

# The Mita Campus

KEIO UNIVERSITY  
1858  
'calamus gladio fortior'

"Without doubting there is no seeking; without seeking there is no gaining"—Yukichi Fukuzawa

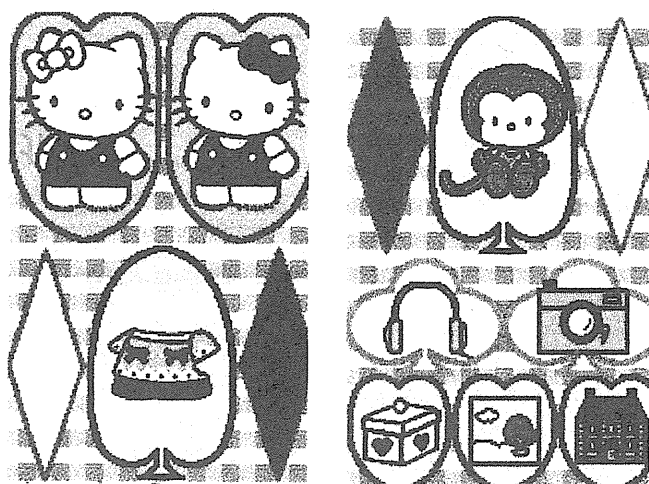
## Inside this edition:

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## Volume 221 Winter Edition 1997/98

Apologies are in order to our faithful readers for this rather long-awaited issue; and a very warm welcome to those new.

This densely packed winter edition of *The Mita Campus* (MC), in an unprecedented break with the past, contains a formidable three **interviews** (pgs4,5,6). The present issue has also concentrated on being more opinionated; hence the three **editorialistic articles** (pgs3,8,9) which should serve plenty of food for thought.

Our culture section has been invaded, quite out of coincidence, by the ever popular movies of Hong Kong director Zhiyi Li. Our reviewers get their pens around assessing his most recent **two films** (pgs12,13).

The **Mita Cam Recommends** section has been newly established for those with an appetite for English and languages, and gives tips only a journal of this kind can part (pg11). The MC has also put its arse into gear by taking up the surfboard and splashing into the now irresistible **Internet**. (pg14). In the process, one of our better surfers agonizingly attempts to make some sense out of this otherwise confusing **digitalization** phenomenon.

On one final note: We strive, despite the fact that the present political and financial melee seems to allow only enough room for pessimism, never to desert our sense of humour. The articles on *Kitty-chan* (pg7), the **Letter from the Editors** (next page), as well as the interview with the **Keio Tengu boy** (pg6) all have been written in this vein.

However hard times may get, the MC shall be the last newspaper on campus to assume a negative stance. We hope you will all find something to nourish and savour in this bumper edition. (Editor-in-Chief: T. Mitsuda)

# A letter

## from the editor

**O**kada (Oka-chan), the manager of the successful Japanese soccer team, was elected hands down to be God in heaven for this year by our editors. He was given authority to look back at last year and to decide who to send to heaven and who to hell; and who to neither.

The very first to come knocking on God's door was Sakakibara, the killer of Jun Hase.

**God Oka:** Okay, what may I do for you? Would you like to go to heaven, or to hell? Or am I just wasting my time in asking?

**Sakakibara:** "I love killing, hee hee."

**God:** That's no answer, but you just about qualify to go to hell.

**Sakakibara:** Only on one condition: Are there more cats to mutilate? Can I dig their eyeballs out?

**God:** Go ahead. They shall dig yours as well.

Next in line was a group of Japanese wives who now live in North Korea and who paid a visit to Japan for the first time in 30 years.

**God:** I'm surprised to see you here ladies. But I suspect you are the well-behaved and the well-nourished ones?

**Japanese Wives:** Yes, but we have come to cancel our seats we had reserved here: "We still believe that North Korea is heaven on earth." We are simply no longer in need of them. And we admire our great father, Kim Jong-Il. Victory to our blessed land! But excuse us, for we have a flight to catch...

**God:** Oh... Bon voyage.

After the wives had departed, secretariat Huang came along, a high-ranking former officer in North Korea, who defected to the South, making care that he was not seen by the women

**Huang:** Oh, those women! "They

are simply mad. "People in the North must think that I have gone nuts too. I think I'm a madman too."

**God:** Well, since the women left us with a couple of spare places, why don't you just take a rest in heaven. Here, I'll give you a free ticket to a World Cup game in Pyongyang in 2002. It's a bargain you cannot simply refuse!

The next person in line looked familiar; wearing an unkempt beard that hanged down from his chin onto his white frock. The stench that filled the room as he was moved in on a chair by two white-robed males, was instantly recognizable as well as unbearable.

**God** (holding his nose): I suppose I don't need to ask who you are, Shoko.

**Asahara:** Hey! What are you doing in my chair? "I will go to heaven! Never killed anybody."

**God:** Back to your satian on the mountainside!

Next in line, a dejected and tieless former president of the now bankrupt Koko-Yamaoka jewelry retailers, came forward shyly as if ready to give a confession.

**President** (looking forlorn): "Nobody could be God. We went bankrupt today."

**God:** Spare me a ring of diamonds for my wife, and I will let you go to heaven. Of course, you need to refund it when I hand it back to you after five years.

The next in line was the general secretary of the UN, Kofi Anan, paying his yearly visit.

**Anan:** I have a suggestion, my dear God. Mother Teresa should go to heaven. "She was a model of love, self-sacrifice, and undying courage."

**God:** I have no doubt she deserves it; but I need her to persuade another lady I met while I was in

France and who is just as eligible, Anan. ("Candle in the Wind", performed by Elton John, is heard on the heavenly stereo, and Lady Diana enters to be met by the Heavenly photographers)

**God:** You are guaranteed to go to heaven! If you're not going to join, who will?

**Lady Di:** Leave me alone.

**God:** Come on, Di. But you must.

**Lady Di:** Not when there are paparazzis working for the Daily Heaven.

Last year was particularly nasty. As the short sketch above portrays, there seemed to be very few cases where the road opened up to heaven. In fact, there were people who would refuse at the first mention, the idea of going to heaven and willingly seek to go to hell(Sakakibara). Others, though seemingly wanting to enter, had the wrong attitude(Shoko). And those who qualified with apparent ease end up rejecting heaven(Di), while some still believed in an earthly utopia(Japanese wives).

It seems that people have lost their attraction of living in heaven. Let's hope that there are more events this year that promise to get nearer to the gates of heaven... But by the sounds of this sketch, being God is not an easy job of laying back and waiting for people to come forward: in Diana's case, God had to beg for her to enter.

For more information by God, please log into the Heaven Wide Web.

(<http://hwww.angel.god.he/~okachan97>)

*Motoko Kawakami*  
*Sakuya Mitsuoka*

# THE END OF THE ASIAN MIRACLE?

The whole of Asia is in a mess. Optimists argue this to be a mere rest before even more economic success. Others are sceptical; seeing it as the end to rapid growth. *James Malcolm*, a doctorate student at Sheffield University, gives his forecast for Asia.

**S**OUTHEAST ASIA was turned into a disaster area during the second half of 1997. Hit both by tumbling currencies and a blanket of smog, order is yet to be restored to both market and environment. Although El Nino's contribution to the environmental crisis could not have been prevented, both crises were preceded by plenty of warnings. As with Indonesia's recurring, man-made fires and the region's high levels of industrial and traffic pollution, so runaway credit growth and huge current account deficits should have set off alarm bells.

In retrospect, the roots of the financial crisis are clearly visible. Responsibility lies both with the international financial community and with regional governments, although it is ordinary Asians who must live with the consequences.

## The 'uniqueness' of Asia

For years international investors have poured money into the region, propelled by a sense that Asia was different from Latin America and other emerging markets where they were burned in recent years. The key but unspoken assumption was that higher literacy rates, a Confucian work ethic, and strong political leadership made the Asian Miracle a unique phenomenon that would continue indefinitely. The fact that regional currencies were pegged to the dollar made investment particularly easy, and much was apparently made without proper credit analysis. Regional governments welcomed the huge capital inflows as a sign of confidence in their leadership. And the more their economies grew, the larger local egos became. Political leaders directed ever more funds into dubious pet projects in construction and industry, such as Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir's plan to build a 95km bridge across the Straits of Malacca and Indonesian President Suharto's national car project. Whenever anyone pointed out problems, officials defended themselves fiercely, berating critics for bigotry and turning

the spotlight on problems in Western societies instead.

## Realisation

For a while, regional growth rates continued to boom and new money flooded in. But opportunities for productive investment were soon overwhelmed, and funds began to spill over into unproductive and speculative sectors - property and stock markets - where it fuelled an asset bubble much like Japan's in the late 1980s.

The end came in early July when speculators began to realise that regional currencies were being maintained at unrealistic levels in respect to economic fundamentals. Using complex financial engineering to increase their leverage, a number of large financial institu-

Malaysia and the Philippines, Hong Kong and now South Korea. Many of the financial institutions who had initiated the falls made large amounts of money out of the "correction".

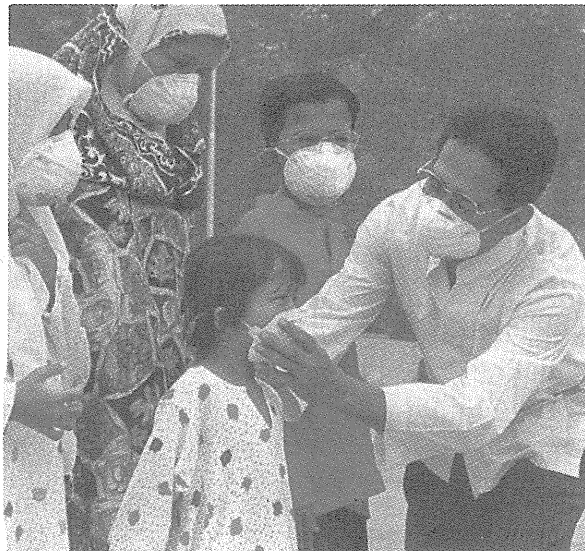
## Initial criticism of the West

For their part, Asian officials were quick to blame foreigners for the crises, ignoring the fact that the underlying weakness lay in domestic economic mismanagement. They issued accusations of deliberate plots by foreigners to "sabotage" Asian economies. They also placed emergency controls on currency and stock trading to limit losses, and even talked of hunting down key foreign bankers and arresting them under tough local anti-subversion laws.

Happily, though, it did not take long for the governments to come to their senses and reappraise their initial reactions, realising that such responses would do more harm than good by putting off future investors. Several countries reluctantly accepted help from the IMF and hereby committed themselves to pursuing policies of greater market transparency and liberalisation. By making it more difficult to conceal the local inefficiencies and corruption these measures should work to correct the region's most fundamental structural problems.

## The future

So, what does all this mean for the Asian Miracle? In the short-term, the crisis will herald a new era of lower rates of growth. In the long run, it remains to be seen whether it will be just a "hiccup" in continuing growth trends, as one regional leader insists, or whether it marks the end of the Asian Miracle as we have known it. Serious problems related to income disparities, ethnic tension and environmental degradation were all simmering before the crisis, but rapid economic growth gave the region's leaders a means to keep social unrest and political instability from boiling over. For now, at least, the future of the Asian Miracle is uncertain.



tions targeted concentrated selling of one currency after another in the belief that regional governments would not be willing or able to maintain existing exchange rates. They hoped that, seeing currencies begin to fall, other market participants would join in the selling and accelerate the decline. And when currencies did tumble, investors realised that the relative value of their own stock and property investments was also plummeting and they began to pull their money out. In this way, regional markets crashed in a domino effect which spread from Thailand to Indonesia,



# Survival in Hollywood

Sho Kosugi tells *The Mita Campus* of his idea in helping others fulfill their dreams in the movie world

INTERVIEWER: YOHEI HARADA

IT WAS 29 years ago that Sho Kosugi, then a 19 year-old penniless Ronin, went to the USA after having failed twice at University entrance exams. After spending his time as an understudy for eight years, he finally fulfilled his dream to perform in the Hollywood movie world through sheer self-motivation and perseverance. Sho Kosugi is famous for his appearance in films such as *Enter the Ninja*, *Play for Death* and *Shogun Maeda*. He took time speak to *The Mita Campus*'s Yohei Harada in Sendai.

**The Mita Campus (MC):** We understand that you are now establishing HIFA (Hollywood International Film Academy) in Los Angeles. Could you explain to us your motives for this idea.

**Sho:** In America, I was an "extra" for seven years and have been playing as a professional actor in the movies for 22 years. During that time, many people visited me, asking me to adopt them as my private understudy. As Hollywood

is a place where competition is harsh, all I could think about initially was to support myself. However, around nine years ago, I began to feel that I should be doing something for others.

**MC:** What are the features that distinguish HIFA from other existing academies?

**Sho:** To be frank, it is risky business plunging into the movie world, isn't it? Graduating from other film academies is no passport to film-making, but HIFA is intended to minimize that risk by producing a film each year in which the students take an active participation. The students of the director course would for instance go along with the actual directors, fulfilling their roles as assistants during the shooting of the film. Through work at this practical level, HIFA students grasp an understanding of what the directors actually do.

For those aspiring to become actors, it is ideal to attend HIFA in

Japan from the age of three till 17 and then go on to HIFA in the USA. The special pre-school education for gifted children is indispensable especially for actors. This is because it is often the case that fellow countrymen buzz with excitement when they see Japanese actors starring in Hollywood, only to find out that there can only be room for one Japanese actor per film. American producers have used Japanese actors with the Japanese audience in mind. But there is a limit in that they are not proficient enough in English. To overcome this barrier, actors must be taught English from an early age as well as training themselves to become good actors in order to get by in the international film world.

**MC:** From your experience at directing, what kind of people do you think are most suited to this world?

**Sho:** Firstly, they should be creative. Secondly, as Hollywood regards the market as an important factor, those intending to be successful should know a potential great hit by just reading the script. As an added factor, those who can show skill at writing should also stand a good chance.

**MC:** Speaking of the *Ninja* film, didn't you feel awkward hearing the *Ninjas* speak in English?

**Sho:** Prior to talking about the *Ninja* film, I would like to stress that the decline of the Japanese movie industry is largely attributable to film makers' inclination towards making artistic films which are well-received by a

small group of film critics but never reach the levels that entertain the general public. Films sought by the public and artistic films are different. What is the sense of winning the Grand Prix at Cannes? Did *ET* or *Jurassic Park* ever win one? Box-office profits do increase without ever winning a Grand Prix, and that means success that help towards

making the producer's next film. To turn again to the *Ninja* film though. If you are in pursuit of artistic merit, you would set out to make a documentary describing the life of the *Ninja* through the ages. But such a film would attract little interest from the public and are invariably unsuccessful - the

"A *Ninja* film must have entertainment value and viewed on the same level as *Superman* or *Batman*"

continued on next page



Japanese film industry being the most notable living example of that failure. Therefore a Ninja film must have entertainment value and be viewed on the same level as *Superman* or *Batman*. Although Japanese inevitably see the Ninja as non-fictional, the secret to box-office success is to abandon such a slanted view.

**MC:** Finally, do you have any messages to Keio students?

**Sho:** To tell you the truth, I had wanted to go to Keio and play baseball. But I think that it was the right choice not to have gone in the end. Although it is important to enter university, what I feel is

*"In a foreign country, you will never be asked which university you graduated from, but asked what you can do"*

decisive is what you can do independently in the future. I would therefore strongly recommend mastering something which can only be done while at university. For in a foreign country, you will never be asked from which university you graduated from but asked what you can do. It is better to narrow and deepen your interest while studying. I think the 21st century will be the time when you can no longer say: "I can do anything whatever is required".

Such talent will only be accepted in Japanese firms and will not be appreciated by companies abroad. Under such circumstances, I have

the following message to convey: "You should have a dream and ambition!" As only one human being, it is certain that there is something which only you can do and cannot be done by others. I hope that you will find that out as soon as possible. In my case it was the movie.

You may be opposed by your parents by proceeding the way you want. But you might as well be defiant because you are not living for your parents.

As Keio is the university that I wanted to enter, and from which my elder sister graduated, I would like to say the following to students there: "Try your best and always believe that your dreams come true!"

## Provincial town's public relations campaign to keep with the times.

**T**owa Town, in Iwate Prefecture, is a small, active town located between Hanamaki and Tono. The town's main source of income is rice growing. Today, Japanese agriculture has many problems. For example, serious excess of rice stretching back years and suffering a lack of young farmers. On this count, Towa Town is no exception.

This March, the mayor, Hideo Obara, announced a drastic policy to breakthrough the deadlock in agriculture and to survive competition with imported rice. He protested against the central government policy, *gentan*, in which the government intended to reduce acreage in return for subsidies that compensate the farmers' cooperation in reducing farmland. Obara, in retaliation, decided to promote production and support farmers who made the opposite effort to extend the size of their business. He thought that the *gentan* policy with its rigid system had made agriculture in Japan unattractive, especially for the young.

The mayor's policy drew attention from people, and was in particular criticized by agricultural groups. Under pressure, the mayor's policy was finally withdrawn in August. The critics believed that the mayor would destroy the current system which helped to stabilize rice prices and

that he ignored the efforts of many farmers all over the country who supported *gentan*.

The mayor answered them saying that it was a foregone conclusion that *Nagata-cho* would have to change the policy soon to keep with the needs of a modern society.

The town, as if it had paid heed to the mayor's warning to prepare for a new age, has started engaging in new business to extend its rice market.

The opening of a new shop in Musashi Kosugi is an illustration of this new attempt. The shop sells products that are brought directly from the town. This kind of management is unique for a small local autonomy like Towa.

The MC had the opportunity to interview Miss Kobayashi, a town official of the agriculture department.

**The Mita Campus (MC):** Please tell us the main purpose of this shop.

**Miss Kobayashi (Kobayashi):** Of course our goal is to extend our market in the Kanto area. For this goal we had to investigate the taste of consumers as well as advertising our shop. We also want people to have chances to know more about rice. There are many kinds of rice and their flavours differ, like coffee beans. If you come to our shops and have dinner at our

restaurant, you will be able to understand the quality of our organic rice.

**MC:** The price of rice has fallen sharply this year and it is said that the management of rice growing will face a crisis next year. How will your town cope with this situation?

**Kobayashi:** Two thirds of the farmers in our town are over sixty and during the past decade the number of abandoned farmland has increased fourfold. The rice market in Japan is now changing greatly, and it is too difficult for us to cope with the competition. But I think the root of the problem lies in the great gap between the opinions of consumers and that of rice producers. I think this is because consumers are too indifferent to the taste of rice. We thus want to help people understand agriculture better through opening such a shop like this. This is the first step we aim to achieve.

**MC:** Young people including Keio students do not seem to be interested in agriculture. Do you have any messages for Keio students?

**Kobayashi:** Agricultural problems will become increasingly important in relation to the environment and to food shortages. Therefore you should consider it is as one of the global issues which we would have to solve. Towa offers some plans of practical training in rice growing and is open to students. Please make use of the chances we offer and through it get to know the actual state of agriculture better.

By Koji Nakahara

# Keio boy cooks for *Tengu*

(and his fight against cockroaches continues...)

INTERVIEWED BY: MOTOKO KAWAKAMI

**M**R. ITA IS A SENIOR STUDENT at Keio University. He will be starting his carrier as a consultant next spring at a well-known firm in Tokyo. In the meantime he was eager to challenge something he had never done before, in addition to earning some money. When he saw a job-advert in a local newspaper for a traditional Japanese *izakaya*, he jumped up at the chance and dialed the number. He was accepted with ease. The beginning was as simple as that. There, he would be able to go through a number of interesting experiences and make money and friends. He might meet a pretty girl there. There may even be a chance to acquire special skills and exclusive recipes. What more can you expect? Only after he started working at the restaurant did he realise that working at a place dealing with food means dealing with human being's long time enemy - cockroaches. You can see them practically anywhere: under the tables, on the dish shelves, in the garbage bins, and even on your favourite dishes! Mr. Ita has shared his precious stories at the *izakaya* with *The Mita Campus*.

## *The Mita Campus*

**(MC):** So how did you come to choose this job at the *izakaya*? Why not a private tutor for high school students?

**Mr. Ita (Ita):** Actually I have been engaged with jobs such as a private tutor and as a *juku* teacher (crammer-school) all my four years

at university. If you teach at the *juku*, or at your student's house, you are always superior to someone: you are the teacher. You are also paid pretty well. I am not to saying that I was uncomfortable with that. It is just I wanted to try out something new before I graduate next March.

**MC:** Did you get used to the job easily? Were there any training before you actually started with your work?

**Ita:** There was neither guidance nor introduction, it was all O.J.T. (On the Job Training). There are manuals to help you learn the minimum of what you need to know at the *izakaya*. The good thing was that I was not totally unfamiliar with the cooking for I sometimes cook at home. The cooking at *Tengu* is not a big deal either. The only difficult task that I face is in preparing the fish; you are required to slice it very thinly to make sashimi. For that you need to use a special kind of knife called *yanagiba houchou*.

**MC:** Have you made any major mistakes at the *izakaya* so far? Are there any troubles at the workplace?

**Ita:** Well, there have been two major errors that I have made; one is when I dropped 2 kg of rice on

the floor, and the other time is when I overcooked *chawan-mushi* (steamed egg pudding). As for troubles at the workplace, rude customers always give us headaches. For example, people who make too much noise or engage in *ikkinomi* are a tremendous nuisance to other customers and waiters. We also receive complaints from customers who suffer from children playing around and shouting in the restaurant. We are often asked by guests to bring what they have ordered as quickly as possible. Though we are try our best to fulfill

our customers' needs, it is not easy to do so in peak hours. The orders come in one after the other, and because our kitchen is not large enough for cooks to move around freely, I don't think our duties are done quite so efficiently. The cooks are trained to prepare dishes in 20 minutes after the orders come in. And the

waiters try to keep every table covered with food.

**MC:** What are your best-selling dishes?

**Ita:** The favourite among our customers is *saikoro-steak* (beef steak cut into small squares). Our chicken broth sauce is also very popular, and Tosa-style *katsuo fish sashimi* is very tasty in high season.

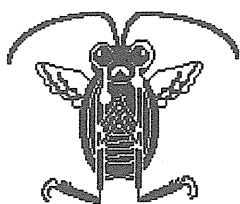
**MC:** What are the backgrounds of the people working at your restaurant?

**Ita:** There are high school and university students, who take up about 60% of the whole workforce. High school students are allowed to work only after school or during the holiday season, so they are not the major force. Housewives are there as well, who do naturally very good at their jobs. Others consist of part-time workers (*free-arbeiter*). In total, there are about 30 part-time workers, while there are only 3 full-time workers.

**MC:** What kind of person is suitable to work at an *izakaya* like yours?

**Ita:** I think he or she has to be very

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swift moving around, and they should have what you call stamina to endure the long-hours of working. Most important of all, they should not be too sensitive, like when you make mistakes at work. Everyone here makes mistakes, be they big or small. It is still very important that you apologise to whomever you have troubled, but, at the same time, don't be too sorry, for some mistakes are unavoidable. One is required to be friendly to guests, smiling whenever appropriate. Not that we "sell" our smiles like one of those fast-food chains. I think minimum manners are needed when you frequently come into contact with customers.

**MC:** *There has been much concern going around about hygiene care after the outbreak of E.coli (O-157) in Japan last summer. Are there any special care that your restaurant is adopting in order to maintain cleanliness?*

**Ita:** First of all, I must inform all readers that our restaurant does not put parsley that has already been served but not eaten by customers on new customers' dishes! I know some restaurants do this, isn't it gross? (laugh) Our restaurant no longer serves *kaiware*-radish, which was said to be affected by E-coli. We use a special sterilizer called MRSA; this one is very strong and effective, yet we are never, ever free from nightmares, a.k.a. cockroaches. They are just about everywhere: on the tables, in the dish shelves, in the sink, and even in your favourite dishes! The cockroaches we see here are not the black ones most of you are probably familiar with; they are instead, brown small ones that fly around. Sometimes we see white cockroaches resembling cast-off skin. Whenever they come out onto the guests' seats, one of the waiters says to another, "There is Mr. Tanaka (special reference to cockroaches) appearing again on table No. 5. Could you go and cast him off?" This way our customers never find out that we are actually talking about getting rid of cockroaches! I say this work is nothing but a fight with careless customers and cockroaches. After all, don't they share common qualities between them?

**Interviewed in November 1997 at Shochibo, Mita.**

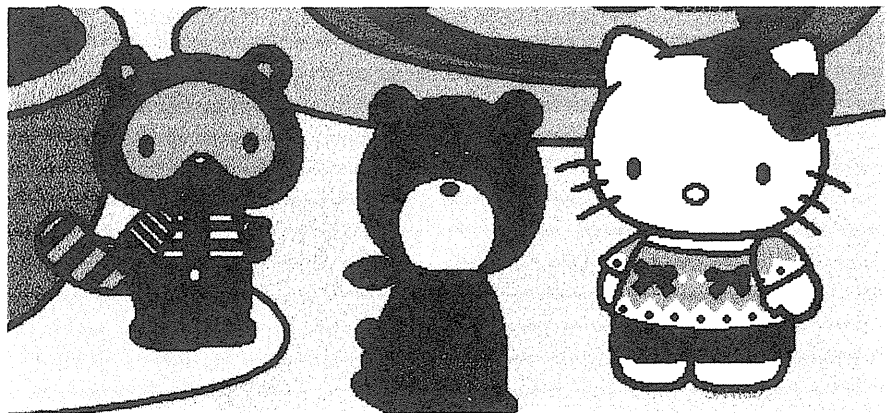
## TRENDS

### Say Hello to our New Pals - Hello Kitty vs My Melody *choukawaii ratings*

**G**O TO YOUR nearest train station and perhaps you will see a group of female high school students showing off their red handy phone carrying cases each with a picture of a bunny. It is not rare to see women in their twenties carrying *Hello Kitty* plastic bags on their way to work. It seems as though all the women in today's Japanese society have turned into five-year-old kindergarten pupils, with their often hideously coloured mascots dangling about them. So what are the backgrounds of these

game much like its previous trend-setter, *Tamagotch*. Plastic handy phone cases are big hits among women aged 15 to 30 (there are some exceptions, as in any other case); the most popular model is the quilted pale pink case with *Hello Kitty's* face in front.

On the contrary, *My Melody* is a counterpart which is gaining strong support from those who crave for "difference". A rabbit with a pair of red ears and matching coloured cape, it was originally a popular character back in the 70's and has



imaginary animals who have won the affections of so many females?

The *Hello Kitty* boom began when the famous singer, Tomomi Kahara, talked about her *Hello Kitty* goods collection in interviews by various magazines. In one of them she refers to this cat superstar as "a friend who always listens to her complaints and happy stories, as well as a partner who is eager to cheer her up whenever she feels down". This somewhat childish endearment came to produce a special term *kitty-ra*, meaning "person who is addicted to *Hello Kitty*". Now there are countless *Hello Kitty* related products including *Hello Kitty's mutcha esute*, a portable digital

revived after nearly 15 years of absence from the market. One high school girl claims that *My Melody* is much prettier than its rival. "*Mai-mero*" (the nickname of *My Melody*) is full of emotion and seemingly more active than *Kitty-chan*.

It is clear to anybody that the ever-talked bunny and kitty will go on with their pretty faces for another month or two, selling off their catchy charms to people on trains, in classrooms - practically just about anywhere on the isles. The question is, will we see them after a year has passed? Are they going to be a standard, or are they just another *Tamagotch*?

**By Motoko Kawakami**

# THE MITA CAMPUS EDITORIAL

## Sympathy with the Murderer

Kota Inami

When Japan looks back to 1997 few will fail not to ponder over the horror that occurred in Kobe. The severed head of an 11-year-old boy, Jun Hase, missing for three days after leaving his house merely to walk down the same street to his grandparents, was found symbolically placed outside the gates of a junior high school. The ensuing predictions centred around the suspected age and mentality of the killer, and psychoanalysts jostled to give their interpretations of the note disclosed by police, which had been left in the murdered boy's mouth threatening more murders. Attention reverted subsequently to the letter sent to a local newspaper, seemingly supporting the case that the perpetrator was the product of educational misgivings. With the arrest of a 14-year-old school boy, society was thrown into a bout of soul-searching, provoking wide spread accusations ranging from those aimed at the educational system to despair at contradictions within society in general.

The media, realising that they actually knew little of what children today are thinking, asked from them comments and reactions to the murder in the hope of putting the event into context. This primary exercise of reassuring the adult audience that the majority of youngsters could think sanely was then given a jolt with letters such as the one below:

"I could sympathize with the suspected murderer and was not surprised to hear he was a junior high school pupil. He was merely somebody who accidentally stepped over the last line. I admit that I bully those weaker; it's just that he was extreme. I also find that school places too much stress, and for one, feel as though I have no existence there."

In many ways the most alarming feature of this case was the fact that reactions, such as this one, have proven fellow pupils to be sympa-

thizing with the killer, despite the act's evident brutality. This expression of adolescent sympathy, though easily viewed as a mere byproduct of the murder, deserve closer attention and time should be given over to discussing this social phenomenon in itself.

The above letter is nevertheless representative of the majority of messages, with the exception of some that were written in a more critical tone but in reaction to the sympathizers: "Despite the amount of stress that I endure, I have kept working away at it. I feel it's totally unfair of people to start sympathizing with the committed murderer."

Whatever the percentages, however, this editorial wishes to see the two conflicting feelings to be fundamentally rooted in the longing to be "recognized".

Children are not waiting to be told that "a human life is precious", as the headmaster of the 14 year-old boy's school is reported to have addressed his pupils. Nor would they stand to benefit from the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education calling for "teaching geared towards children's hearts". Still less useful are comments made by specialists claiming to know what makes juveniles turn into savages - it should not be as complicated as that. What children clearly and dearly need are simple humans willing to recognize their 'plural identities' and then be taught the skill of overcoming that moment of despair.

Placing the brunt of the blame on education, aimlessly pointing the accused finger at society, or even at parents fail to address properly the real concern of pupils who are losing their bearings as a result of their complex character.

Failure to give enough attention to this factor would mean having to reckon with more such cases arising in the future, albeit in disguised form. If, we then take the problem as lying in the 'loss of a sense of being alive', and if we see in this as a university student - in many ways the final product of the system - a truism, we must accept this event as something personal, and one which

occurred within the confines of our educational establishment and attempt to solve the problem at that level. Taking account of the above premise, the editorial proposes the 'sense of loss' to be overcome in the following way.

We must rid ourselves of the myth that there is something instinctly 'real' in an identity. The 'loss of life' is the symptom of a person, frantically trying to be someone one should not be. These may be people who have taken on board parents' expectations to succeed. Images of oneself invented by friends could also be seen as 'unreal'. Whatever the causes, they should never be seen as something false and quite apart from one's identity - It should be accepted as one part of a diverse identity.

Thus praying for some understandable person to suddenly materialize and recognize one's identity, or tricking oneself into believing that one's soul and spirit belong to some other entity, can surely not be the right or at best the quickest path to take.

Those who show sympathy towards the young murderer; those lazy; those who fear the public eye; those who feel irritated when they come across idlers; those who bother not turning up to school; those who dream of richness....these need not fit into one smart and tidy 'self'. The best is to give them an ascending order of priority, so that one is always prepared to adapt to any circumstance that inevitably arise.

For those not convinced, the editorial wishes to leave its readers with this last thought. The present writer once asked a farmer whether he had any pity killing chickens on his farm every day. The answer he gave was poignant and truthfully contradictory: "I can kill chickens because I love them that much."

If there is anybody who senses the need to kill, the morally bottom line is that it must be loved, prior to it being killed. This priority of priorities should in the least serve as the starting point to take if all else fails.



# A Chance to be Viewed Differently

**TATSUYA MITSUDA**

The attention the world Cup decider in Malaysia generated was phenomenal. Although television ratings must always be taken with a pinch of salt, practically all households in Japan had their television sets switched on in the small hours of that memorable and victorious November night. Morning broke with sports newspapers celebrating nothing but football; becoming a premium as they became sold out as quickly as they had come off the press. News programmes replayed the penultimate scene almost indefinitely, while documentary programmes and link-ups were frantically co-ordinated. During coffee hour in shops, schools and offices, talk was dominated by match analysis, and discussion was given over to who was the best player. In short, the nation came together as never before through the communal supporting of their own national football team; transfixed, as if there were no tomorrow.

The match a few months behind us, this initial reaction now seems a little bizarre. The more so, since the sport always had to play second fiddle to the all-Japanese pastime of baseball; seldom managing to dominate the family's conversation at the hallowed supper table. Prior to the match, football was clearly not embraced or taken seriously across the generations, nor was it expected to transcend the baseball protectionists and succeed in capturing the nation's mind so swiftly, and with apparent ease. But we must be careful not to jump the gun. For as a part of the cultural landscape, football is a long way from blossoming.

This editorial does not believe that by competing in the World Cup, it would be a matter of time until the sport becomes an instrumental part of the nation's sporting culture - anticipated on the same level as the New Year ekidens. For the game really to gain root, it needs to be done systematically and with vision. Here, the J-League is going about it in more or less the right way; targeting local communities rather than seek clubs to be run by large firms whose interests are invariably uncultured and disconnected to the region. This is a harsh lesson learnt from baseball, where the limited number of professional clubs and the power of the sponsors are constant causes of rift.

But the real reason why football has to be nurtured close to the cultural grassroots is because of the proven fact that to compete

successfully at an international level, one need not only to improve skills, but also to play in a style that mirrors the most powerful components of one's own culture. In that respect, baseball in Japan could only be compared to the Major Leagues. But this never led to an acute demand in search of a winning formula, simply because baseball never committed itself to organising serious international matches that forced a comparative re-assessment of their style of play. The only form of improvement could be instigated domestically where there always was a limit. Fortunately, football, on the other hand, although improvement in skill, physique and teamwork all would bring a country into the competitive arena, demands at an international level something extra in bringing about a win. This "something extra" comes into play when there is only a slight difference in power, and entails summoning the whole nation's culture onto the field.

The World Cup in France will most probably bear this out. Many already know Japan's opponents in the qualifying group, and the explanations given about their playing style portray their national character. Jamaica is an obvious example to cite; their rhythmical style of play reflecting the country's love of reggae. Croatia plays artistically but are easily provoked - another revelation of their nationhood. Even our own team plays in a style involving speed, technique and above all teamwork - clearly a style that goes hand in hand with the Japanese mentality. Hence, when teams can no longer be judged by their football skills and experience, what sets teams apart is the extent to which the team has assimilated their cultural characteristics to work to their advantage, and the effort each country has made in rallying the nation's support. Precisely because of this cultural incorporation, the weight of a result at the World Cup can mean more than a simple Saturday football result that is easily forgotten in next weekend's victory. For many, a loss would signal, particularly when there is no observable power-difference, proof that their own sporting culture was not as strong or committed as that of the opponent's.

This cultural aspect is also linked to the reputation the national team's performance leaves or lives up to. For images the mass hold of another country is limited at best and prejudiced at worst. Japan, for instance, is generally viewed in countries merely in economic terms: in relation to cars and electronic equipment. And the influence big football matches may exert,

in particular with regard to the opponent's country, can be considerable in giving width to this hard-worn image. In this case, the potential of a face-lift is greater for less well-known countries that are geographically too remote to grasp. So when the Saudi Arabians made their way through to the Best 16 in the '94 World Cup, the viewing mass took note and applied this new positive knowledge to their perspective of the Middle East.

Sadly, you are not necessarily guaranteed plain sailing in so far as the reverse is equally possible. Failure could mean irretrievably harming the nation's sporting image. The present writer still remembers, while resident in Europe, hearing of the so-called "Doha Nightmare" and then being forced to live with the irritable consequence of being referred to as the national of that "last ten seconds team" - and this, a reaction to a tiny result from one corner of the world. As this last example illustrates, there is definitely a facet of cruelty in international football. But this is all part and parcel of competition. So long as you are a national of a particular country that has the slightest interest in soccer, you would be considered a 'supporter', regardless of whether you have an active interest in it or not. For the fate of your national team is unfortunately, but inseparably linked to the way you are treated and viewed - however much you choose to disregard results as irrelevant.

Seen in this way, the task our own team faces seems both potentially rewarding but equally damaging. A sizeable impact on the world soccer scene is possible. Surely the easiest way would be to be satisfied by just being able to take part with the elites in the hope of learning something from them. However, such a laid-back attitude can only promise disaster. If this is unacceptable on grounds of pride, our team could well choose to be as discreet and safe as possible, avoiding to neither shock by winning nor draw laughter by being thrashed. The team should make an effort, of course, but this effort should place as the number one priority a realistic aim - if you lose, lose as gracefully as possible. Quite contrary to the above two, option number three is by far the most courageous. Nobody wants to have the country's reputation tarnished, but it is also an indisputable fact that wishing to make an impact entails taking that risk of being made into a laughing stock. The MC, as we hope everybody does, believes that our team elects to go for it. For whatever the result, we are all fated to share the same consequences and that cannot be unfair.

# Palawan paradise - unspoiled beauty in the Philippines

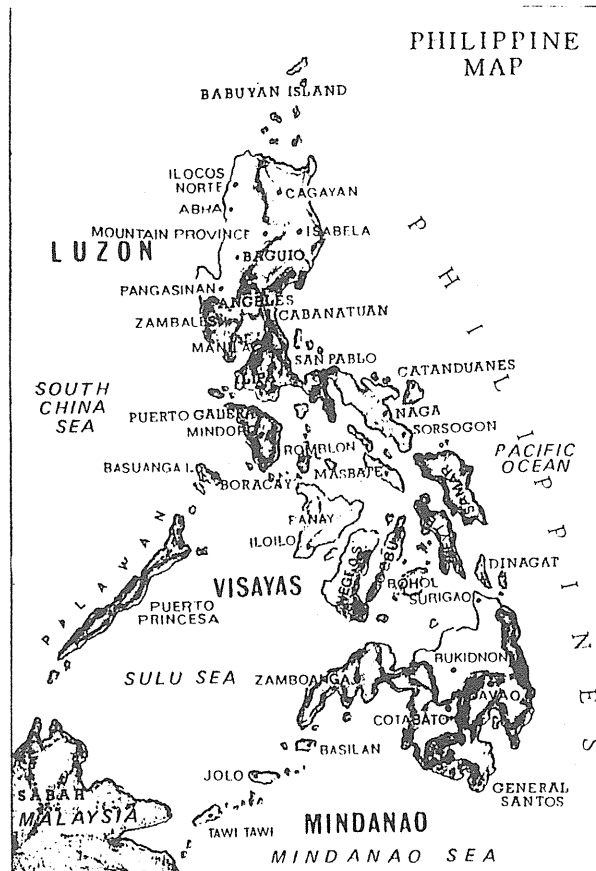
The MC introduces Mililoc Island (Northern Palawan) as a student holiday

**E**XPERTS at a number of international economic institutions have been celebrating the success story of the Philippines over the last two years. Rated as the best place in which to invest in East Asia by a Far Eastern Economic Review survey, the Philippines is showing that democratic values and economic development can go hand in hand.

The greatest political and social stability is expected in South Korea, Indonesia and Hong Kong and China. On both counts, the Philippines was ranked among the least politically and socially stable.

The current year, the Year of Ox, serves as the debut of the Philippines to stardom in East Asia.

Palawan, (see MAP, centre) where the Miniloc Island is situated, is the largest island in the country. Rich in natural resources and still relatively isolated and under-developed, it offers a profusion of world-class snorkeling and scuba diving, and also friendly inhabitants. Many Japanese travelers declare Palawan



their favourite area of the Philippines. Northern Palawan in particular has much to offer the traveler. The beach at Miniloc Island ranks among Palawan's most memorable experiences and may become a great destination for natural, unspoiled beauty. Cliffs towering above it are the haunt of the swiftlet that produces the edible birds nest, so prized by the Chinese. The nesting season is February-May, peaking in March. Miniloc Island is situated in a cove, and has 31 native-style cottages surrounded by tropical plants and Cliffs cottages on the hillside. All these cottages are air-conditioned complete with private toilet and bath.

Minilonic Island's beauty can be savoured both over and under the water by island hopping and exploring the Big and Small Lagoons; by snorkeling and discovering the beauty of the Cove's under water coral garden. Other activities on offer include water-skiing, diving, kayaking, wind surfing, bottom fishing and cave exploring.

To reach Miniloc Island, the direct and quickest way is through A. Soriano Aviation, which flies twice daily to El Nido off the Miniloc Island. El Nido is only one hour-and-half-hours by plane from Manila. At El Nido Airport, guests are transferred to a banca (outrigger boat), for a scenic 40-minute ride to the resorts.

(written prior to the economic turnaround in Asia)




  
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 地球人時代到来 どこでもイクル、コトバでいける。

## Language Expo '97

The MC finds the event to be big, but not actually to represent 'languages' in its entirety

This year's Language Expo in the Kanto area, took place during the first week of October in the NS building in Shinjuku. With practically all major language companies competing for the attention of language lovers, it should have been an occasion not to have been missed.

The Expo claimed to be the largest of its kind in Asia, and the many exhibits in its two great halls aroused much interest. In particular, the popular academic/writer of the English way of life, Nozomu Hayashi, called Rinbo-sensei by his followers, and other distinguished guests turned out to give away their secret recipe to language learning. As if to trounce on language enthusiasts, foreign books were given away at bargain prizes and language learning CD-Rom samples were handed out for free. Learning was marketed as 'fun' with English language computer games, while audience participation with the re-enacting of a Hollywood movie scene on centre stage seemed to prove that language is fashion.

For those brimming with still more linguistic appetite, introductory courses on minor languages such as Swedish and Turkish were conducted. Tours of the company pavillions were promoted by a stamp rally and the number prevalent at company pavillions advising people on foreign universities seemed to prove the rising fashion of studying abroad.

The financially inevitable disappointment was the dominance of English. As a result, the two other popular European languages, French and German, had practically to sit it out in the shade. *The Mita Campus*, although generally impressed by the organisational work that had gone into an event-packed expo, would only recommend it to those non-specialists with a general interest. To those who already feel they know their way through the linguistic woods, however, it should be given a miss next year.

by Tatsuya Mitsuda

**Most Honored Books**
  
 Here are the best of the best—our editors' favorite award-winning titles of 1997. By any measure, this year's big prize winners are an extraordinary lot.
   
**The Year's Best Sellers**
  
 Our customers speak loud and clear: These are the books you bought in the greatest numbers this year. A drum roll, please—Amazon.com's number one bestseller of 1997 is...
   
**Most Controversial Books**
  
 A cast of celebrated characters populate the pages of the year's most talked about titles. Princess Di rubs elbows with JFK, Marla Stewart, J. D. Salinger, and many more. What a strange party it is!
   
**The Editors Pick the Best Books of '97**
  
 Check back daily as we count down to our favorite title of the year. Today, *The Perfect Storm* by Sebastian Junger is #14. It's in good company. Here are the others we've featured to date.
   
**Authors Pick the Best Books**
  
 What piqued Garrison Keillor's interest this year? What's on P. D. James's nightstand? Which titles made Christopher Buckley sit up and take notice? Check out our favorite authors' favorite books of 1997. Check back daily for each day's featured author. Plus, read more great **Author Picks** for 1997!
   
**Will 1998 Be the Year of the Ant?**
  
 The year 1998 is filled with promise, unlikely six-legged heroes, as well as new offerings from Martin Amis, Dorothy Allison, and Toni Morrison, to name just a few.
   
**Top News Stories of 1997**
  
 Mars proved to be a little green being. Jack dropped from Kong's flagpoles. We bo Dolly, the carbon sheep. What a year! What was in a special About It.
   
**Best of Breed**
  
 Browse by subject! Find the year's best categories.
   
 \* Business and Law
   
 \* Children's & Young Adults
   
 \* Computers
   
 \* Literature & Fiction
   
 \* Mystery & Thriller
   
 \* Science & Nature
   
 \* and more...
   
**Sad Farewells**
  
 We mourned the passing of many bright lights in 1997. From Princess Diana to Mother Teresa to J. Stewart and Viktor Here, we remember never forget.



## Official Guide Book

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# Book shopping made easy

Internet bookstores save on time, money and energy

Anyone who has had the experience of ordering English language books from bookshops here must have faced utter frustration. To begin with, the main foreign language book handlers such as Maruzen and Kinokuniya, though helpful and efficient, charge ludicrously high prices for their efforts - sufficient qualities to disinterest students and academics. The next port of hope, the *Seikyo*, is reasonably priced in comparison; to be fair, they offer 'book fairs' with reductions. This sympathy fades, however, when told that books may take up to three months to ship, if none are discovered in some warehouse in Tokyo. But invariably it is more often the case that readers tend to choose books either on a wave of enthusiasm, or when dissertation deadline looms, where time becomes the burning issue. Both are impossible to be satisfied if you stay domestic.

Those who want to rid themselves of this irritation, should take *The Mita Campus's* advice and go surfing on the net, where bookshops from English-speaking countries have set up their own pages and offer the world instant access to their shelves. These bookshops such as the two biggest, *Barnes and Noble* and *Amazon.com*, boast databases containing literally millions of titles and claim order efficiency and secrecy, shipping orders at great speed. Freight prices vary according to the duration and weight of the order, but since the majority of

the books are discounts (usually 30% off for hardback and 20% for paperback) it is likely that, without leaving the comfort of your own mouse, the Internet bookstores end up being a better deal than the aforementioned places. Payment is by credit card, and for those financial analyzers, the MC recommends that they seek an opportune time when the Yen is in a strong position to place orders. (i.e. not now)

In addition to these agreeable offers, the various pages contain new books, bestsellers and book reviews from both lay and professionals that tempt you to browse deeper. On becoming a free member, or alternatively when books are purchased, whereby you instantly become one, the store keeps a record upon which book recommendations are made personally. Conversely, by informing the store of your favourite authors and specific subjects of interest, you would receive frequent e-mails recommending titles, along with a review. It goes without saying that all these are arbitrary options and is just as easy to unsubscribe.

For English book-lovers and also book-needers in Japan, they are a welcoming alternative to the extortionate prices levied by domestic bookshops in general.

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MOVIE REVIEW

# Happy Together - when the gender border no longer applies...

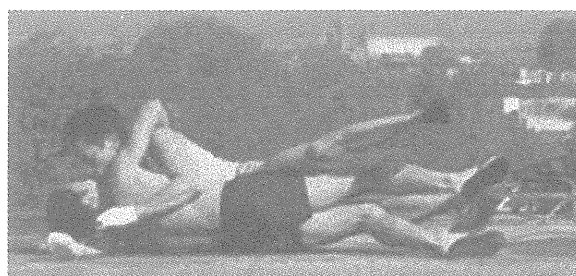
1997 Hong Kong / Directed by Zhiyi Li

**H**APPY TOGETHER is a story of two Hong Kong gays who travel to Buenos Aires.

The opening begins with a steamy homosexual love scene that intends to shock a heterosexual audience. Then the film plays out how their relationship develops. The main character's lover is a good-looking, stylish, selfish and capricious man; unfaithful but who comes back to be with him in the end. It was to revive the love affair that they chose to go to Buenos Aires.

Despite the initial disgust of the sex scene, the audience quickly get accustomed to the love affair between these two men. For the mutual feeling prevalent is the same as in any heterosexual love affair - jealousy, anger and love all come into play. Thus the audience encounter no problems in relating to the characters' feelings. By the end of the film, there is no aversion to them being gays, if there had been any at the beginning; it was simply about a love-affair that did not make them that happy, however strong the love between them could be.

The central, and perhaps the most interesting aspect of the film lies in the ambiguous border between the genders. The story seems to be a typical love affair between a faithful male protagonist and a wanton woman. The man works hard to earn money and the lover stays at home watching TV, and playing around with the money he has earned. But the character also cooks, cleans the room, and does the washing. He even shops. He plays both the traditional role of a man and that of a woman, and is



content as long as his lover stays with him. It is not that the character is someone in a heterosexual love affair - they are not forced to abide by any particular social rule. They are also fundamentally equal in strength; and when they fight, it is never a physically unfair one. They also have just as much chance of finding a job. Beside the love scene, there is in fact, nothing to remind us of their gender; they are just two individuals sharing a special feeling for each other.

Another reason why genders in this film blurs owes to the appearance of these two men from Hong Kong. Generally speaking, Asian men are physically less masculine than their western counterparts. Good-looking Asian men have an appearance of beauty that might be considered feminine to western eyes. The traditional definition of good-looking men in Asia is not essentially about masculine features like muscle, hair

and beast-like power - these are not popular among Asian women. In this respect, there is not so wide a gap between the definition of 'good-looking' men and 'beautiful' Asian women. Here, a social role and behaviour take over appearance as the deciding factor defining masculinity and femininity.

Even with such an aspect taken in mind, the division of social roles between the two men is not all clear; and this is one reason that contributes to the relationship's ambiguity. One man plays both the traditional male model of earning money and at the same time the feminine model of cooking and nursing. The other performs neither of them.

Not only these social roles but their behaviour is untypical and traditionally masculine. Although the traditional image of masculinity is outside (in other word, never staying in one place like the house), proving one's physical strength and above all, seldom showing any emotion, the two men frequently stay at home together - at one time dancing the tango - and both of them are prepared to express their emotions by crying. One revealing monologue of the character when he is taking care of his lover who has injured his hands, saying to himself, "I'm happy. I don't want him to recover." This image of outright domination - taking care of his injured and sick lover is

confinement that sees itself as a traditionally feminine quality in the west. These examples all highlight the way in which the traditional concept of gender is a social phenomenon.

Actually, the way of taking this film is related to producing some feminine image through it. This film in the main is made up of three monologues. These monologues reveal their emotion. The audience is strongly involved in the sentimental world of these two men. This could be because showing one's own emotion is supposed to belong to women, especially in the West. On the contrary, in Asia, men can also be heavily emotional and sentimental. The question is whether the director was conscious of this difference. Whatever the answer, this film certainly portrays an effective image of the ambiguity in the genders.

by Maki Fukushima



## Lost and Found - sekai no hateni

The MC goes along and finds itself getting lost in this eagerly awaited, if now overrated, Asian movie

1996 Hong Kong / written and directed by Zhiyi Li

AS EXPECTED, the theater was full, the majority of the audience being girls. The very first showing of *Lost and Found*, which opened on July 5 at Cine Amuse in Shibuya, had been received with anticipation. After all, the movie starred two big Asian actors; Takeshi Kaneshiro (whose ever-growing popularity accounts for the large female audience) and Kelly Chen. How could any fan of Hong Kong movies resist? But as it turned out, it may be wiser to resist until the video comes out.

The story of *Lost and Found* is as old as time. In fact, too old. The heroine, Kelly (Kelly Chen), is an upper-class beauty with an incurable disease looking for someone to give her love and hope to live. She meets two men, Chun (Takeshi Kaneshiro), a jack of all trades whose job is finding anything missing from people to cellular phones, and Ted (Michael Wong), a Scottish sailor. Chun comforts Kelly as he successfully and responsibly completes each work and restores his client's hope, as well as Kelly's, telling her that "nothing is lost forever." Ted tells her his family history and some Scottish folklores and not much more.

The story is so simple that it could be confused with that of some soap opera, but this is not where the problem lay. When a movie is "bad", the problem tends to be in the script. Director Li, who also

wrote the script, tries to move and convince his audience with his tragic love story. But his intentions are hard to grasp, and in the end, unconvincing. He puts a lot of maxims and old sayings into the characters', especially in Ted's

to reach his audience in portraying the theme of "life and hope." He implants, however, far too many, leaving Ted looking like a fool and the viewers wondering why the heroine needs any time at all to decide between the two men. Moreover, there are many pointless scenes that should be cut out of this (almost) two-hour-long film. As Shakespeare remarked, "brevity is the soul of wit."

To be absolutely fair, *Lost and Found* is not a bad movie. The cast is likable, especially Takeshi Kaneshiro, whose adorable but not-all-there character brings a mellow atmosphere to the movie. It may not be a classic, but it has its good moments. So if you are a big fan of Takeshi Kaneshiro and have money to spare, relishing it in the theater would not be a waste, of course. If you are, however, the type going only because other Hong Kong movies such as *Wong Kar-Wai's*, was impressive, we strongly urge you to think twice. Save it for the arrival of Wong's new film, *Happy Together*, coming this fall. (For comments on this film, see the article on previous page)

Reviewed by: Izumi Asakawa



## OPERA

### The Metro' Opera opens its doors to students

ON 31ST MAY, 1997, a dress rehearsal by the Metropolitan Opera (MET) was held at the Tokyo Culture Centre in Ueno. Specially designated for students to be free of charge, the final dress rehearsal was an occasion in which the performers go over the whole play for the last time, wearing their costumes.

The MET in New York is one of the best known opera houses in the world with talented conductors and singers always on stage. The Japanese tour was no exception with the likes of stars such as Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Cecilia Bartoli performing. The public dress rehearsal held for students by the MET has already been in operation in New York for the past fifty years. This final dress rehearsal, however, was the first attempt ever by any major Opera house overseas to open its gates free of charge.

*Così fan tutte* belongs to the category called Opera Buffa, meaning "comedies."

The opera is about two sisters, Fiodiligi and Dorabella and their officer boyfriends, Gulielmo and Ferrando. One day an old philosopher, Don Alfonso, suggests that the boys make a bet on whether their girlfriends are faithful to them. The boys take it on and lying to the girls saying they will go to war, pretend to depart. The truth is that the boys disguise themselves as Turks and come back home to seduce the girls. The boys even exchange their partners. At first the girls turn down the seduction, but in the end decide to marry someone else. This leaves the boys feel angered and betrayed. Then Don Alfonso says to the boys *Così fan tutte* (that's the way women are), and cheer them up. The Opera ends happily with the rightful couples back together again.

In the dress rehearsal, all the performers came on stage, except Cecilia Bartoli, who was playing the role of the servant. Owing to the starved outline, there was a long line of students outside the theater by opening time. Once inside, television reporters, journalists, special guests and theater staff took

## INTERNET

seats in the front rows on the first floor, while students had to sit either in the back rows of the first, or on the second floor.

The dress rehearsal began at 10:30 in the morning. Even at the dress rehearsal the conductor and the musicians wore their casual clothes. As the curtains rose the performers came out on to the stage the with their beautiful costumes. Even though many of them were not singing in full volume, they sung just as wonderfully. Since *Così Fan Tutte* is a comical story, there was also laughter. James Levine, the conductor, stopped the orchestra occasionally to direct the singers and the orchestra. There were breaks whenever necessary. During these intervals the performers came down to the seat to talk with the audience - a spectacle that can only be seen at rehearsals. The rehearsal ended after three in the afternoon, the theater filled with great applause.

The free dress rehearsal is a great opportunity for students to see the conductors and the performers off stage and learn the making of an opera. It can only be hoped that there will be more of such occasions held in Japan so as to let more people into the charm of the opera.

by Miho Takahashi

## The Electronic Mita Campus

First English-language student-run journal on the web in Japan

The University's only English journal is now accessible on the net. (<http://www.mita.keio.ac.jp/~a9521447/>)

Although our Home Page is far from completion, we already have numerous articles divided into corresponding genres taken from previous editions and we intend to build up a sizeable archive storing articles spanning the last four years. And with a world readership in mind, we plan to publish new articles and revise old ones in such a way so as to introduce interested but those not quite acquainted people to Japanese society from the inside; in particular attempting to shed light on the dilemmas she faces at present, and how Japanese (students) view their world.

*The Mita Campus* hopes to act as a bridge in transcending the invisible cultural barrier that is seemingly prevalent between Japan and the rest of the world. In this spirit, the site would like to introduce to the foreign readership, links to other Japanese sites of interest that are readable in English

but have unfortunately escaped publicity abroad.

This HP attempt is unique and in many ways crucially important, we feel, for articles written by natives on Japan is an account by an insider that can claim to portray reality - a virtue that is so often lacking in the foreign press. At the same time, in choosing English as the language of communication, we are in a linguistically advantaged position to lay bare anomalies inherent in Japanese society that are otherwise taken for granted or unacceptable when writing in the Japanese language.

We always welcome critical comments by our readers and in particular in relation to our newly opened HP. Please send them by e-mail to Rie Watanabe to the address below. We would be glad to hear from you.

Webmistress: Rie Watanabe

Inquiries: [a9521447@mita.keio.ac.jp](mailto:a9521447@mita.keio.ac.jp)

## The Confusion of *Digital Publishing*

IN THE BEGINNING, there was only paper. It stayed this way for thousands of years, until about twenty years ago. Then, the only way to distribute words and sentences was to print them on pieces of paper and bind them in a portable format commonly known as the "book". This system worked perfectly and is still in popular usage this day. But one certain other method of word-distribution has increasingly gained currency in recent years. Many refer to this as "Digital Publishing". To the overwhelming majority, though, it merely signals the equivalent: "Something we don't understand and don't want to understand anyway." This is evidently hypocritical, for many are guilty of possessing three-thousand-dollar computers that have never been switched on.

Despite this general public apathy towards electronicalisation, a new generation of small-time publishing companies have found success marketing this technique with the advent of the World Wide Web. The

medium has brought with it inevitable problems; the most evident being that digitalizing results in the ambiguous definition between the older publishing technique and the new. For books are now written, edited and formatted on computers and need only then to be processed through the printing press. This is now a well established system in the book market known as DTP (desktop publishing). Taking the term "digital" loosely, this may also be referred to as "digital" publishing although the end product is read on paper.

On another much personal level, however, a faster, easier and inexpensive way of digital publishing is possible by placing publications on home pages. In this case, the independent 'publisher' need only to sit back and let others come and read it through the Internet. For those already in possession of a personal computer and a modem, the cost would be minimal. Here, the medium through which material is published is digital as is the employed technique. The two ex-

amples cited above illustrate the difficulty in being precise about digital publishing and is easily confused.

The publishing world is now at the peak of this fast evolving "paperless press" phenomenon. The revolution is, however, far from complete and its present complexity evades anyone from predicting what direction it is going to take. One thing is, however, certain. The world is moving on, and it will continue to do so indefinitely. In such a climate, there is as much chance of publishers switching from "analog" to "digital," as the other way round.

These technical formats should, nevertheless, not lose sight of one important feature that has existed since time immemorial - writing skills. This used to be considered the most and perhaps only important factor in publishing books. However, its worth is in danger of rapidly diminishing amidst all the mega-hertz and RAM memory that keep accumulating inside the digital publisher's mind.

by Takahiko Mukohyama

# The Mita Campus

KEIO UNIVERSITY  
1858  
'calamus gladio fortior'

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We are especially in need of native English-speakers willing to act as our advisors. Ofcourse, those whose mother tongue is not English, but who relish the challenge of writing or commenting for this only English newspaper-journal, are also very welcome.

In both cases, please contact Motoko Kawakami at 0471-48-1810 or write to us through post or e-mail at: The Mita Campus English Newspaper Society Keio University 2-15-45 Mita Minato-ku Tokyo; a9521447@mita.keio.ac.jp

LH

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