voters, including many Republicans, support abortion rights, and that Democrats could characterize congressional opponents as

misogynists in attack ads, it's entirely possible that an abortion-rights law could pass Congress. They certainly could have tried under Obama. But they didn't.

There is no reason — zero, none, nada — to believe that the Democratic Party's 161-year-old refusal to lift a finger to help the disenfranchised will change if or when they win back Congress. Which is a squandering of the anti-Trump moment so tragic. It's time for the actually-existing American Left to do some serious soul-searching, analysis and — most of all — organizing. Why didn't militant leftists insist on greater prominence at the Women's Marches than those Democratic hacks? Where is the grass-roots organizing? Where are the left-wing think tanks to create an intellectual and theoretical basis for our arguments? Why aren't there protests daily, as opposed to annually? Trump and the Republicans and the Democrats shouldn't be able to show their faces in public without facing a crowd of loud and angry protesters.

It's not like the Democrats are a fiendishly clever adversary! Allowing the idiots who chose Hillary over Bernie to steal anti-Trumpism points to complete impotence and political incompetence on the part of what's left of the Left.

Ted Rall's latest book is "Meet the Deplorables: Infiltrating Trump America," co-written with Harmon Leon.

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North heads for gold medal in diplomacy

- Pyongyang looks to divide allies
- Moves may result in eased sanctions
- Abe irritates host with push on drills

World
Pyeongchang South Korea
REUTERS

North Korea has emerged as the early favorite to grab one of the Winter Olympics' most important medals: the diplomatic gold.

That is the assessment of a former South Korean government minister and political experts who say the North has used the games to drive a wedge between South Korea and its U.S. ally and to potentially ease pressure on its sanctions-crippled state.

In barely a month since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un surprised the world and said his nation was ready to join the games, South Korean President Moon Jae-in has delayed military exercises, feted Kim's sister at the Pyeongchang Olympics and given conditional consent to a bilateral summit in the North.

"North Korea clearly appears to be winning the gold," said Kim Sung-han, who served as Korea's vice foreign minister in 2012-13 and who now teaches at Seoul's Korea University. "Its delegation and athletes are getting all the spotlight, and Kim Jong Un's sister is showing elegant smiles before the South Korean public and the world. Even for a moment, it appears to be a normal state."

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, who attended Friday's opening ceremony alongside the North Koreans, said no high-level talks existed between the two sides. South Korea said it still has the need to isolate North Korea.

A U.S. official said more important would be how Pyongyang behaved after the Olympics. It had shown no interest so far in negotiating over demands to give up its nuclear and missile programs.

Pence cast one of the loneliest figures at the opening event. He remained seated when the joint Korean team entered the stadium, in contrast to Moon who stood along with Kim Jong Un's younger sister, Kim Yo Jong, to applaud.

Douglas Paal, a former senior U.S. diplomat under previous Republican administrations, said North Korea held the propaganda edge for now because, "it's tough not to get caught up in the emotions of an Olympics event."

But he said it would be hard for Moon to keep up the momentum

after conservative allies abroad remind him what is at stake in the North Korean nuclear threat.

The warm North-South body language at the games not only masked a split between Seoul and Pyongyang, it contrasted with the tense encounter between South Korea and Japan, an ally in U.S.-led efforts to pressure North Korea. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who seemed uncomfortable at times during the opening ceremony, irritated his hosts by telling the South Korean leader that joint South Korea-U.S. military drills should be promptly resumed after the games.

To pave the way for the North's participation at Pyeongchang, South Korea had delayed the annual exercises with U.S. forces, which usually take place between February and March, until after the Olympics. "Now is not the time to postpone U.S.-South Korea military exercises," Abe said, according to South's presidential Blue House. Moon replied that it was not appropriate for Abe to have raised the issue, describing it as an internal affair.

Japan does not participate in the military exercises, but it is within reach of North Korean missiles and relies heavily on U.S. forces and their readiness to deal with that threat. "For Japan it's a nightmare scenario," said Takashi Kawakami, a professor of international politics at Takushoku University in Tokyo.



North Korean supporters cheer on an athlete during the 2018 Winter Olympics in Gangneung, South Korea, on Feb. 10. AP

North Korea is under a heavy U.N. sanctions regime which was originally targeted at stopping the proliferation of arms and nuclear and missile technologies, but has become more all-encompassing after its accelerated missile testing.

After years of ineffective implementation, those sanctions may have begun to finally bite, which, according to a Japanese government official and experts, helps explain why Kim Jong Un agreed to send a national team and his sister to the Olympics.

A foreign resident living in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, said he had seen fewer people in

Kim sister steals spotlight in South

World
Seoul
AFP-JJI

A friendly face promising better times, or a mask to conceal a brutal dictatorship? South Koreans are divided on Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the North's leader, and her landmark visit to their country.

The first member of the North's ruling dynasty to set foot in the South since the end of the war, Kim has been an instant object of fascination for South Korean and global media since she rode down the escalator at Incheon airport Friday, calmly surveying the scene.

She shook hands several times with the South's President Moon Jae-in, cheered a unified ice hockey team with him, and conveyed her brother's invitation to a summit in Pyongyang.

Every detail of her visit as the key member of a diplomatic delegation to the South's Winter Olympics has been scrutinized, from the clothes she wore and her facial expression to the bag she was carrying and even her handwriting.

One calligraphy expert described her as "positive, upbeat and very goal-oriented" based on the precisely angular, somewhat girlish script she left in the guest book at the South's presidential Blue House.

Her brother — the third generation of her family to rule the isolated and impoverished North — will be pleased with her international diplomatic debut, said Yang Moo-jin, professor at the University of North Korean Studies at Seoul. "Kim kept smiling but at the same time was rarely seen having



South Korean President Moon Jae-in talks with Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, after watching a Sunday performance by the North's Samjiyon Orchestra in Seoul. YONHAP / VIA REUTERS

her head down during the visit, even to our president," he said. "So maybe Kim Jong Un must be applauding at home."

But reactions among ordinary South Koreans have been more mixed. "They fired missiles until recently and conducted a nuclear test before suddenly launching this peace campaign," businessman Kim Byoung-gwan said. "I don't trust it."

Others questioned the attention devoted to her.

"All the media in the South and the around the world are going gaga about Kim Yo Jong," said one commentator online. "Looks like they would soon join the North's propaganda media to worship and idolize her."

Moon has long pushed engagement with the North — which is

accused of widespread human rights abuses and subject to multiple sets of U.N. sanctions over its banned nuclear and ballistic missile programs — to bring it to the negotiating table.

His approval ratings have fallen since the deal for the North to take part in the Games was struck, with the decision to field a unified women's ice hockey team proving particularly controversial.

But one of the most widely welcomed moments of Kim Yo Jong's visit was when both she and the North's ceremonial head of state Kim Yong Nam stood as the South's flag was raised and anthem played at the Olympics opening ceremony in Pyeongchang.

"I hate Moon and I hate the North," read an online comment. "But the scene was undeniably

impressive. I hope the action came from sincerity for peace, not a fake gesture."

Educated in Switzerland like her brother, Kim Yo Jong has risen rapidly up the ranks since Kim Jong Un inherited power from their father Kim Jong Il, and she is now one of his closest confidantes in a country where elite politics have always been a family affair.

Officially she is first vice department director of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party, and has a position in its important propaganda operations.

But Yang explained her most vital role: "She is one of a very few people who can talk freely about anything with the leader Kim."

Believed to be aged 30, her existence was barely known to the wider world until Kim Jong Il's funeral in 2011, when she was seen standing right behind her brother on state television, looking tearful and ashen-faced.

She demonstrated a very different demeanor on her visit than the "deferential" one she does in the North, said Korean Peninsula Future Forum analyst Duyeon Kim.

"Here, she projects Royal Family air, power, nose held high w/ slight smirk saying she's superior over South, & charm w/smiles, sass," she tweeted.

Beyond the Olympic imagery of togetherness and unity, many South Koreans are openly skeptical. "The Kim family is a grandmaster of disguise," said one.

Another declared: "Look at that girl acting like a well-behaving princess. No matter how nice she acts, nothing can sugarcoat all the human rights atrocities under her and her family."

National
Monday, Feb. 12

Man grilled over Coincheck heist

KYODO — A Japanese man has been questioned in connection with last month's massive theft of digital tokens from cryptocurrency exchange Coincheck Inc., a source close to the investigation said.

The police learned that the man converted a small amount of the missing NEM coins into another form of cryptocurrency called lightning through a site on the darknet, which can only be accessed through special anonymity software, the source said Saturday. The man was aware the NEM had been stolen from Coincheck. About ¥58 billion (\$533 million) worth of NEM was stolen on Jan. 26, with more than ¥500 million worth of it likely to have since been converted into bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, according to data security experts.

The Metropolitan Police Department's cybercrime divi-



A Coincheck office signboard in Tokyo. KYODO

sion, which questioned the man on a voluntary basis, suspects several people were involved in converting the stolen NEM and is monitoring darknet sites and NEM transactions to identify them, the source said.

Since the breach at Coincheck, the FSA has begun checking their the risk-management systems of virtual-currency exchanges, Financial Services Minister Taro Aso told reporters.

Some 260,000 holders of NEM have fallen victim to the Coincheck breach. Since the heist, Coincheck has suspended most of its services.

National
Tuesday, Feb. 13

Cabinet's approval rating hits 51%

KYODO — The public approval rating for the Cabinet has inched up to 50.8 percent in the latest survey, with more than half of respondents backing its policy of pressuring North Korea to halt its nuclear weapons and missile development programs.

The approval rating is 1.1 points higher than in the previous poll in January.

The Cabinet's disapproval rating meanwhile stood at 36.9 percent, inching up slightly from 36.6 percent in the previous survey in January.

The results of the Kyodo News poll, released Sunday, also show that nearly half of the public opposes Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's proposal to amend the Constitution by inserting an "explicit reference" into war-renouncing Article 9 to legitimize the Self-Defense Forces.

Around 40 percent said they support the idea.

National
Wednesday, Feb. 14

Working asylum seekers detained

KYODO — As Japan strengthens security ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, more people who are staying in the country illegally have been put back in detention centers after being conditionally released, government data has shown.

Over a recent five-year period, the number of overstayers jumped fourfold, partly because some released individuals violated a prohibition on working. But their supporters call the treatment inhumane, as many of them are asylum seekers who cannot live without a job.

The government's move could be seen as an attempt to tighten control over asylum seekers. Japan is often criticized internationally for being closed to refugees. In 2016, the country recognized only 28 people as refugees, a mere 0.3 percent of the applicants.

Those who have no status



Tokyo Immigration Bureau KYODO

of residence and are subject to deportation are temporarily detained in principle. They are not immediately repatriated if their home countries refuse to accept them or if they seek refugee status.

Some of those held are provisionally released from detention centers depending on their detention period, physical condition and other factors. Release is allowed on the condition that they will not work, according to Justice Ministry officials. They are put back in detention if their asylum requests are rejected or if they are found to be working.

World
Thursday, Feb. 15

Russians killed by U.S. in Syria: reports

Washington
AP — A scenario that many fear in the fog of Syria's multi-front war is a confrontation in which U.S. forces, responding to a provocation, kill Russian soldiers or mercenaries on a crowded battlefield.

Russian news reports Tuesday described just such a situation, with an unknown number of Russian military contractors killed in a ferocious U.S. counter-attack last week.

But Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and other U.S. officials said they had no such information on casualties, and the Kremlin did not confirm any Russian deaths. U.S. officials also said the Russian government had lodged no complaint about its citizens being killed.

What is not disputed is the fast-changing, often confusing nature of a battlefield in which forces of multiple countries



Jim Mattis AFP-JJI

are bumping up against one another, raising the prospect of violent collisions. Whether by accident or intention, such clashes risk plunging Washington and Moscow into a situation they studiously avoided even during the darkest hours of their relationship: their forces directly warring with each other.

Russian forces are supporting the Syrian government in its war with opposition groups, some of which are backed by the United States. Elements of both sides are fighting the remnants of the Islamic State group in Syria.

National
Friday, Feb. 16

Government eyes casino visit limits

KYODO — The government on Thursday presented ruling lawmakers with a plan to limit the number of times people can enter casinos to around 10 visits per month.

The plan is part of measures to prevent gambling addiction, but it has already met with opposition from lawmakers of the Liberal Democratic Party, with some saying the envisioned restrictions "too strict."

Amid differences between the ruling coalition of the LDP and Komeito, the two parties will continue to negotiate. Under the plan, people who visit the government-run Itoya and Koyu to three visits a month will be allowed in seven consecutive days and 10 visits in consecutive days. Japanese nationals and foreigners living in Japan will be subject to the restrictions.

World
Friday, Feb. 16

U.S. teen charged with 17 murders

Parkland, Florida
AP — An orphaned boy with a troubled past and a love for video games was charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder on Thursday after being arrested for slayings by state and federal authorities following a mass school shooting in the U.S. in five years.

Fourteen wounded survivors were hospitalized as bodies were recovered from inside and around Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Nikolas Cruz was ordered held without bond and booked into jail.

His former classmates thought they were having another drill Wednesday afternoon when a fire alarm sounded, requiring them to leave their classrooms. That's when police say Cruz, equipped with a gas mask, smoke grenades and multiple magazines of ammunition, opened fire with a semi-



Nikolas Cruz AP

automatic weapon, killing 17 people and sending hundreds of students fleeing into the streets.

Cruz purchased the AR-15 legally about a year ago, a law enforcement official said. Federal law allows people 18 and older to legally purchase long guns, including this kind of assault weapon.

President Donald Trump's reaction focused on Cruz's mental health. "So many signs that the Florida shooter was mentally disturbed, even expelled from school for bad and erratic behavior. Neighbors and classmates knew he was a big problem," Trump tweeted Thursday.

● North heads for gold medal in diplomacy

sanctions-crippled 制裁によって不自由になった。 feted 祝祭した。 bilateral summit 二国間会議。 delegation 代表。 applaud 拍手。 propaganda 宣伝。 momentum 勢い。 postpone 延長する。 wedge 割れ目。 preconditions 必須条件。 alliance 同盟。 denuclearization 非核化する。 proliferation 拡散。 all-encompassing 網羅的。 basked 浴し

● Kim sister steals spotlight in South

dictatorship 独裁制。 dynasty 王朝。 fascination 注目。 surveying 見渡した。 scrutinized 徹底的に調べられた。 calligraphy 書画。 goal-oriented 目標指向的。 precisely 正確。 isolated 孤立している。 impoverished 貧しい。 idolize 偶像化する。 controversial 議論の余地がある。 inherited 受け

継いだ。 confidantes 親友(女性)。 vital 重要な。 existence 存在感。 ashen-faced 顔色の悪いこと。 demeanor 表情。 skeptical 懐疑的な。 disguise 変装。 sugarcoat 取り繕う。 atrocities 残虐行為。 ● Man grilled over Coincheck heist heist 強盗。 cryptocurrency 暗号通貨。 anonymity software 通信匿名化ソフト。 cybercrime ネット犯罪。 virtual-

currency 仮想通貨。 suspended 中止した。 ● Cabinet's approval rating hits 51% inched 上昇した。 halt 停止。 poll 世論調査。 amend 改正。 renouncing 放棄。 legitimate 合法的に。 ● Working asylum seekers detained illegally 違法に。 detention 引き止め。 overstayers 不法滞在者。 violated 犯す。 prohibition 禁止。 inhumane 非人道的。 deportation 国外追放。 repatriated 本国へ送り帰す。 provisionally 暫定的に。 ● Russians killed by U.S. in Syria: reports multifront war 多方面での戦争。 confrontation 衝突する。 provocation 挑発。 mercenaries 傭兵。 ferocious 野蠻な。 collisions ぶつかり合い。 intention 故意に。 remnants 残党。

● Government eyes casino visit limits

measures 対応。 gambling addiction ギャンブル依存症。 envisioned 直面している。 coalition 連合。 consecutive 連続する。 ● U.S. teen charged with 17 murders orphaned 孤児。 premeditated 計画的な。 magazines 弾倉。 semi-automatic weapon 半自動式の小銃。 erratic とつぴな。

TimeOut

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Facing extinction: It's possible to find examples of nagaya "row houses" from the postwar era scattered around areas such as Sumida, Taito and Bunkyo wards today.

MANAMI OKAZAKI

Left to right: A number of nagaya in Tokyo's Kyojima neighborhood have been slated for demolition.

MANAMI OKAZAKI

Nagaya: The long and the short of it

A new generation of creative entrepreneurs are trying to preserve Tokyo's 'row houses'

Manami Okazaki
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Nagaya have been disappearing from downtown Tokyo for many decades, with row upon row of these "long houses" torn down to make way for more comfortable — and profitable — residential complexes and office blocks.

However, it's still possible to find examples of nagaya from the postwar era scattered around areas such as Sumida, Taito and Bunkyo wards today, and a new generation of creators are taking steps to customize them for their own purposes and give them a new lease on life.

Nagaya first appeared in Tokyo during the Edo Period (1603-1868) as a type of living quarters for the common class, with residents living side by side in the long wooden buildings.

The residents of such complexes shared a communal well, toilet, waste disposal area and shrine. Indeed, residents within the same building lived in close proximity to each other, creating a sense of community at a time of high-density population growth in the capital.

The single-story design remained largely unchanged until around the Taisho Era (1912-26), when a second story was added and the kitchen area, which had typically faced the alley, was moved to the back of the premises as gas and water infrastructure improved. Moreover, toilets were built into individual units.

Yoko Kobari, a historian at the Fukagawa Edo Museum, says that an Edo-era map of the Fukagawa-Saga district shows that there were 312 houses in the area. The first nationwide housing census wasn't held until 1941, so it's necessary to refer to maps such as this in order to get

an insight into dwellings in the city.

"Of these, 249 — or around 80 percent — were rented spaces," Kobari says. "But we can't say for sure that all these buildings were nagaya, as some of them could have been shops or storage facilities."

"What we can say, though, is that Fukagawa housed most nagaya of all the districts in Edo (modern-day Tokyo). Many of the large industries supporting Edo were located nearby, and the artisans and laborers that worked in these industries gathered here."

Using Edo-era woodblock prints and illustrations found in novels as reference materials, replicas on display in the museum show the types of people living in the shitamachi (downtown) area at that time. On display are dwellings for single men (a shellfish seller and a woodworker), a family, and a single woman (an educator of calligraphy and the arts). They were

Below: Kamenya Omote occupies a nagaya on a shopping street in Kyojima. Below left: A shop called S sells curiosities in Tsukishima. It is only open on Saturdays. MANAMI OKAZAKI

typically around 9 *shaku* (2.7 meters) wide by 2 *ken* (3.6 meters) deep and included a section for sleeping and eating, as well as an entranceway that often doubled as a cooking space.

In the houses' communal spaces sits an Inari shrine, a protective deity that provides what architectural scholar Hidenobu Jinnai describes as "a spiritual bond for the denizens of the alleyway."

In a book titled "Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology," Jinnai says that these shrines created a space for sunlight and ventilation, preventing what could quickly turn into unhygienic conditions in the alleyways.

Efficiency was key to life in these communities.

"The families would make everything by hand and use it until they couldn't be used any more. It wasn't a disposable culture like it is now," Kobari says. "The concept of recycling was incredible — materials like paper and rice straw were used to create containers, raincoats and footwear. There is respect for things and a resourcefulness that modern Japanese

people seem to have forgotten."

One feature of note in the museum displays is the abundance of wooden buckets and wells that sit in front of each house and on street corners. Fires were obviously a constant threat.

"A huge fire broke out every 10 years or so and the houses went up in flames," Kobari says. "However, it's highly likely that some of the fires were set deliberately. A lot of timber yards operated in Fukagawa and a fire typically created a lot of work for the carpenters there."

Nagaya weren't built to last, and their ephemeral materials left them exposed to catastrophic incidents. Indeed, it's somewhat surprising that any of the buildings survived the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 or the firebombing raids at the end of World War II.

One of the few nagaya from the late Edo Period to early Meiji Era (1868-1912) that remains is a mid 19th-century three-row tenement house that was built in Horie, Urayasu. It has since been dismantled and reconstructed at the Urayasu City Folk Museum.

Creative endeavors

The majority of nagaya that remain scattered throughout downtown Tokyo these days are postwar constructions. Despite their typically decrepit state, a number of young creators have rediscovered their charm, refashioning them into studios, cafes and event spaces.

The Sumida Ward neighborhood of Kyojima in particular has seen an influx of this new generation of renovators, who were initially lured to the area by the affordable rent.

You can find numerous examples of nagaya conversions while walking around Kyojima: architectural studio Cuatro, shared office space Shokubaya, knitwear atelier Seesaw, guesthouse Sumida Nagaya, mask shop Kamenya Omote and Muumuu Coffee, a hip cafe and hub for *kendama* enthusiasts.

Aside from nagaya makeovers, other projects in the area to revive historic, working-class housing include indie cassette tape gallery Newlid and studios Detroit Corn Club and Sheepstudio, among others.

Ayumu Haitani is the owner of Muumuu Coffee and Halahelu, a cafe made from a converted 1965 *kominka* (old-style house) that had been in a dilapidated state. Both Muumuu Coffee and Halahelu attract a wide variety of patrons, from manga artists and designers to architecture students and music enthusiasts.

"Muumuu Coffee was the first I started on my own (in 2013)," Haitani says. "I started it with the purpose of saving the nagaya together. The building was 70 years old and was originally a dance performer's house — there were jugglers. Before that, it was an electrical parts shop and, before that, a kimono draper."

Haitani says the paper-thin walls don't completely block out the sounds next door, so you do have to take some care, but he says the space is perfect for his cafe. He also mentions that the building was once a dance performer's house.

Haitani says, "When it's late, I try to be quiet because of an elderly woman next door. I found it hard to stop myself from making noise. It was a hassle in the beginning but once you get used to it you can live normally, have friends over, drink and talk."

Nagaya also lack insulation in the frigid winters. "Muumuu is really cold," Haitani says. "You just use (the heater in) an air conditioner, but the heat doesn't reach your feet. In places in the neighborhood have floating entranceways, and the artists and artisans use it as a workspace. It really is freezing if you don't put a stove in."

"However, I don't really feel these factors are that inconvenient, which is why I stay," he says.

Hiroshi Sasaki is a web designer who worked for four years out of Shokubaya, a nagaya that has been turned into a shared office space in Sumida Ward's Yahiro neighborhood.

Sasaki says nagaya allow creators to experiment with their environments.

Continued on page 12





Continued from page 11

"Nagaya offer freedom," Sasaki says. "With regular rental apartments, you can't do anything. You can't even make a new shelf — it's suffocating. It was really cookie-cutter up until now but, generationally, there are people who find this insufferable, and they want to do as they please. That is natural and it reflects on where they live."

Sasaki lauds the DIY ethic that exists in the neighborhood. "It encourages residents to make something and, if it doesn't exist, make it themselves," he says. "Take Halahehu, for example — Ayumu did it on his own. Once others see this, they get inspired to try it as well."

Indeed, Haitani has uploaded "before" and "after" images of Halahehu on Instagram in an attempt to motivate others in his neighborhood. Housing makeovers in the area often involve a complete overhaul, which includes raising the floor, fixing uneven roofs, installing bathrooms and adding interior walls. Projects can take more than a year to complete, significantly raising the value of the property.

"While it is really hard, you can create your own space if you persevere," Haitani says, admitting that he convinced his landlord that renovations were required without even knowing how to draw a blueprint.

One of the best ways to experience life in a nagaya is to stay in one. Shokubaya's neighbor, Sumida Nagaya, offers exactly that.

Sumida Nagaya is a small and chic hostel that can only accommodate eight people at a time. Local architectural firm Na+ Kenji Nagakubo Kenji Design Office created a spacious cafe in the downstairs space. Upstairs, the designers created a dormitory layout that reflects the maze-like alleyways of the neighborhood.

"The downstairs space was originally a metalwork studio," owner Masakazu Iwamoto says. "The landlord's grandfather was a carpenter who constructed a few nagaya along Meiji Street. The plan is the

same for all of them. My landlord wants to leave them behind as his grandfather's legacy, so he was happy to find someone who was willing to convert the building and use it."

Iwamoto admits that the age of the nagaya — it was built in the 1960s — doesn't generate the sentimental value required for the building to be seen as worthy of preservation. Moreover, Japan's growth period was characterized by a seemingly gratuitous pursuit of large-scale development.

"There's a tendency in Japan to knock things down and make something new, but if it's something cool we should preserve it," Iwamoto says. "There's a new sensibility among people, though, a new sense of values. I think it's changing and more people seem to want to renovate houses these days."

A particularly good example of a revamped nagaya is S, a Tsukishima shop that is only open on Saturdays, owing to owner Namiko Sekine's principal job as a salaryman. S sells whimsical items, including a one-sided dice, glass domes with seasonal flowers and a Russian porcelain vodka bottle in the shape of a doctor.

The nagaya is owned by Sekine's mother, which she purchased after she retired as a space in which to host flea markets and tea gatherings.

"She didn't really have a solid plan, but wanted a house to use as a space in which anything can be done," Sekine says. "Instead of just buying a regular house, she decided to buy an old nagaya because she foresaw that it could attract interest. She wanted to do new things while being inspired by history."

Unlike most revitalized nagaya, which more or less retain the original aesthetic of the exterior, S features a groovy curved-glass facade, a facelift that Sekine concocted with architectural firm Nikko Design.

"It was basically an old building, so we had to work with someone who was used

Above and above left: Sumida Nagaya is a small hostel that accommodates just eight people at a time. Top left and right: The Fukagawa Edo Museum displays life-size replicas of Edo-era nagaya. MANAMI OKAZAKI

to renovating them," Sekine says "It can't just look cool. It's old, so they needed to know where to reinforce things. I think it would be somewhat problematic for someone who has only done contemporary architecture."

Sekine finds that his nagaya offers him an escape from the hustle and bustle of the city.

"I'm only here for one day each week, but when I'm here, time passes slowly," he says. "Cars don't pass by and in the alleyways I like to observe cats and mice scurrying around. When I see the local cat is pregnant, I can feel the seasonal changes. It's hard to find such places in Tokyo, but my nagaya offers this. If you head out to (the adjacent) Monja Street, it seems like a return to ordinary life, but being right here feels like going on a trip."

Collective responsibility

A number of creators in contemporary nagaya districts such as Yanaka, Nezu and Sendagi come from other places in Japan. They bond together to create tight-knit communities that are typically described by the artists as "humanistic."

In the Edo Period, nagaya communities were largely autonomous and the Tokugawa shogunate made residents responsible for their own security, waste disposal, maintenance and administrative matters. This created a sort of community consciousness and the lack of privacy created an inherent awareness of a neighbor's well-being.

"The nagaya was the family," Kobari says. "If an incident or an accident occurred within the nagaya, it became everyone's responsibility. So in order to avoid these things, everyone helped each other and kept one another in check."

This citizen-oriented dynamic contin-

ues to exist in Kyojima today, and Haitani says the construction of Halahehu was only possible with the assistance of others in the area.

Many nagaya don't have baths, so tenants need to use the local *sentō* (public bathhouses), which is a form of community in and of itself.

In the Edo Period, small shops lined streets selling goods and local produce. Nagaya lined the alleyways. Lacking private yards, these alleyways also became a space for leisure and interaction.

Nowadays, nagaya residents continue to beautify these spaces by creating gardens of precariously stacked potted plants outside their homes. Pavements are covered in chalk drawings during events for kids and the paucity of cars enables the alleyways to become virtual playgrounds in their own right.

In a metropolis where it can be hard to get to know a neighbor, one of the greatest charms of these downtown districts in Tokyo is the ease in which one can meet people of all generations.

"It's the opposite of, say, Daikanyama (in Shibuya Ward)," Sasaki says. "Many different age groups live in the area and life just seems more natural here. The elderly folk are really knowledgeable. Typically, you need to go to the countryside to converse at length with the elderly."

Sasaki was also attracted to the area by its ties to traditional craftsmen, including one relative who used to produce *gunbai* (a fan used by sumo umpires).

"He was living in Ryogoku," he says. "When I was young, I would visit his atelier and seeing that left quite an impression on me. I have had this lasting image in my head that Tokyo's downtown area is an amazing place."

It's the interaction between Tokyo's traditional structures and the contemporary communities that have evolved over time that makes life in a nagaya all the more attractive. "Living in a nagaya for a long time is like living with your neighbors," Haitani says. "You're never lonely."

Why Did You Leave Japan? by Daniel Morales

Yoshihisa Arai: Floating on air in Chicago

When taking ballet classes has more appeal than learning karate

A t rehearsal a week before the debut of the Joffrey Ballet's latest production in Chicago, dancer Yoshihisa Arai sat on the ground in the back of the rehearsal space with his legs in a split, stretching and checking his smartphone.

He had been away from the stage for nearly six months after breaking the fifth metatarsal in his right foot while landing during rehearsal last August, but he seemed calm amid the chaos around him.

At the front of the room, members of the company moved energetically through one of the four pieces that make up the "Modern Masters" production, a sampling of modern and contemporary works. Understudies mirrored the movements of the leads.

Arai and others on the edge of the action watched and waited for their moment.

Arai, who goes by Yoshi to most at the Joffrey Ballet, trained at a young age in Japan, went abroad to study and work in the U.K. and now has come into his own in Chicago.

Since arriving at Joffrey in 2012, he has spent just over five years evolving alongside the dance company and developing into a widely acclaimed dancer. He is soft spoken and deeply considerate of art, which belies a bigger stage presence.

Longtime Chicago dance writer Laura Molzahn first saw Arai during a rehearsal. "I noticed Yoshi right away because of his leaping," she remembers. "He had incredible ballon, which is a term for seeming to kind of hang in the air."

She later encountered him in the Joffrey offices. "He seemed so much smaller in an everyday situation than he seemed on stage. He's just kind of a big presence. Those people naturally stand out. That I think is his gift."

When he was 10 and living in Yamaguchi Prefecture, Arai started ballet lessons, though his father wanted him to take karate. "We just told him, 'We're going to go to that (ballet) class to stretch because we karate kids need to stretch as well,'" Arai says with a grin.

Arai pushed himself, attending class six days a week after school, sometimes getting home from Hiroshima at one in the morning. He had some success, winning prizes in Japan, and resolved to dance professionally. "It wasn't like 'I want to go,'" he says. "It was 'I'm going.' I decided, I am going there."

"There" was The Royal Ballet School in London, which he had researched after meeting Gailene Stock, the school's director at the time, at the 2004 Prix de Lausanne competition. Stock told him she could see his talent.

When he moved to London in 2005, Arai remembers that his English was so bad that one instructor refused to give him corrections. "It's a waste of my time and a waste of other students' time," he said. "Come talk to me when you understand English." This put him on edge in the beginning. But because he was totally immersed with his classmates and language classes, he picked up English in around six months. The only Japanese he used was on the phone talking with his mom.

His training in Japan helped him master the technical aspects of the art, but in England Arai says he also came out of his shell. "I think ballet needs to have something beyond technique," he notes. "You have to have your personality — your true person-



Profile

Name: Yoshihisa Arai
Profession: Ballet dancer
Hometown: Yamaguchi Prefecture
Age: 28
Key moments in career:
2005 — Enters The Royal Ballet School in London
2008 — Joins Northern Ballet in Leeds, U.K.
2011 — Joins Tulsa Ballet in Tulsa, Oklahoma
2012 — Joins the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago, Illinois
Things or moments you miss about Japan: "Family for sure. I wouldn't be here without my family. And food, of course."



ality — coming out from inside of you. That's what I learned in England."

At The Royal Ballet School, he had amazing opportunities. He performed at Buckingham Palace in front of Prince Charles and for Queen Elizabeth II's 80th birthday. But at the same time, he knew he wouldn't feel quite at home in the large, mostly British company, so he looked for something different after graduating.

Arai then spent three years in Leeds at Northern Ballet, which he says was a tryout period as he improved under the direction of David Nixon in productions such as "Madame Butterfly," his favorite. "I've been involved with, 'It's good, but it's not traditional ballet,' he says. "I didn't understand there," on the one hand. We worked on this, 'I would be a Swan Lake."

He then followed a dream to join the Tulsa Ballet and then to Chicago after impressing Joffrey Ballet artistic director Ashley Wheater as Mercutio in Edward Liang's "Romeo and Juliet."

"He's an amazingly charismatic dancer. He has a sense of musicality, which has a sense of fluidity in it," says Wheater. "All those things kind of hit me at one time when I saw him in Tulsa. ... He gives himself 100 percent to whatever he's dancing. It's not just showing you the steps, but it's showing you every layer that goes into

that work, and I think that's a rare thing. The Joffrey Ballet is a company that has 40 dancers or more of equal talent, while it still has a competitive energy, but there isn't as much of a push to become a principal dancer as there is in the Joffrey Ballet. One person seems to suit Arai. "One person seems to be the main role all the time," he says. "I had opportunities when I was in England. You need to evenly give to all the others."

Wheater also continues to push the Joffrey Ballet and challenge the company. The Chicago Tribune dance critic Lauren Wack notes that "the company is growing and evolving. It's a very comfortable place for a dancer because they don't get complacent."

This is true for Arai who, after two weeks of rest last fall, choreographed and taught "The Firebird" suite for the Joffrey Academy of Dance school with his foot still in a cast. It was an experience, he says, that kept him from feeling down about the injury.

Such opportunities to teach and collaborate have also allowed Arai to exercise his creative side. Before his injury last year, he worked with San Francisco Ballet choreographer Yuri Possokhov on the role of the Mandarin in "The Miraculous Mandarin." "It was at times humorous that both of us

Clockwise from top: Yoshihisa Arai and Victoria Jaiani perform in "The Miraculous Mandarin," one of three works of the Joffrey Ballet's "Global Visionaries" program; Arai as a young dancer in Japan; a portrait photo of Arai. PERFORMANCE AND PORTRAIT BY CHERYL MANN. COURTESY OF YOSHIHISA ARAI

often had difficulties expressing ourselves in English," says Possokhov, who was impressed with Arai's intensity and immersion into the role. "But we perfectly communicated with our eyes."

"We created the role together," Arai says. "So it was very special for me. That was such a privilege."

Arai is now developing his own program to offer younger dancers their own opportunities to create. He plans to make it more than just a class and to actually create a work from scratch. "I think it's priceless to have that experience," he says.

But first, the "Modern Masters" production. Arai may have been a little nervous at rehearsal, but he gained confidence after the first show on Feb. 7, when he proved, yet again, that he stands out. Of the dancers mentioned by name by Chicago Reader reviewer Irene Hsiao, Arai was praised for his signature leaping ability: "Yoshihisa Arai danced the first variation with a billowing loft, wonderfully suspended by unseen forces."

Japanese Kitchen Makiko Itoh

What makes a great *chawanmushi*? Using an even better dashi

Savory egg custard
complimented by a
washoku fundamental

The clear, umami-packed stock called dashi is the foundation of *washoku*, traditional Japanese cuisine. While stocks made by simmering various umami-rich ingredients are important in many cuisines, it's hard to think of another where it plays as indispensable a role as it does in *washoku*.

One reason why dashi has become so ubiquitous is that methods for extracting it from easily stored ingredients were invented several hundred years ago. Long before the discovery of convenient glutamate-packed concentrates, cubes and powders, Japanese cooks came up with ways of drying certain ingredients from which umami could be quickly and conveniently extracted. These dried ingredients are still used today, by home cooks and pros alike.

The earliest written record of the word "dashi" appears in the Kamakura Period (1185–1333), where it meant a kind of sauce used on white fish. There are even earlier mentions (dating back as far as the sixth century) of making stock by simmering fish or animal bones and vegetables, but these were not known as dashi. In the Muromachi Period (1392–1573), recipe books belonging to the Okusa-ryu (Okusa school) of culinary arts, which still exists today, are believed to contain the first record of using *katsuobushi* to make a broth, in a recipe for stewed sardines. *Katsuobushi* is made by salting, drying and fermenting bonito fish, each step of the

Chawanmushi with shrimp, maitake and mitsuba

For the *ichiban* dashi (makes 1 liter):
• 1 liter cold water
• 10 grams dried konbu (a piece about 20 cm long), preferably maitake
• 10 grams (a large handful) of dried *katsuobushi* (bonito flakes)

Put the konbu in a pot with a pan. Leave to steep for 30 minutes. Place the pot over medium heat. When the water is boiling gently but before it comes to a full rolling boil, put the bonito on top and turn the heat off.

Strain the dashi. The bonito flakes have sunk to the bottom of the pan. Strain through a fine mesh sieve.

For the *chawanmushi* (serves one):
• 30 grams boneless chicken breast
• 1-2 medium shrimp
• 1-2 shiitake mushrooms, stems removed
• 4-5 mitsuba leaves
• 1 medium-sized egg
• 75 ml *ichiban* dashi
• 1 teaspoon *usukuchi* (light colored soy sauce).

Wrap the lid of the steamer with a large

kitchen towel so condensation won't drip onto the custard. Start boiling the water in the steamer. Line up the custard cups next to the steamer.

Remove any sinew from the chicken and cut into 1 cm pieces. Shell and clean the shrimp. Put the chicken and shrimp in a bowl, and pour some boiling water over them. Drain immediately and set aside.

Slice the shiitake mushrooms in half if they are large. Beat the eggs gently. Mix in the dashi and soy sauce. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve.

Distribute the chicken, shiitake mushrooms, shrimp and mitsuba leaves evenly in the custard cups. Gently pour the egg liquid into each cup.

When the water in the steamer is boiling, put the custard cups in the steamer and close the lid.

Turn the heat down to low, slide the lid to the side so that it's slightly open, and steam for 25 to 30 minutes until the custard is set. Serve immediately.

Try other additions to the custard such as *kamaboko* fish cake, cooked vegetables and boiled ginkgo nuts. Avoid using *maitake* mushrooms, which contain a substance that prevents the egg from setting.

process designed to maximize the bonito's umami as well as allowing it to be preserved and stored in those pre-refrigeration days.

Japanese dashi as we know it today was developed and refined in the Edo Period (1603–1868). Two distinct types of dashi emerged: one based on dried *katsuobushi*, and the other based on dried

seaweed. The latter is very delicately flavored, and was (and still is) preferred in the Kansai region centered around Kyoto and Osaka.

On the other hand, the stronger flavored dashi extracted from *katsuobushi* was preferred in the Edo (current Tokyo) region. The most popular type of dashi now is made by combining a vegetable



Above: *Chawanmushi*, a savory egg custard, is a classic Japanese dish based on dashi stock, the foundation of traditional Japanese cuisine. Right: Umami-rich ingredients such as *katsuobushi* (bonito flakes) (right) and *konbu* are used in combination to create flavorful dashi.



ingredient, such as *konbu*, with an animal ingredient, such as *katsuobushi*, or *niboshi* (small dried fish, the most common of which is baby sardines). Vegetable sources such as konbu are rich in L-glutamate, while animal sources like *katsuobushi* or *niboshi* are rich in disodium inosinate. When both are combined, the dashi has a well rounded flavor that is very pleasant on the palate.

These days, you can buy instant dashi granules, which can be easily dissolved in liquid or just added on its own for a shot of umami. There's also monosodium glutamate (better known as MSG) if you want a pure shot of the glutamates.

But it's really not that hard to make dashi from the original dried ingredients,

and I really think the end product when made fresh tastes so much better. Use *ichiban* (first-extraction) dashi for dishes like the *chawanmushi* where the taste of the dashi is the primary flavor of the savory egg custard, and *niban* (second-extraction) dashi — made from the same ingredients used for *ichiban* dashi but simmered again — for dishes that have lots of other flavors such as *nimono* (stews).

Tokyo Food File Robbie Swinnerton

Hakkoku: Striving for the next level of sushi greatness

What makes outstanding sushi? Superb seafood, obviously, along with an understanding of how to balance it with the *shari* (sushi rice). Technique and timing are essential, too. But there's a further dimension, a "plus alpha" that separates the very finest sushi experience from the merely excellent.

Inevitably this is subjective — the demeanor and focus of the chef; your sense of anticipation as you arrive; and your satisfaction as you leave. It all boils down to one factor: Does it feel special?

Hakkoku certainly does. Chef Hiroyuki Sato's new restaurant, which opened in early February, has been a long time in the making. Ten months have elapsed since Sato left Sushi Tokami, the *shushiya* where he announced himself to the world five years ago, winning a Michelin star and admirers both at home and abroad.

Not that he's been idle in the interim. A series of pop-ups and collaborations kept him in the spotlight and served to drip-feed anticipation for his next move. With Hakkoku, he more than lives up to those expectations.

First, it looks spectacular. The interior, by design studio Simplicity, is spacious and serene. It is divided into three separate chambers, each enclosed by shoji screens



covered with *washi* paper, filling them with diffused light. Compared to his somber, seen-better-days basement digs at Tokami, the contrast could hardly be greater.

Currently, only two of those spaces are in use. Sato presides at the main counter; the smaller side room is for his sous-chef (and where lunch is served). Each seats just six people, making Hakkoku one of the most hands-on, exclusive restaurants in Tokyo of any genre.

All this begs the question: Does Sato's sushi live up to this rarefied setting? Without a shadow of a doubt.



Anyone who ate at Tokami during his tenure knows Sato has always had access to some of the finest seafood and the techniques to make optimum use of it. Those skills are on display from the outset.

As before, he welcomes you with his signature *tossaki* nori roll, filled with coarsely chopped tuna taken from the base of the fish's head and paired with his trademark *akazu* (red vinegar) shari. Whether it's the setting, or the year-long gap since he served it last, the taste is better than ever.

The rest of the Hakkoku tasting menu, though, is significantly different. Initially,

Far left: Hiroyuki Sato slices *chutoro* tuna at Hakkoku. Left: The brilliant, rich color of *akami* (lean, red) tuna.

Sato is not serving sashimi or other *otsumami* (appetizers). Instead, he's putting together a magnum opus of *nigiri* and *maki* sushi — more than 30 pieces, all of them great, some sublime.

Among the highlights is the flight of contrasting tuna cuts, in which the brilliant *akami* (lean red meat) is by no means overshadowed by the fattier, more luxurious parts; the humbler blue fish, sardine and *kohada* (gizzard shad); and the sweet-succulent *anago* (broiled conger) that helps close the meal.

The only low points are the vegetable dishes introduced as palate cleansers. In such a substantial dinner, dishes subtler than blanched onion, raw kale and bell peppers are required.

It's still very early days at Hakkoku. But it's already clear that Sato is not just content to serve superlative sushi; his aim is to take the genre to the next level.

La Paix Bldg. 3F, 6-7-6 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo; 03-6280-6555; open 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 5-11 p.m.; closed Sun.; lunch ¥20,000, dinner ¥30,000; nearest station Ginza; non-smoking; major cards accepted; English menu; English spoken

Tokyo Saryo: The new stylings of *sencha* green tea

Japan's traditional daily drink, *sencha* green tea, is making a comeback. For too long it's been crowded out of modern consciousness by the buzz and self-promotion of coffee culture. But thanks to places like Tokyo Saryo, *sencha* may be starting to regain its relevance and appeal.

This chic tea specialist on the fringes of Sangenjaya believes that premium, single-origin *sencha* — the whole, dried leaves of the tea bush, infused with care, and sipped with discernment — is worthy of as much appreciation as, say, coffee beans from Ethiopia or Brazil.

The look is that of a miniature, minimal, third-wave coffee shop, and so is the preparation. Choose a couple of varieties to taste and compare, and then watch as your brew is prepared — in the pour-over style — with the same intensity and precision as you'd expect from any barista.

Give yourself plenty of time. *Sencha* (unlike coffee) allows for at least two infusions from one batch of leaves. The first, brewed at 70 degrees Celsius, offers subtle sweetness. The second, at a slightly higher 80 degrees, is more robust. And for the third, roasted rice is added to make *genmaicha*.

Feel the caffeine kick in, gentle but powerful, clearing and resetting your



Pour-over: Tokyo Saryo's pour-over tea matches that of French coffee shops.

mind. Be careful, though: this could become habit-forming.

1-34-15 Kamiyama, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo; www.tokiosaryo.jp; open 1-8 p.m. Sat., Sun., & hols. 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; closed Mon.; tasting set ¥1,300; nearest station Sangenjaya; non-smoking; major cards accepted; English menu; little English spoken. Tokyo Saryo's parent company, Green Brewing, has now opened a *sencha* boutique in Ginza; non-smoking; major cards accepted; English menu; English spoken



Big in Paris: Japan's sake nouveau has to be proved a hit with restaurateurs in the French capital.

Japan turns the tables on France with sake nouveau

AFF-JLI

For decades, France has exported millions of bottles of Beaujolais to Japan every November, with some people celebrating its arrival by literally bathing in the fruity red wine. Now, Japanese

producers of rice wine hope to turn the tide by bringing "sake nouveau" to France.

While wine critics are apt to turn up their noses at overly young banana-scented Beaujolais, the sake nouveau being sent to France is one of Japan's best-kept secrets, its promoters claim.

A dozen top French chefs are so passionate about the drink that they have incorporated sake nouveau into their menus, either serving it with French food or including it in their recipes.

"Sake nouveau is unpasteurized and only lasts for six weeks or so after it is bottled. But it has much more body, taste and nose than classic sake," says Youlin Ly, the Parisian restaurateur behind the drive.

It is almost unknown to most Japanese drinkers, he admits, where sake has lost ground in recent decades to beer and wine. "Sake is very much a local drink in Japan. People traditionally tend only to drink the sake of their region or village," Ly says. "There are local events in the villages for the sake nouveau."

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famed for his fusion cuisine, is using sake nouveau in a dish of lacquered beef and foie gras, adding it to a broth infused with cedar, yuzu citrus and lemongrass.

"I also use it like peasants did long ago with wine by adding a bit to the bottom of a saucepan of soup," says the owner of the KGB and Kitchen Ter(re) restaurants in Paris.

Two-starred chef Alexandre Gauthier was so taken with sake nouveau that it is the only non-French beverage allowed onto the wine list of his acclaimed La Grenouillère restaurant near Le Touquet in northern France.

It has also been included on the menu of the Mirazur at Menton on the French Riviera, which came fourth in the British-based list of the World's 50 Best Restaurants.

Unlike some classic sake that are served warm, sake nouveau is usually served cold in wine glasses, says Ly.

"Classically the taste of sake was not meant to get in the way of the food. In general it wouldn't have much nose, or any real aroma at all. Nor was it very long in the mouth," Ly adds.

But that is changing. "Nouveau sakes and modern sakes are much more aromatic and are very much made to be Japan. People traditionally tend only to drink the sake of their region or village," Ly says. "There are local events in the villages for the sake nouveau."

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Big in Japan by Mark Schreiber

Face of immigration is rapidly changing

Over the past half decade, major changes have taken place in the demographics of foreign residents in Japan. Weekly Playboy's Dec. 18 issue devoted a four-page article to "Research into Vietnamese." Why Vietnamese? And why now?

"Their numbers in Japan have drastically increased," the magazine rationalizes. Up fourfold from five years ago, they grew by a remarkable 36.1 percent between 2015 and 2016. The Vietnamese population of 232,562 (as of end June 2017) has shot past Brazil to make them the fourth-largest nationality, and they may soon overtake the Philippines (251,934) for third place.

Take, for example, the city of Matsudo, a bed town of about 484,000 in Chiba Prefecture served by the JR Tokyo commuter line, about 21 minutes from Tokyo's Ueno Station. It currently boasts 15,058 foreign residents, including a growing community of Vietnamese.

"Matsudo has lots of Japanese-language schools," the chef at a local Vietnamese restaurant tells the reporter. "Spread by word of mouth among Vietnamese, the number of foreign students has increased. Still, they don't stand out much. It's probably because only a few of them do business around here."

Weekly Playboy's reporter then traveled to Hiroshima Prefecture, which last year was ranked fourth nationwide in terms of the number of technical trainees from Vietnam. Enough on a proportional basis, he writes with some exaggeration, to make Hiroshima a "province of Vietnam."

Duan, a 32-year-old housewife originally from Hanoi, tells the reporter: "The Japanese I work with are devious. They scare me and I don't care for them much."

Duan arrived four years ago as a language student, and wound up marrying a Japanese 18 years her senior.

The language school where Duan first studied operated a side-business of farming out its students to part-time jobs, and initially Duan labored at a demanding job in a shipping depot for refrigerated items.

"One day I dropped a heavy box on my foot," she relates bitterly. "I could barely walk and had to seek medical attention. Even the day I went to the hospital the company made me work."

To make matters worse, she said, the school arranged with the depot to report her injury as having occurred during her

commute to work, thereby making her ineligible for worker's compensation.

Conditions at her second job, at a restaurant, proved no better. Still, she expressed deep affection for her new husband, a "sweet old guy" whom she describes as caring and generous.

While not dwelling on the prospects of immigration, Weekly Playboy doesn't pull any punches about the Vietnamese are already the nation's top priority in one unenviable statistic. During 2015, their 2,556 victims of a criminal code once reserved for cases by Chinese.

A Japanese interpreter working in the country says roughly half of Vietnamese trainees and students are unable to make up their school tuition payments and drop out; many turn to crime.

According to government figures, the number of legal foreign residents in Japan last year reached 2.47 million, or 1.95 percent of the total population. On a proportional basis that might not seem like a lot, compared to, say, Switzerland, where non-citizens make up 29 percent, or Australia (28 percent).

The 34-page cover story in Weekly Toyo Keizai (Feb. 3) titled "Japan, the major nation of hidden immigrants" views the issue from a variety of macro- and micro-perspectives.

The issue starts by noting that the total number of foreign residents in the country presently outstrips the 2.31 million population of Nagoya — Japan's third-largest city — by more than 100,000.

So if that's the case, why does Toyo Keizai use the word *kakure* (hidden) in its headline to describe immigration?

"Depending on the perspective, Japan is already a major nation of immigrants," declares chief economist Koichi Fujishiro of the Dai-ichi Mutual Life Insurance Co.

It seems that while the government maintains the position that Japan is not open to immigration, according to defini-

The total number of foreign residents in the country outstrips the entire population of Nagoya — Japan's third-largest city — by more than 100,000 people.



tions in use by some organizations, an immigrant is simply "a person who has resided in a foreign country for one year or longer." If that's the case, then according to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, during 2015 Japan admitted approximately 400,000 immigrants — in substance if not in name — placing it fourth overall among advanced economies, behind Germany, the U.S. and the U.K.

The cities with the highest foreign population are listed as Yokohama, with 92,117; Nagoya with 77,668; Kobe (46,831); Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward (which is treated as a separate municipality, with 43,354); and Kawasaki (38,651).

While Weekly Playboy focused on Vietnamese, Toyo Keizai played guide to the Chinatown that has sprung up in the vicinity of Nishi Kawaguchi Station, situated on the JR Keihin-Tohoku Line in Saitama Prefecture just across the Arakawa River from Tokyo's Kita Ward.

Inside the station building one can indulge in a Chinese-style breakfast of *doujiang* (hot soya milk) and *youtiao* (deep-fried dough crullers). Ethnic groceries sell live turtles and frogs. Roughly half the businesses patronized mostly by Chinese are food and beverage establishments.

On the rise: The Vietnamese population in Japan has jumped by 36.1 percent between 2015 and 2016.

GETTY IMAGES

Within the Chinese community, people from different provinces tend to dominate different types of business areas. While food services are run largely by arrivals from the northeastern provinces, *mizu shōbai* (bars and related "adult" businesses) tend to be managed by people from Fujian province on China's southeastern coast. A color-coded map of Nishi Kawaguchi's Chinatown identifies 28 Chinese-operated businesses, including three retail stores, 20 restaurants and five service businesses — a billiard parlor, two internet cafes, a karaoke outlet and a real estate agency.

And where are the accusatory cries complaining of new arrivals taking jobs away from Japanese? Forced to confront a serious and worsening labor shortage, Japan's politicians and bureaucrats are clearly much less inclined to quibble over the downsides to immigration. That makes it practically the diametric opposite of the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump. Which also raises the question: Will some of those deported from the United States possibly wind up in Japan?

Media Mix by Philip Brasor

Workers denigrate Fukushima plant cleanup

Most of the reliable reporting about the clean-up of the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant since it suffered three meltdowns in March 2011 has been from on-site workers. Even when articles appear in major media outlets about the situation at the crippled reactor, it's usually presented through the anonymous or pseudonymous firsthand experiences of the men on the front lines.

Some have become famous. The public would not know much about the situation without Kazuto Tatsuta's manga series, "Ichiefu" (or "IF" — shorthand for "Fukushima No. 1"), the writings of former letter carrier and cleanup worker Minoru Ikeda, or the books and tweets of a man known as "Happy," who has been working as an employee at the plant.

Because these individuals directly address what they and their colleagues have gone through on a daily basis, the work they do has been de-romanticized. It's not as heroic as initial foreign media reports made it out to be. If anything, it's tedious and uncomplicated.

Workers are concerned about those matters that all blue-collar laborers worry about — pay and benefits — which isn't to suggest they don't think about the possible health risks of radiation exposure. In October 2017, Ikeda talked to the comedy duo-cum-nuclear power reporters Oshidori Mako & Ken on the web channel Jiyuna Radio about potential false reports on radiation levels around Fukushima, although also touching on health issues that have not been reported by the mainstream media. His main point was that serious illnesses may not manifest themselves until years after workers quit the site and thus no longer qualify for worker's compensation. In other words, the workers understand the risk. They just want to be fairly compensated for it.

In that regard, one of the most common gripes from on-site reporters is the "hazard compensation" (*kiken teate*) workers are supposed to receive. Recently, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. (Tepco), which is both responsible for the accident and in charge of the cleanup, announced a reduction in outlay associated with the compensation, which is paid as a supplement to wages. This compensation can add as much as ¥20,000 a day to a worker's pay, but now that Tepco says radiation levels have dropped, they will no longer provide the compensation, or, at least, not as much as they have been paying.

A special report in the Jan. 22 Tokyo



Shimbun attempted to explain how this change will affect workers and the work itself. In March 2016, Tepco divided the work area into three zones: red, for high radiation levels; yellow, for some radioactivity; and green, for areas that had no appreciable radioactivity. Workers interviewed by Tokyo Shimbun say they've never liked this system because they feel it "has no meaning." Rubble from the red zone is routinely transferred to the green zone, where heavy machinery kicks up a lot of dust, so there's no physical delineation between zones when it comes to radiation levels. On the ground, this reality is addressed by subcontractors who make their employees in the green zone — which constitutes 95 percent of the work site — wear extra protective gear, even though Tepco doesn't require it.

But the workers' main gripe about the zone system is that most of them ended up being paid less and, as on-site workers have often explained, they weren't getting paid as much as people thought they were. Contractors advertise high wages to attract workers, but then subtract things like room and board, utility fees, clothing and equipment. And it's been known for years that the hazard compensation was more or less a racket gamed by the contractors standing between Tepco, which distributes the compensation, and the

workers, who are supposed to be the beneficiaries. There can be up to six layers of contractors between Tepco and a worker, and each layer may take a cut of the compensation. In 2014, four workers sued Tepco for ¥62 million, saying they worked at the site but received none of the promised hazard compensation.

That situation still seems to be in play, according to Tokyo Shimbun. Several subcontractors told the newspaper they receive the compensation for their workers not from Tepco directly but from the contractor that hired them, and in most cases the compensation has been reduced, sometimes by more than half. One subcontractor said that a company above them actually apologized for the paucity of the compensation they were handing down because their "revenues had decreased." The man known as Happy told Tokyo Shimbun that Tepco is ordering less work at the site, which means less pay for workers. He also said that while his company exists only to provide the hazard compensation to workers wasn't clear. Some contractors have even invested in the robots that are used to inspect the reactor because they want to be able to continue without interruption.

It was common for Tepco to rotate workers toiling in the high-radiation areas regularly and to have them re-assign them to low-radiation areas. After

Front-line fight: Workers remove protective clothing after a shift at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant in November 2011.

KYODO

some time they may have been rotated back into the high-radiation area, where pay is more. The man known as Happy says this sort of system now seems to be on the way out, and that makes sense if radiation is actually decreasing. However, he's afraid that if there is another emergency that requires a sudden influx of workers, they won't be available.

Tepco is obviously thinking of its bottom line, and the man known as Happy thinks the work should be managed by the government, which is contributing tax money to the cleanup. However, it seems only the Japan Communist Party is reading the dispatches from the plant. Last May, Japanese Communist Party lawmaker Taku Yamazoe questioned Tepco President Masao Hirose about the hazard compensation to workers wasn't clear.

He said that while his company doesn't know where the money goes to workers, he cannot say for sure that is the case because of the circumstances surrounding Tepco's relationships with contractors. With work on the wane, it seems unlikely that those workers will see any of the money that's owed to them, retroactively or otherwise.

Japan Pulse

'Because I'm a Mom' sends vexed mothers the wrong message

Alisa Yamasaki
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

What was meant to be a much-needed pat on the back for mothers has done more harm than good. In Hulu's original children's program "Dai! Dai! Daisuke Onisan!!," hosted by ex-NHK talent Daisuke Yokoyama, Daisuke Onisan performed a new song titled "Atashi Okasan Dakara" ("Because I'm a Mom"). Written by popular children's book author Nobumi, the lyrics are as follows:

I was living alone before I became a mom/ I wore heels, I painted my nails/ I tried to eat strong and tried to prove I could work.

Today I cut my nails to play with my kids/ I wear clothes I can run in so I can go to my part-time job.

*Because I'm a mom.
Because I'm a mom.
I wake up at 5 a.m. feeling sleepy/ Because I'm a mom/ I let you eat my favorite food/ Because I'm a mom/ I memorize names of trains/ Because I'm a mom.
It's always about you, not me.
Because I'm a mom.
Because I'm a mom.
I used to be thin before I was a mom/ I*

did what I liked and I bought what I liked/ All I thought about was myself...

*If I could go back to before I was a mom, I would go out at night/ I would go to a concert and buy clothes for myself.
But I've quit all of that and now I'm a mom/ I'd rather be a mom over all of that.*

According to the writer, the song is meant to support mothers across Japan and the lyrics were based on stories he heard from real mothers.

The song is not about what mothers have to sacrifice for their children, but what they are able to experience because of them, Nobumi says.

Despite Nobumi's best intentions, the

song went viral across the internet — not for its uplifting message, but instead for placing a "curse" on mothers.

"About the 'Because I'm a Mom' lyrics that everyone is talking about — if a mother sees this after giving birth, they probably would feel depressed," Twitter user @ke315 says. "It reminded me of how I developed postpartum depression when I had my firstborn because I tried too hard. ... Everyone is saying the song feels like a curse, but it really is true."

The repetitive phrase "Because I'm a Mom" implies that mothers face a burden, furthering the idea that women are expected to give up their lives in order to raise their children.

This mentality isn't just harmful for mothers, it also affects their children, Twitter user @iroiro_niji says.

"As a kid, the most painful thing to hear from your mother is stuff such as 'I gave up things in my life because I'm a mom, because I have kids, because I care so much about you,'" @iroiro_niji says. "You start thinking, 'Well, I should never have been born.'"

To dispel the belief that mothers are all self-sacrificing saints, Twitter users began using the hashtag "#あたしお母さんだけど" or "But I'm a Mom" in order to illustrate how women don't need to give up who they are when they become parents.

"I'm a mom but I sleep in until 9 a.m., I paint my nails, I wear what I like, I want to lose weight and I love to eat spicy food," says @mr_0826.

Twitter user @moet_csf suggests going a step further.

"It warms my heart that the 'But I'm a Mom' hashtag happened so quickly as a rebuttal to 'Because I'm a Mom.' Still, we shouldn't even feel the need to include the 'But.' Being a mom and enjoying your life are never at odds."

The "Because I'm a Mom" theme recalls the recent trend of "mommy and Moony" receive for their children, a racial portrayal of a mother who is expected to raise her child without much support from her husband.

It's becoming increasingly clear that what Japanese mothers need isn't praise for the pain they go through but removing the burden placed on them.

While creating more day care centers would arguably be a better way of achieving this, it helps when the overriding message presented by the media is "Mothers can take a break as well" instead of "You're a mother, so it's your duty to endure."



In need of a helping hand: The lyrics of a children's song have been criticized for promoting the idea that women are expected to give up their lives to raise their children.

GETTY IMAGES

Darkness aside, beauty exists in the shadows

Nonfiction

In Praise of Shadows
Junichiro Tanizaki
Translated by Gregory Starr
98 pages
SORA BOOKS

Stephen Mansfield
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In striking contrast to their ancestors, contemporary Japanese seem to adore light, their great cities are electromagnetic centers of brilliance, their living rooms flood-lit like sports stadiums.

The rallying call of those who survived the "dark valley," as the 1930s and war years were dubbed, was "akarui seikatsu," a "bright life." Postwar shadows, side lighting and intermediate tones were banished, memories of the war subjected to collective amnesia and the eviscerating rays of new forms of illumination. The appreciation of muted light, as Tanizaki infers in his long 1933 essay, "In Praise of Shadows," had already begun to lapse into a cult of quaintness.

Tanizaki, in Gregory Starr's new and highly accomplished translation, samples a number of instances where the use and perception of light differs from the West, noting that, where Western paper reflects light, traditional Japanese paper

absorbs it. Here we have a preference for the soft and pliant over the brittle. Donald Richie (1924-2013) in his book "A Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics," posited that the study of aesthetics in the West was "mainly concerned with theories of art, that of Japan has always been concerned with theories of taste."

The breath of Tanizaki's interests, in Japanese cuisine, interior design, the treasure of the connoisseur, are all recessed in the shadows. The merits of meat, light and perishable, organic materials, noting in the case of the *zashiki*, a Japanese tatami room, that walls are "generally made from soil and sand, in order to 'let the frail, melancholic, ephemeral light saturate the solemn composure of their earthy tones.'"

The writer holds that, for a true appreciation of the beauty of lacquerware, it must be observed in the dimness of half-light. Tanizaki pays keen attention to the shadows that lurk in lintels and alcoves, sensitive to minute details like the solemn, trance-like beauty of gold-leaf covered doors and screens, caught in morsels of light entering a room from the garden.

An early, and rather famous object of

interest in the early 20th century, is a paean to its aesthetic and essential virtues, waxing lyrical about the opportunity its use offers to soothe mind and soul while listening to the drone of mosquitoes, or inhaling the scent of lead from the adjacent garden. The author ultimately reaches the rather extraordinary conclusion that, "of all the many aspects of Japanese architecture, the toilet is the apex of refinement." The disgust felt by most Japanese now for the traditional squat latrine is a measure of how much they have changed, or an indicator, perhaps, of how sanitation can erase tradition.

Citing the faces of young women in ancient times, lips painted in iridescent reds and greens, teeth blackened, Tanizaki draws our attention to how darkness ignites light, their visages transfixing in the gloom. He also admits that the transcendent, otherworldly beauty reflected on the complexion of such women may be an illusion, a trick of light, time and place.

When reading the text, one senses that Tanizaki, in taking Westerners to task for their putative shortcomings in aesthetic sensitivity and his fellow countryman's drift away from the shadows, is quite enjoying himself. I ask Starr if he agrees and the translator acknowledges that the author no doubt experienced a frisson of pleasure in finding prose to express the "nostalgia, sorrow, humor, shock, resignation and even anger that he feels from what is going on around him," adding,

"One thing that amazes me is, I didn't find any real bitterness there."

One would have to go to considerable lengths today to experience the aesthetic sensations advocated by Tanizaki. Such exquisite moments, far removed from everyday life, might include reading sutras in the light from a votive candle or listening to the scratching of small metal particles placed at the bottom of an iron teapot, an effect said to evoke the sousing of wind in pine trees.

Asking Starr what he thought might be the relevance, if any, of a book like this for today's reader, his view is that little has changed since Tanizaki's day and that while "much of society seems to feel not the slightest awe at tossing out certain traditions, there are those who find value in looking back and finding new ways to incorporate the past into their present."

One such person is the notable architect Kengo Kuma, who contributed a well-considered preface to the book. The title remains relevant, Starr concludes, "because darkness and silence is beautiful, and both are getting harder and harder to find."

The darker spaces, as Tanizaki seems to infer, decelerate time; the absence of light heightens our perception of what little exists. One recalls that in the ghostlier scenes of Edo Period (1603-1868) kabuki, young children were employed to follow actors on stage, illuminating their faces from below with candles, an effect that must have magnified the intensity of the performance.

The shadows, like us, are sentient.

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Translated by Tara Cannon
332 pages



In 1995 and 2005, Japan's prime ministers released landmark statements to mark the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the end of World War II. In 2015, as the 70th anniversary approached, many around Asia and the world were focused on what sort of statement Prime Minister Shinzo Abe would release.

This book compiles the presentations delivered to the panel of experts Abe commissioned, as well as frank commentary by the panel members and the contributions that Japan should make to the world going forward. The perspectives from some of Japan's most distinguished voices provide insights for those wishing to better understand the background of the Abe statement and Japan's place within the international community.

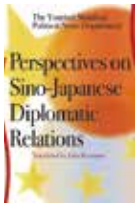
In 2015, the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, a panel of Japan's foremost experts came together to look back on the history of the 20th century and look ahead to the role Japan should play in the 21st century.



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Politics & Diplomacy
Perspectives on Sino-Japanese Diplomatic Relations
The Yomiuri Shimbun
Political News Department
Translated by John Rossman
272 pages



With Asia's largest economy and now a strengthened military as well, China is trying to change the established international order via aggressive diplomatic and military policies. Meanwhile, under the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan has been

standing up to China's aggressive stance. Nevertheless, the coexistence of the two countries is essential to the peace and prosperity of East Asia, and China and Japan must work together in pursuit of a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests.

"Perspectives on Sino-Japanese Diplomatic Relations" is a compilation of articles written by The Yomiuri Shimbun Political News Department. This work examines the diplomatic strategies taken by the two sides, the Senkaku Islands, the Japan-U.S. alliance, the dangers of China's territorial aspiration and more.

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The Living Past by Michael Hoffman

Heroism and the changing state of morality

Every age breeds its own morality. One era's good is another's evil. Today's virtue is tomorrow's vice, today's wisdom tomorrow's stupidity, today's sanity tomorrow's madness.

For 700 years, from the late 12th to the mid-19th centuries, Japan's highest ideals were embodied in the samurai. Unflinching courage, unshakeable loyalty, murderous proficiency with the sword, a serenity in the face of death that to a modern eye can seem macabre, with its culminating ideal of agonizing self-disembowelment – such are the distinctive features of what came to be known as Bushido, the "way of the warrior."

One doesn't know whether to be awed or appalled by the following story, told by Nitobe Inazo in his English-language classic "Bushido: The Soul of Japan" (1900):

A certain high-ranking warrior is unjustly exiled from the capital. Not satisfied with his removal, his enemies are bent on destroying his family. His young son attends a village school incognito. The enemies discover his whereabouts and order the schoolmaster to surrender him. Surrender the son of his lord? Unthinkable. Defy the command? Impossible.

Fortunately, another pupil, also a samurai but lower in rank, observing his physical resemblance to the boy marked for death, knows his duty – and his mother knows hers. At home that night the boy, with his mother's approval, sacrifices his life. Next day his head is ceremonially presented to the authorities. The deception goes unnoticed. The young lord is saved. Nitobe comments, "What an atrocious story! I hear my readers exclaim. 'Parents deliberately sacrificing their own innocent

child to save the life of another man's!' But this child was a conscious and willing victim." The tale, says Nitobe, is "not more revolting than the story of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac."

That bland comparison masks three important differences. The sacrifice of Isaac was for God's sake, not for a feudal overlord's. It dates back 4,000 years, to long before the taming of mankind's darkest, most irrational impulses.

And, of course, the sacrifice of Isaac did not take place.

One more brief story, also courtesy of Nitobe, who quotes a diary left by a physician present on the occasion of the seppuku (ritual disembowelment) of three brothers following a failed plot to kill a lord they believed had wronged their father. The brothers are Sakon, 24; Naiki, 17; and Hachimaro, 8.

"When they were all seated in a row for final dispatch, Sakon turned to the youngest and said, 'You go first, for I wish to be sure that you do it properly.' Upon the little one's replying that, as he had never seen seppuku performed, he would like to see his brothers do it and then he could follow them, the older brothers smiled through tears: 'Well said, little fellow!'

"Sakon thrust his dagger into the left side of his abdomen and said, 'Look, brother. Do you understand now?' The two older brothers die. "The child looked from one to the other, and when both had expired, he calmly had denuded himself and followed the example set him."

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 was the last nail in the traditional samurai's coffin. The past was dead, the future was "Western" – capitalist, industrialist, acquisitive, "rational," "civilized." Few nations in his-

'A real man does not think of victory or defeat. He plunges recklessly towards an irrational death.'
Hagakure

tory have transfigured themselves more dramatically. The novelist Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) depicts the agitations of his time in his 1909 novel "Sorekara" ("And Then"). One either threw oneself headlong into the new life, with its grubby, unscrupulous vulgarities, or one clung, somewhat futilely, to the past. Daisuke, Soseki's protagonist, is unable to do either. He is 30, rich, idle, scornful of the samurai ideals of his upbringing, no less so of the soulless materialism seething and surging around him.

His father, a samurai of the old school, tries to fire his son's spirit – in vain. "Daisuke felt an unpleasant taste in his mouth every time he had to listen to such speeches. Courage might well have been an important prerequisite to survival in the barbaric days of his father's youth, when life was taken right and left, but in this civilized day and age, Daisuke regarded it as a piece of equipment primitive as the bow and arrow. ... Needless to say, Daisuke was cowardly. He could feel no shame in this. There were even occasions when he proudly styled himself a coward."

Cowardice doesn't seem much to be proud of. But to Daisuke, evidently, it's synonymous with enlightenment. His father, had Daisuke spoken frankly to him, would have recoiled in horror. But his view

of life was already dead. Good riddance, is the modern verdict. We today don't call our lifestyle cowardly. We call it "the pursuit of happiness," and tend to agree with Daisuke that murderous vengeance and seppuku are more repulsive than admirable.

Nitobe, writing in English and addressing precisely the modern, negative perspective on Bushido, is at pains to show that its ideals are at bottom little different from those of the West. Heroism is heroism, East or West, he seems to say. Think of the Roman Cato the Younger, he says, ripping out his entrails rather than live under the dictatorship of Julius Caesar. Think, for that matter, of Christ, whose martyrdom, no less than a samurai's, showed "that the vilest form of death assumes a sublimity and becomes a symbol of new life."

The Christian injunction against self-slaughter seems to blunt somewhat the force of that last example, and it would be hard indeed to find a Western equivalent to the early 18th-century military treatise known as the "Hagakure." Among its aphorisms are encomiums of death that make a modern reader shudder: "A real man does not think of victory or defeat. He plunges recklessly towards an irrational death." "The way of the warrior is death. This means choosing death whenever there is a choice between life and death."

Two centuries of civil war ended in 1615. An exhausted nation settled slowly into peace. But death retained its uncanny hold. Not warriors now but lovers were its most fervent devotees – as we shall see in this space next month.

Michael Hoffman is the author of "In the Land of the Kami: A Journey into the Hearts of Japan" and "Other Worlds."

Universal Sunday Crossword: "Side show" by Timothy E. Parker

Across		Down	
1	Attachments to backboards	1	Taboo
5	Motherboard pt.	2	Not a science
8	Fourth qtr. month	3	Prosaic
11	"I'm afraid of that!"	4	Asian getaways
14	Motored movers	5	Bit of butter
18	Far from land	6	"Yeah, I hear ya"
19	Word to a dentist	7	Jack Ruby's victim
20	Producer of molasses	8	Non-PC punier
22	Chipping option	9	Takes a crack at
23	Fail to persist	10	Maytag rival
26	"Zapata!"	11	Videos' counterparts
27	Thou-shalt-not things	12	Applied jam
28	Waterway serving Oriskany	13	Composer Antonio
29	"Carmen" solo	14	Pop up into view
30	On the double, briefly	15	Some old Chevy models
31	Reads over quickly	16	Loses it
32	Film partner of Louise	17	Gov't. property
34	What atheists insist on being	18	overseer
36	Place to get steamed	19	Office VIP
38	Lah-di-___	20	Before, to or fro
		21	Yellow transporter
		22	"So there it is!"
		23	
		24	
		25	
		26	
		27	
		28	
		29	
		30	
		31	
		32	
		33	

Solutions on page 20	
35	Collectible
37	Be an excellent student
40	Controversial apple spray
41	Calamities or catastrophes
42	Flemish city in Belgium
44	Potato variety
45	Twist in a bar?
47	With the most coils or cuts
49	Ready to set sail
50	Many one's last headline
51	Equal a poker b.
52	Telly network
53	Parts of rivers
55	Russian alcoholic b.
59	Used with them
60	Equal a poker b.
61	It's a ... all loss
62	Covered ... dots
63	Primitive ...
65	Big bag ...
66	Little strummed instrument
67	Slow, to a maestro
68	Like the Mojave
69	Like some ...
70	Unit of sunlight
71	Little bit of good
72	Known to very few
73	Assistant
74	Yard tool
75	Penalty for crossing the line?
76	Pigskin prop
77	As if in a dream
78	Shouts of pain
79	Soundly beat
80	"Oh, my!"
81	Light wind
82	Charades or Monopoly, e.g.
83	Dried, like mud
84	Letter furthest from alpha
85	Stock without face value
86	"The Spectacles" author
87	Sibilant sounds that summon
88	Did some ushering
89	Tough-to-remove dirt
90	City near Salt Lake City
91	Frigid temperature
92	Ages ago
93	Little news
94	Tiny shot
95	Some batteries

Sudoku <http://kjell.haxx.se/sudoku>

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains a number from 1 to 9.

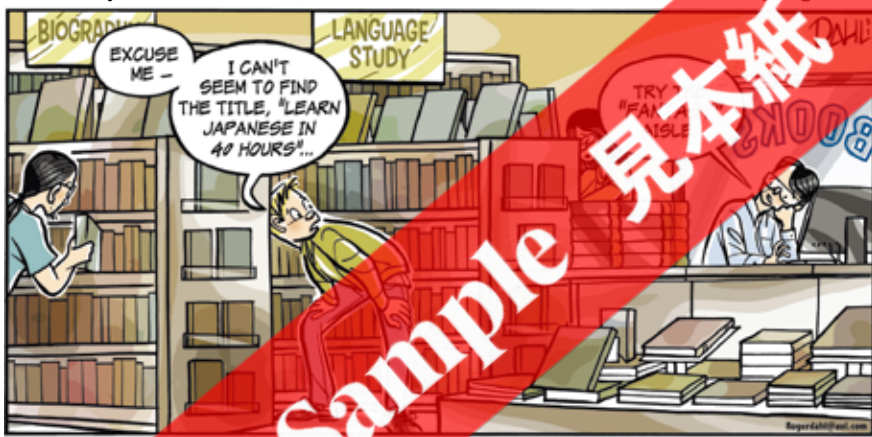
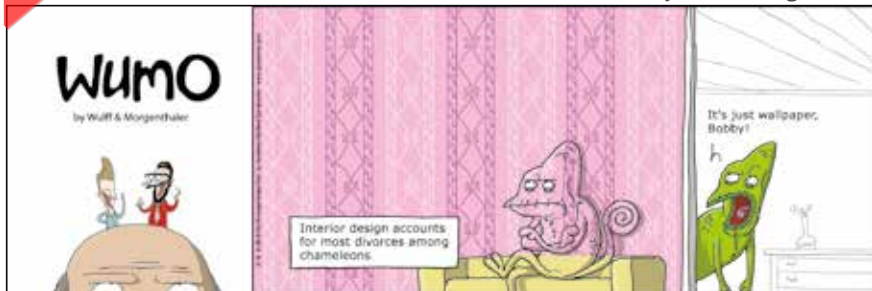
		5		8				9
	4							
				5	2	3		
					7		6	
		9	6					
		7		1		5	3	
	6	7						
5						2		
		9		6	7		4	

7 Little Words

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 cold North Atlantic current (8)	
2 "Clueless" actress Murphy (8)	
3 Guglielmo Marconi, for one (9)	
4 pursue incessantly (5)	
5 largest Pacific salmon (7)	
6 gray or blue cat (7)	
7 big and burly (5)	

ND	DOR	BOL	HOU	LA
NY	CH	BRA	SKY	OGN
TA	OCK	IN	BR	ESE
TE	IT	HU	MAL	SE

TimeOut | **Diversions & Weather****Cartoons****Zero Gravity****Dilbert****WuMo****Weather: Seven-day forecast**

	Temperatures in Celsius High/Low						
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Tokyo	9/4	9/0	7/1	10/2	7/1	9/1	9/2
Osaka	8/1	8/1	9/3	10/3	8/1	10/1	9/3
Nagoya	7/1	9/4	11/2	10/2	9/0	11/0	10/1
Sapporo	-3/-8	-2/-7	-1/-6	-4/-8	-2/-9	-1/-7	-1/-6
Sendai	3/-3	9/4	5/-2	4/-2	4/3	7/-2	4/4
Niigata	4/4	3/4	5/4	3/4	4/-2	7/4	3/4
Hiroshima	10/-2	8/0	10/3	10/3	9/4	11/4	10/2
Takamatsu	8/0	7/4	9/1	10/2	7/1	10/1	9/2
Fukuoka	10/1	8/4	10/6	10/4	10/5	11/3	11/4
Kagoshima	15/2	17/6	15/9	13/6	13/5	14/4	15/4
Naha	22/15	24/16	23/18	20/16	19/15	19/13	22/15

Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku												
3	7	5	1	6	8	4	2	9				
6	4	2	3	9	7	8	1	5				
9	1	8	4	5	2	6	3	7				
4	2	1	5	7	3	9	6	8				
5	3	9	6	8	4	1	7	2				
8	6	7	2	1	9	5	4	3				
2	9	6	7	4	5	3	8	1				
7	5	4	8	3	1	2	9	6				
1	8	3	9	2	6	7	5	4				

7 Little Words												
1. LABRADOR	2. BRITANNY	3. BOLOGNESE	4. HOUND	5. CHINOOK	6. MALTESE	7. HUSKY						

Sunday Universal Crossword												
RIMS	CPU	OGI	WAS	VANS								
ASEA	PAH	SOH	CHUM	TRON								
FALL	B	HEW	W	IDE	VIVA							
TABOOS	URAL	ARIA	ASAP									
SCANS	THELMA	LORDLESS										
	SPA	DAH	PSEUD									
ADA	AXIL	NATO	DEISTS									
ULLIN	OTIS	WOK	HOE									
BASTES	AMP	SILVERSID										
CRAWL	SHORTER	ALLEGRO										
SETUP	PONON	ALLS	IDES									
STRAKE	PUTTIES	TCHOR										
DESP	ATE	SD	ANKARA									
ARR	ROE	STR	KIPAY									
BESOTS	PLOP	TOAD	DEL									
	FEUDS	WUZ	KEG									
CONF	REE	STEPPE	ARGOT									
AMOS	RACE	TPOS	EMERGE									
KEP	ERNO	TY	HS	EST	IDE							
EGAD	AMENITY	TAT	AMEN									
DARE	LET	POR	SSS	TENS								

Overheard**On Sunday has ears**

KitKat heaven
American woman: How many different flavors of KitKat are there?
 — Nakano Station, Nakano-ku, Tokyo.
 Overheard by The Japan Times On Sunday

Overheard a conversation you'd like to share? Simply fill out the online submission form at jtimes.jp/overheard. Please recount the conversation in the format above and be sure to provide a description of the participants (age, male/female, nationality if relevant, etc.), note where the conversation took place and include any other context that might be necessary.

Tweets of the Week**What's everyone else saying on Twitter?**

Wooden skyscraper
 @ArchDaily: Japan Plans for Supertall Wooden Skyscraper in Tokyo by 2041
<http://bit.ly/wooden-skyscraper>

Genderless subculture
 @js_TalksPlus: This #Harajuku fashion, "genderless kei," has undertaken the mission to change the ideas and expectations surrounding men's clothes in #Japan.
<http://bit.ly/genderless-subculture>

Empress overcomes many trials
 @nippon_en: As the first commoner to marry a future Japanese emperor, Empress Michiko has overcome many trials.
<http://bit.ly/empress-michiko>

American ninja
 @TravelLeisure: How an American became one of Japan's professional ninjas
<http://bit.ly/american-ninja>

Tohoku road trip
 @Visit_Japan: There's never been a better time to visit Tohoku. Start planning your road trip to Northern Japan right now
<http://bit.ly/go-tohoku>

Giveaways

We are giving away a book in Japanese on the history of Germany during World War I. Published in December, the book titled "1918 Nen Saikyo Doitsugun wa Naze Yabureta" ("Why the most powerful German military was defeated in 1918") was written by Akira Iikura, a professor at Josai International University in Chiba Prefecture. Iikura, a specialist in international politics, offers broad perspectives on the systems of the German military and government in the early 20th century and analyzes the factors surrounding the country's defeat in World War I.

How to apply: Please send your name, address, postal code, phone number, name of giveaway and a comment on the publication to The Japan Times On Sunday Giveaways, Digital Enterprise Division, 4-5-4 Shibaura, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-0023, fax the same information to 03-3453-7085 or complete our online submission form at jtimes.jp/onsunday by Feb. 25.

**Hoefflin soars to slopestyle gold**

Freestyle skiing
Pyeongchang South Korea
 AP

The Olympics were never part of Sarah Hoefflin's plan.

The goal when she entered university in Cardiff, England, a decade ago was to become a doctor. So she buried her head in books and earned a degree in neuroscience. Skiing back then was mostly just a way to blow off some steam every once in a while.

Medical school was supposed to be the next step after graduation.

One problem: she didn't get in. "It just didn't work out for me," Hoefflin said.

No matter. The skiing thing kind of did. The 27-year-old from Switzerland capped her improbable rise with a victory in women's slopestyle on Saturday, edging teammate Mathilde Gremaud for the top spot by drilling her final run down the demanding course at Phoenix Snow Park. Isabel Atkin of Britain took bronze with a score of 84.60 in her final run to give her country its first-ever medal in a skiing event at the Olympics.

Hoefflin was already in position to reach the podium the last time she stepped into the gate.

Rather than settle for something



other than gold, Hoefflin went for it, capping her winning run with a double-cork 720-degree spin. She raised her arms after sticking the landing and her score of 91.20 was more than three points clear of the 88.00 Gremaud put up in her first run of the finals.

Heady territory for a skier who didn't get serious until her early 20s. Hoefflin remembers crashing hard the first time she ever tried to navigate a slopestyle course "because I didn't know what I was doing." She only entered her first competition at the urging of class-

mates because the winner received a new set of skis and she, well, she'd never had new skis before.

That's hardly a problem anymore.

Hoefflin has practically sprinted toward the upper echelons of her sport, winning gold

Kobayashi qualifies third

Ski jumping
Pyeongchang South Korea
 KYODO

Ryoyu Kobayashi soared into contention for the Pyeongchang Olympics men's large hill title on Friday by qualifying an impressive third for the final.

Kobayashi, who cracked the top 10 in the normal hill last weekend by finishing seventh, produced the day's biggest jump of 143.5 meters for 127.6 points, garnering the biggest cheers on another frosty night at Alpensia Ski Jumping Centre.

The 21-year-old Kobayashi trailed a pair of Norwegians, leader Robert Johansson (131.9 points) and Johann Andre Forfang (128.7), going into Saturday night's final.

"I rode the wind well," said Kobayashi, a first-time Olympian. "I had fun out there. I'm doing the same things I've been doing all season, making sure not to lean in too much, keeping my hands relaxed."

"I hope tomorrow I can have the wind I had today. I haven't jumped this well even at the World Cup. So if you think about that, I think you could say..."

He added: "I hope better than the previous normal hill."

All three men's jumpers qualified to see Kobayashi in the final.

Kobayashi went through 21 jumps, including 122.5 meters for 127.6 points, Taku Takeuchi (120.5 meters, 98.5 points) was 27th, while Kobayashi's older brother, Junshiro, placed 37th

(115.0 meters, 89.5 points). The field was reduced to 56 after one jumper was disqualified.

In the days since finishing 21st in the normal hill, the 45-year-old Kasai has been upbeat about his chances in the large hill, the event in which he won silver at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi.

Yet Kasai on Friday was furious with himself for a performance that left him way out of medal territory.

"It was garbage," Kasai said. "There was no confidence, and I'm angry at myself. I'm doing the same things, but I couldn't accelerate."

"I couldn't get any speed behind me in the trial jump. The wind wasn't great and I made an awkward jump, which was a bit concerning. I thought too much and wasn't aggressive at all."

On Sunday

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Sports

Alpine skiing
LEDECKA
TAKES GOLD
IN SUPER-G
《《 PAGE 22


26

Skating
FANS
ENJOY
MOMENT
《《 PAGE 22



Majestic Hanyu demands title

Star becomes first man to repeat as champion since Button in 1952

Figure skating
Jack Gallagher
Gangneung South Korea
STAFF WRITER

Yuzuru Hanyu etched his name into the pantheon of skating legends with a second straight Olympic gold medal in the free skate at the Pyeongchang Games on Saturday.

In doing so, the defending Olympic and world champion achieved a feat that had not been accomplished in 66 years, since American Dick Button won his second gold at the 1952 Winter Games in Oslo. Button won his first gold in 1948 at the St. Moritz Games in Switzerland.

The 23-year-old superstar became one of just four men in Olympic history to win consecutive golds with the triumph. Hanyu joined Sweden's Gillis Grafstrom, Austria's Karl Schafer and Button in the history books. Grafstrom won three straight (1920, 1924, 1928) golds, while Schafer reigned in 1932 and 1936.

Against what seemed almost insurmountable odds after suffering a serious injury to the lateral tendon in his right ankle just three months ago that kept him off the ice for two months, the Sendai native landed four quadruple jumps to scale the summit of the sport in spectacular fashion at Gangneung Ice Arena. What he did here was nothing short of phenomenal.

Hanyu skated to "Seimei" and exerted his incredible force of will from beginning to end. He embraced the music and did it all. His hydroblade and Ina Bauer near the end capping off the historic effort that earned him a total score of 317.85 points. The victory gave Japan its first gold of the games.

Shoma Uno skated last and came through with a clutch performance to capture the silver medal with 306.90, while Hanyu's training partner Javier Fernandez claimed the bronze on 305.24.

The 1-2 finish by Hanyu and Uno brought Japan its first ever multiple skating medals in a single figure skating discipline at the Olympics, while Fernandez collected a historic first Olympic medal in the sport for Spain.

Hanyu opened with a beautiful quad salchow, followed that with a superb quad toe loop, then hit a triple flip. Following a combination spin and his step sequence, Hanyu landed a fantastic quad salchow/triple toe loop, then



Yuzuru Hanyu (top) performs his free skate routine at the Pyeongchang Olympics on Saturday at Gangneung Ice Arena; Shoma Uno (left) skates en route to the silver medal; Hanyu and Uno hold Japanese flags after finishing the competition first and second, respectively. AP, KYODO, AFP/JULI

made it four quads with a toe loop that was supposed to be the first of a three-combo jump, but wasn't executed. That was the lone blip in the program.

Hanyu then pulled off a triple axel/single loop/triple salchow combo, a triple loop and a triple lutz, before closing with a sit spin, choreographic sequence and a combination spin. Waiting in a back room for Fernandez and Uno to finish their free skates, Hanyu was overcome with emotion when Uno's score was posted and he wept openly, the magnitude of his incredible

accomplishment setting in.

"I have no words, right now," Hanyu stated immediately after winning. "I am overwhelmed. This is the best day of my skating life. My tears were from my heart. I can find one word and that is 'happy.'"

After some time to cool down, Hanyu put everything in perspective at the post-event news conference.

"Since I was injured, I am very fortunate to skate here at the Olympics," Hanyu commented. "I am indeed very happy to win the Olympic gold medal."

Hanyu admitted that he

made the most of a very difficult situation.

"I am truly proud of this achievement," Hanyu added. "I had to do what I could do at this moment."

Uno competed to "Turandot" and battled magnificently to make the podium. He fell on his opening quad loop, but landed a quad flip, and two quad toe loops while impressing the crowd with his considerable skill and presentation ability.

The 20-year-old Uno's reaction to getting the silver medal was typically understated.

Continued on Page 23

MEDAL STANDINGS

	G	S	B	T
Germany	9	2	4	15
Norway	6	8	5	19
Netherlands	6	5	2	13
United States	5	1	2	8
Canada	4	5	4	13
Sweden	4	2	0	6
Japan	1	5	3	9

More Olympic coverage online:
www.japantimes.co.jp

Results as of press time on Saturday