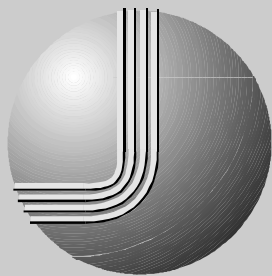


CJST News

The Canada-Japan Society of Toronto



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Upcoming Events

Into the New Year...

CJST-organized events at Access Japan 2000 were a great success; we need your valuable input to make 2001 another eventful year.

**BY JOHN E. LE BLANC,
CJST PRESIDENT**

The past calendar year has been extremely busy for the CJST. The Board, the committees and the membership in general have been involved in numerous projects calling for hundreds of hours of volunteer effort and dedication. With Access Japan 2000 calling on us to help showcase Japanese culture, the CJST and its ever-diligent members rose to the occasion and made an accomplished mark in the Canadian/Japanese community. In total, the CJST organized and presented 3 of the 32 Access Japan events, and each was a great success (read about them inside); in addition, we helped introduce and formulate the organizing committee for another event. I believe I can safely say that this level of involvement was by far the highest for an all-volunteer organization.

I often pause and reflect on how unique we are in the Canadian/Japanese community. We are all-volunteer, and yet we somehow manage to be everywhere on the community events calendar. Quite a feat, I must say! (*-sigh- That's quite enough self-back-patting! --Editor.*)

LOOKING AHEAD: In the new year, I am challenging the Board and the membership to set an agenda for the CJST. After our Bonen kai (see details in the included flyer or on our website) we will settle into our ever-popular Ichi-moku-kai groove (on the first Thursday of every month, at Megumi Japanese Restaurant, 9 Church St. just below Front St.), and mull over our 2001 plans. We are working on several ideas for cultural events, and we are also due for a business luncheon in the very near future (watch for details), but we always need an infusion of new ideas to keep the CJST vital to its membership; we thrive on your participation. If you have any suggestions on what you think would be of interest to the membership, please let us know.

Speaking of ideas, I received an e-mail from a friend in Calgary who went to a Sumo & Sushi party. Someone living in Japan had sent videotapes of the latest basho to my Cow Town buddy, and a

group of sumo/sushi fans ended up gathering at a local sushi shop to cheer on their favourite wrestlers via videotape (hmm, NHK copyright issues?) and nosh on food of the gods. Minimum organization, maximum weight per athlete of any sport on earth, all mixed in with sushi and beer... could life get any better? I'm in! Who wants to make this happen? Perhaps we could even add this to our Ichi-moku-kai evenings once every quarter...

Thanks for making it to the end of my ramblings. I look forward to seeing you all at our Bonen kai, and in case I forget, have a happy and healthy New Year! ■

STOP THE PRESS !!

All members attending the January 4, 2001 Ichi-moku-kai will receive their first beer free (same value substitutions allowed)!

That's right, one free drink for all members attending the January 4th IMK. Come and get the New Year off to a great start. See you at Megumi Restaurant, 9 Church Street.

P.S. – How's that for a hair-of-the-dog New Year's present?



CANADA-JAPAN FREE TRADE ROUNDTABLE OCTOBER 18, 2000

Canada-Japan Free Trade? Panelists discuss its merits and obstacles

BY DON WATERS

Four panelists from the Canadian and Japanese business communities gathered at U of T's Bennett Lecture Hall, Faculty of Law to share their views on the merits of a free trade arrangement for Canada and Japan, as well as the hurdles that must be overcome if such an agreement is to come to fruition.

The panel was composed of Dr. Wendy Dobson, Director of the Centre for International Business at U of T's Joseph L. Rotman School of Management; Sam Boutziouvis, Vice President of International Trade and Global Economics for the Business Council on National Issues; The Honourable Edward Lumley, Vice-Chairman, Nesbitt Burns Inc. and Chairman of the Canada-Japan Forum; and lastly, Yoshio Nakatani, President and Chief Executive Officer of Toyota Canada Inc. Dr. Dobson introduced the panel and acted as moderator for the roundtable.

Sam Boutziouvis spoke in place of Tom D'Aquino, President and Chief Executive of the BCNI who was ill on the day of the event. Mr. Boutziouvis began by commenting on the recent stagnation in the Canada-Japan economic relationship. In the era of the new economy, trade flows between the two countries have remained flat; he feels Canada-Japan free trade should be a priority for each of the countries. Canada's economic well-being is highly dependent on free trade with other industrialized countries. While those opposed to Canada-Japan free trade note that the Japanese economy has had numerous problems over the past 10 years, it remains the second largest economy in the world. Similar concerns were expressed about the state of the U.S. economy at the time of the NAFTA negotiations and which have now completely disappeared.

Mr. Boutziouvis noted that Canada provides Japan with a springboard to an enhanced relationship with the United States and a door to other economies, given Canada's involvement in many different economic and political bodies, i.e., the Commonwealth, La Francophonie. However, in order for Canada and Japan to achieve a closer relationship, a strategy needs to be developed. Within the next five to seven years, governments and businesses need to commit to achieving tariff-free trade on as many products as possible, as well as deeper commitments on trade in services. This would require both sides to establish sector and industry groups to explore opportunities and implement strategies.

However, the relationship should not be limited to a free trade agreement. Something more complex is required, including social security agreements, deregulation, agreements on regulatory cooperation, and engaging in active program of trade data reconciliation.

Edward Lumley began by highlighting some of the achievements and commitments made by the two countries. However, while the justification for trade liberalization is easy for Canada – Japan is its second largest trading partner – the benefit for Japan is not as obvious, as Canada is only fourteenth on Japan's trade list. Nevertheless, Canada is important to Japan in many other respects. Canada's significance to Japan lies in other areas as well: peace, security, culture. As a result, when the Canadian and Japanese delegations of the

Canada-Japan Forum first met, trade issues were not even discussed. The relationship that already exists is on far greater terms.

Mr. Lumley proceeded to emphasize how much further we must go by discussing his involvement in Canada-U.S. trade liberalization at its infant stages. Japan and Canada should not be discouraged in making small commitments at first, since these will lead to the stronger relationship necessary for a comprehensive agreement to be reached. Further, once a broad trade agreement is in place, other aspects of the relationship between the two countries will also be strengthened, such as culture and tourism. Free trade is just the first step to taking the entire relationship between Canada and Japan – economic as well as all other aspects – to a higher level.

Yoshio Nakatani reviewed some of the main obstacles to free trade negotiations in the past, and how these obstacles have changed. In particular, he emphasized Japan's previous resistance to bilateral agreements, and noted that such attitudes have very recently changed among the Japanese elites. Japan has just recently broken away from its exclusive policy of multilateralism by exploring bilateral free trade with Singapore. In addition, there is an acceptance that these arrangements should not be limited to Asian nations. Moreover, the discussions with Singapore are planned to encompass much more than just free trade, including e-commerce, investment, and labour mobility.

Mr. Nakatani also reviewed the benefits of free trade from Canada's perspective. Canada has largely ignored trade with Asia, instead relying heavily on trade with the United States, with whom it conducts more than 80% of its trade. However, one-quarter of all United States' trade takes place with Asia. Canada needs to diversify its relations likewise in order to protect its political and economic interests.

From Japan's perspective, an agreement would reinforce Japan's investment in Canada and enlarge its access to the NAFTA market. In addition, an arrangement with an advanced economy such as Canada would help Japan accelerate the process of social and economic rationalization in key industry areas. This would be an important step to Japan restoring its economic vitality. In the end, such an agreement would promote competitiveness and economic growth in both countries.

Mr. Nakatani feels that a bilateral agreement would not take away from the multilateral agreements to which each country is a party, but would complement the World Trade Organization's objectives and assist it in developing new ideas. And for both countries, a bilateral arrangement would also help lead to a more balanced relationship with the United States. While some parties content with the status quo will oppose such a relationship, Mr. Nakatani emphasized that we should not hesitate to promote such a new economic relationship which would be for the broader benefit of both.

Dr. Dobson opened the discussion to questions, following which the Honourable Barbara McDougall closed the discussion portion of the event by thanking the panelists. A cocktail reception followed, opening with a few words from William Saunderson of the reception sponsor Ontario Exports Inc. ■

Film Review

After Life (Japan) 1998, 118 minutes
Starring Erika Oda, Susumu Terajima, Sadao Abe,
Natsuo Ishido, Kazuko Shirakawa
Directed by Hirokazu Kore-Eda

REVIEWED BY JEFF HARJU

If you could choose one memory from your life to relive forever, what would it be? This is the underlying theme and the most intriguing aspect of Hirozaku Kore-Eda's newest film, the critically acclaimed *After Life* (the Japanese title is *Wonderful Life*).

Set in an aging halfway house located between the worlds of the living and the dead, the film examines the interactions between "agents"/employees of this limbo-land and the newly dead who have one week to be processed through the halfway house before they enter permanently into the afterlife. Each individual spends the first half of the week choosing the one memory that he or she will be allowed to carry into the afterlife; the second half is dedicated to recreating this chosen moment on film, all with the assistance of the agents. At the conclusion of the week, the finished film is screened for the individual, who watches until the chosen memory is vividly awakened in his or her mind. At that precise moment, the journey to the afterlife is completed.

The film's strength lies in its telling of the various life stories, including the enigmatic histories of the agents themselves. Some lives are bleak, some mundane, some joyous. Ultimately, each individual must painstakingly assess his or her entire life, and choose to remember only one event.

Kore-Eda chooses a handful of characters representing a clichéd cross-section of Japanese society. Included is the disillusioned salaryman who struggles to extract even one worthwhile memory from his life. There's the high school girl who initially picks a trip she once took to Disneyland. There's a "dirty old man" who states that, naturally, every real man would choose a memory of "doing it." There's also the ex-prostitute/hostess who chooses the memory of the one man who was kind and caring to her, and the surly twentysomething who refuses to make any choice at all.

The characters develop slowly, and they are so stereotypical that I was left wondering if the introduction of a more interesting character - someone a bit less "nice"? - might have grabbed the audience's attention more readily. Kore-Eda's afterlife makes no distinction between "good" and "bad", and his characters reap no rewards or punishments for their deeds in life. While this is all fine to me, it skips a lot of issues that might help improve the complexity of the film.

As with the character development, the film as a whole is also more than a little slow-paced. *After Life* is a "nice" film...but that's it. While not bad, there is no great cinematography, story development, direction, or acting that really warrants a movie of such length. I feel it would be much better suited to the stage, and could be much more effective in reaching and relating to the audience at close range.

To be fair, *Newsweek* hails the film as "a masterpiece," the *International Herald Tribune* calls it "...a serious, moving, and beautifully crafted film," and *NOW Magazine* has given it a NNNNN rating. I haven't seen Kore-Eda's acclaimed debut *Maboroshi* so perhaps I'm not the best judge, but I think that if you're interested in riveting, clever Japanese films you should instead try Juzo Itami's films. See *After Life* on video (just released)...you won't be missing much by not catching it on the big screen. ■

Once a Gaijin...

BY STUART CREEMORE

Every 'foreign country person' has a different take on what it means to be a 'gaijin', but one thing's for sure, gaijin ain't Japanese. Personally, I liked being a gaijin, and used to feel almost proud standing in the 'gaijin' line at Narita along with all the other funny looking people, even if it was always the longest, slowest-moving line. With feet and noses that big, how could we be anything but 'aliens'?

Now that I'm settled back in Canada, I sometimes miss being a gaijin. Born a WASP, a term which Stockwell Day and his ilk are bringing to even further disrepute, I can't yet claim to belong to a 'visible minority' or any other chic ethnic group. Here, back in boring old Toronto, I'm just a vanilla Canadian. Nobody asks me where I'm from, or if I can use chopsticks or eat natto - people even sit next to me on the subway! I can still remember the call of 'gaijin sama' as I waited at the bank or ticket window - what a nice ring that had.

Yes, there's nothing quite like being a gaijin in Japan - unless you're black or Asian - but then of course they're not really gaijin. Gaijin have a sense of belonging in Japan - of belonging somewhere else, but as long as you have your visa in order, and don't pull any Paul McCartneys, you're a most honoured guest. And if you've got a steady supply of money coming in, you won't find a better place in the world to spend it. The problem is the loss of gaijin status upon returning to Canada - we just just don't stick out enough here.

Fortunately, there's a partial solution - the CJST. Come to any Ichi-moku-kai night, and there's always someone asking, 'So, how long were you there?', 'Where did you live?', 'What did you do?'. Chances are you'll find someone who at least knows your train line, and maybe even one of your favourite 'akachochin'. And hey, if you're Japanese and miss meeting real gaijin - not these Canadians who don't know Bruce Lee from Beat Takeshi - then drop by Megumi's 'furst Thirsty' of any month. If you fall somewhere in the middle - Japanese Canadian, for instance - you won't find a better way to bridge the gap. *Jaa, mata ne...* ■



JAPANESE HERITAGE: WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES IN 2000 OCTOBER 4, 2000

Sold-out panel discussion informative, provocative

BY LINDA ADACHI

On October 4th, a packed room at the Japan Foundation had the privilege of listening to five exceptional women describe their personal and professional experiences. Although coming from very different fields, all five individuals share a Japanese heritage, which strongly informs their lives, and which provided the theme for the CJST-sponsored event. **Dr. Patricia Morley**, author of *The Mountain Is Moving: Japanese Women's Lives* and former Concordia University professor, acted as moderator.

Nisei (second-generation Japanese Canadian) novelist/poet **Joy Kogawa** is a Member of the Order of Canada, a social activist (currently working with the Toronto Dollars Community Project), and the recipient of several honorary degrees. Ms. Kogawa spoke of a sense of turmoil within her overall identity which comprises a Japanese heritage and Christian faith. It is this intersection of the Eastern and Western belief systems – which she likened to “a mid-air collision” – that informs her work, most notably in her first two novels *Obasan* and *Itsuka*.

Coming from the perspective of a World War II internee, she described a Nisei individual as one “who is not at home, who does not belong, and who is ill at ease.” Ms. Kogawa also noted the irony that the Nisei of her generation seem more Japanese than contemporary Japanese living in Japan, as they continue to observe the customs taught by their Meiji era-born immigrant parents.

Japanese-born and B.C.-based entrepreneur **Kazuko Komatsu** has spent 20 years running businesses in traditionally male industries: fish, lumber, and now, beer. According to her, she didn't set out to prove anything as a woman – these business opportunities simply arose, and she took them. She believes that “men's businesses” remain that way only because men comprise the majority of the workforce in such industries, and that the disparity will not change unless people drop the male/female hang-ups. Ms. Komatsu feels mothers should strive to provide the same education and moral values for their children, whether male or female.

As Canada's first female owner of a brewery (Pacific Western Brewing Co.), Ms. Komatsu observed dryly that although she hasn't encountered any overt sexism or racial discrimination blocking her success, she frequently wonders, “What are they *really* thinking?”

Sansei (third-generation Japanese Canadian) judge **Maryka Omatsu** has acted as negotiator for the National Association of Japanese Canadians during the redress movement, and takes an interest in issues of human rights, environmentalism, and multiculturalism. Judge Omatsu pointed out that 100 years have already passed since the first wave of Japanese immigrants arrived in Canada. However, as much as the Japanese and Canadian aspects of the Japanese Canadians' dual heritage have become blurred over time, those interned during World War II felt a distinctly Japanese sense of unspoken shame, and the pain of false accusation left an indelible mark in their psyche.

During the redress campaign, the Japanese Canadians consulted the Issei (first-generation); as a small minority in Canada, it was important

for all Nikkei to work in solidarity. Judge Omatsu recalled that the redress movement adopted the strategy of one 16th century samurai – that is, to “attack the enemy's strategic corner.” The NAJC took advantage of several circumstances: 1988 was an election year, during which multiculturalism was a high-profile issue; news of the American redress movement was strengthening the Canadian cause; Japan was an economic powerhouse at the time. Finally, in 1988, the largest human rights settlement in Canadian history was awarded to the Japanese Canadians.

Judge Omatsu then briefly noted some differences between Japanese and Canadian legal and social systems. Where an individual in Canada is presumed innocent until proven guilty, Japan has a 90% rate of guilty pleas, which Judge Omatsu attributed to Japan's culture of honour and shame. Although she feels “uneasy” about Japan's treatment of women – specifically, its non-acceptance of single mothers and its OL (Office Lady) syndrome – she also pointed out that it has taken 80 years for women in Canada to be accepted into corporate management positions.

Mariko Fujiwara, a researcher at Tokyo's Hakuodo Institute of Life and Living, remarked that individuals of her generation (she is 51) have been affected by their parents' war experiences. Her own parents, both devastated by the war, took the view that the world was an uncertain, ever-changing place. As a result, they felt they “didn't know best” in raising their children, and actively sought the outside guidance of educators. Sent off to boarding school, and treated to “boot camp”-like conditions during short periods at home, Ms. Fujiwara was forced to learn independence early; at 18, she chose to attend an American university on a scholarship. After returning to Japan and experiencing the difficulties of caring for an elderly relative, she came to the realization that life is not a hardship if one chooses one's own path.

As an expert in Japanese social trends, Ms. Fujiwara noted that Japanese women today are undergoing a transformation; Japanese men, falling behind in comparison, are finding the change in dynamics extremely difficult. She suggested that women be “merciful” to men in the corporate world, instead of taking on the aggressive stance that men would take.

Vancouver-born, retired geneticist **Dr. Irene Uchida** worked as a Down Syndrome specialist with an interest in social work. Now in her eighties, she has retained a saucy sense of humour and a feisty attitude. Dr. Uchida remarked happily that “long gone are the days when *hakujin* (whites) thought they were better than the Japanese Canadians, and men thought they were better than women.” As a Japanese Canadian woman, she noted that her life was often a “double fight”. However, her hard work brought many professional rewards; at one point she was in Winnipeg to start a genetics department at a hospital where, she added playfully, she got to be the men's boss. “Enjoy life” was Dr. Uchida's core message to her audience.

(Article continued on Page 6)

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Yukking it up for the gods

Here's another day to note on the Japanese calendar. According to the Japan Information Network website (www.jin.jcic.or.jp), the first Sunday of December marks a "laughing ritual" called *waraiko* in Hofu, Yamaguchi Prefecture. The annual ritual dates back some 800 years in the Hofu district, and is believed to have been initiated by some farmers as an offering of laughter to the deities. 21 households have since inherited the privilege of laughing for the gods once a year.

The participants sit across one another in pairs, and each pair offers three rounds of laughter: the first as a sign of gratitude for that year's harvest; the second to pray for a good harvest the following year; and the third to laugh all one's troubles away. Each pair must keep laughing until they are in perfect unison; a judge bangs on a metal washtub to signal timid or insincere laughter, and bangs on it repeatedly once he deems their laughter genuine and unified.

Next time people are laughing in your face, just pretend you're a god..... ■

Bye-bye, Coneheads:

The *Asahi Evening News* reports that the Japan Sumo Association will be abolishing its height and weight requirements for prospective wrestlers. Currently, sumo wrestlers must be at least 173cm tall and weigh 75kg or more.

To pass the height test, wrestler Mainoumi had silicone implanted in his scalp, and then had it surgically removed after he passed. Others have not been so fortunate, however. 50-year-old Stablemaster Asahiyama, a former wrestler, was unable to have his bump removed, and to this day he has an odd cone-shaped head. As for the weight requirements, wrestlers have had to drink huge amounts of water in order to pass the test.

Asahi hails the change in sumo regulations, suggesting that the current requirements foster the misguided philosophy that being heavy is more important than being athletic; the paper calls the present state of sumo "flavourless." ■

"OTHER" News from Japan

Many thanks to Adrienne Young and Margaret Buckworth for their news tips.

If you come across any interesting Japan-related news items, please forward to ladachi@nikon.ca for inclusion in the newsletter.

Would Homer J. Simpson eat this?

The *Asahi Shimbun* reports that the Japan Tofu Association declared this past October 2 "Tofu Day." This date is a pun on the kanji characters for 10 and 2, which can be pronounced as "to" and "fu" in Japanese. According to the Tofu Association, tofu consumption in Japan has been declining due to shrinking family size. (Rice consumption is also declining.)

All is not doom & gloom for the tofu pushers, however. Restaurants, supermarkets and department-store food counters are starting to offer an increasing variety of tofu-based products. At one Osaka department store, customers flock to the tofu section for donuts made from tofu and soy milk. Elsewhere, tofu is becoming popular as ice cream and as an ingredient for cream puffs. ■

How much is that C3PO in the window?

According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the rapid advancement of technology is giving way to the strong likelihood that robotics could become one of the biggest consumer growth markets in the next decade. Japan currently seems to have the edge on robot research among industrialized nations; it's already the world's leading manufacturer and user of industrial robots. Next, the country aims to transform these industrial machines into common household objects, for entertainment, domestic, and professional-service purposes.

FEER further reports that while Japan's government support for robotics research is much higher than in Western industrialized nations, it's the corporate sector that's doing much of the nifty work. Recently, Japanese television viewers were treated to a peculiar Honda commercial: what appears to be a man wearing a space stormtrooper outfit and climbing the stairs of a New York subway exit, actually turns out to be P3, the world's most advanced mechanical biped. Honda, better-known for manufacturing cars and motorbikes, is pumping money into robotics R & D as a possible long-term diversification strategy.

Other companies are also pursuing advanced robots as a new commercial frontier; one immediately thinks of Aibo, the Sony robo-pet. NEC has also jumped into the fray with its egg-shaped R100 home robot prototype, which rolls around the house looking for faces it can recognize and talk to.

The first-generation service robots will start invading Japan in the next two to three years. Early models won't perform any essential tasks, but will hopefully get the public accustomed to having robots around.

Armed with better software design and vast computer power, robot developers are now focussing on previously unprogrammable aspects of robot design, such as emotion, loyalty and fun. ■

Women's Perspectives.... (cont'd from Page 4)

The subsequent audience Q & A brought out some controversial opinions which had the audience gasping. Mariko Fujiwara, asked about her views on sexual harassment, remarked that "flirting is preferable to being frigid." According to Ms. Fujiwara, communication is the key to preventing or curbing unpleasant situations; that is, one should feel sorry for men who harass women, and such men, once admonished, will stop quickly. In her opinion, sexual harassment cases only happen to "second-class men and third-class women." As for the issue of World War II comfort women, Ms. Fujiwara felt that more discretion was necessary, suspecting that the women may "want to be left alone." Further, she stressed that there were many other atrocities committed during the war.

Joy Kogawa and Maryka Omatsu disagreed with Ms. Fujiwara, noting that others' pain cannot be compared to one's own; Ms. Kogawa provided the example of the Canadian war veterans' complaints during the Japanese Canadian redress movement. Judge Omatsu emphasized that everyone must be united in supporting those in pain.

Kazuko Komatsu, in response to the question of "what is a strong woman," stated that it's strength of mind – not physical strength – that counts. According to Ms. Komatsu, strength of mind should not be assessed by gender-based categorizations such as "women's movement" or "men's jobs." Rather, she believes that one's mind is shaped by one's country, religion, and family. In addition, she stressed that the experience of a woman in Japan is different than that of a woman in Canada; accordingly, the two should not be compared using only the Canadian criteria of what a strong woman should be. ■

What's coming up?

CJST events at a glance...

Jan. 4/01: Ichi-moku-kai

Stagger in and celebrate the new year (haven't they found a name for this decade yet?). The semi-legendary monthly social event continues at Megumi Japanese Restaurant (9 Church Street) from 6:00 p.m. to ?? Free admission for CJST members; \$5 for non-members.

Upcoming?

Let's hear your ideas on what you'd like to see happen in the near future. (Would you like to answer President John's plea for someone to organize a Sumo & Sushi soiree?)

Other events of interest...

Dec. 31/00: JCCC New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance

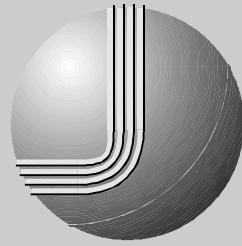
\$90 ticket includes cocktails and appetizers, dinner, a bottle of wine, dancing, prizes, after-midnight sushi. Call (416) 441-2345 to reserve.

Jan. 1/01: JCCC Oshogatsu (New Year's Day) Dinner

Welcome the new millennium with food and entertainment. Buffet-style dinner catered by Tori Ichi, along with a cash bar. \$50 adults/\$25 children. Call (416) 447-9611 to reserve.

Jan. 9 and 10/01: Ice Blossoms

The Crow's Theatre and Japan Foundation co-present a staged reading of the acclaimed Japanese play *Ice Blossoms* by Kaneshita Tatsuo, translated by Mitachi Miho. Free admission, but RSVP required: contact (416) 966-1600 ext. 229, or e-mail taoyagi@jftor.org



CJST NEWS

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We welcome comments, suggestions and contributions you may have on Japan and related topics for this publication.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not of the CJST or its Board of Directors.

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