

# Ghostwriter, lauded composer part ways after admission

By Elaine Kurtenbach  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — The ghostwriter for the musician lauded as Japan's Beethoven says he became fed up and ended their 18-year collaboration last year and he questioned if Mamoru Samuragochi really could hear.

Samuragochi, 50, had previously claimed to be the sole author of his classical works and soundtracks for video games, such as *Biohazard*, despite having lost his hearing by age 35. His story resonated in Japan, where perseverance is greatly admired. But he admitted this month that he did not write the powerful "Hiroshima Symphony" and other works credited to him.

His ghost composer, Takashi Niigaki, said he provided music for Samuragochi for 18 years and questioned if he was hearing impaired.

"I saw no signs that he could not hear," Niigaki said as, seemingly flustered by the limelight, he struggled to answer a barrage of questions over how Samuragochi could have managed the deception for so long.

A written statement from Samuragochi's lawyers apologized for what he called a "betrayal" of his fans and



**GHOST COMPOSER.** Takashi Niigaki, left, ghostwriter of well-known deaf composer Mamoru Samuragochi, whom Japanese have likened to Beethoven for supposedly composing music despite a severe hearing impairment, is escorted to leave a press conference in Tokyo. Niigaki said he hopes to continue composing and performing, despite the uproar over Samuragochi's admission that he did not write the pieces he is best known for, such as the powerful "Hiroshima Symphony." (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

an accomplished composer.

Niigaki said he hopes to continue composing and performing despite the brouhaha over Samuragochi's admission of having faked authorship of many works, including an arrangement, "Sonatina for Violin," that figure skater Daisuke Takahashi used for his short program at the Sochi Olympics.

It was his concern over Takahashi that led him to speak out, Niigaki said, as he feared that a disclosure of the truth later might be more awkward for him.

Asked how the two worked together, Niigaki said he would compose pieces and sometimes play them for Samuragochi, who would then choose which he liked.

"The music was born of my collaboration with him," Niigaki said. "I produced all the works to the best of my ability."

described Samuragochi as being in "too unstable an emotional state" to appear in public.

Lawyer Kazushi Orimoto told reporters that he did believe his client was hearing impaired. Samuragochi has a certificate for his disability and is classified as having severe hearing loss.

His official biography says Samuragochi was born in Hiroshima to survivors of the 1945 atomic bomb attack and began

playing music and composing at an early age. The cause of his gradual hearing loss hasn't been explained.

Nippon Columbia Co. issued a statement expressing astonishment and outrage that Samuragochi had not composed his own music. The company stopped sales of his works, while major media outlets including national broadcaster NHK apologized for having run programs featuring Samuragochi as

## India back in the Olympics; flag flies in Sochi

SOCHI, Russia (AP) — It's probably the most important moment Olympic athletes can have besides competing: walking in the opening ceremony for their country.

But imagine waiting for your grand entrance and getting your cue: "Independent Olympic Participants."

The equivalent of the International Olympic Committee saying it's not you, just your country.

No wonder the athletes' parade at the Sochi Games wasn't so fun for Indian luger Shiva Keshavan, who said he spent the moments beforehand talking with the other two Indian athletes — skier Nadeem Iqbal and slalom skier Hamanshu Thakur — about why their flag wouldn't fly.

"That enthusiasm wasn't there that I generally feel at the opening ceremony," Keshava said.

"The whole world is watching and when the Indian flag doesn't fly, people know that it's because of corruption and it's not a nice image for the country," Keshavan said. "So although there are real problems, still, symbolism is really important at the Olympic Games."

India was back after resolving a dispute over its Olympic governance, though the decision came too late for Keshava, who is India's top winter sports athlete. He competed already, finishing 37th in a 39-man field.

A special ceremony was held in the Olympic Village to raise the Indian flag.

## Cambodia recovers stolen Buddhist relics

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodian police have recovered a precious golden urn stolen last year that contains what are considered to be remnants of Buddha's body, according to an official.

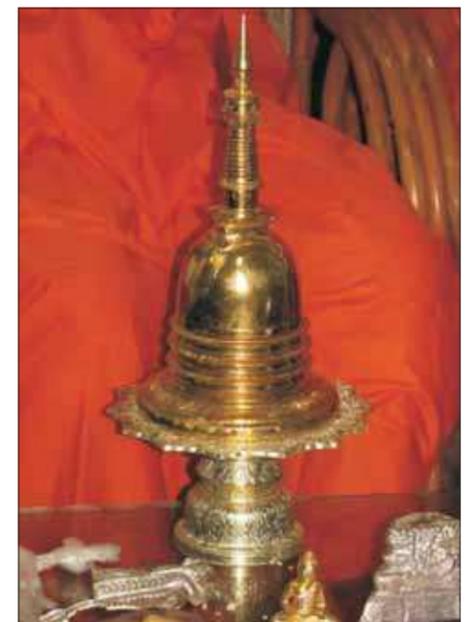
The urn was taken from a mountain shrine 25 miles outside the capital in mid-December.

National Police spokesman Kirt Chantharith said it was recovered from a house in the southern province of Takeo, and a man was arrested in connection with the theft.

Several countries in Asia process relics believed to come from the body of Buddha, and the stolen urn holds enormous religious and cultural significance for Cambodia, a predominantly Buddhist nation.

The theft ignited a nationwide outcry and demands that authorities track it down.

The relics were given to late King Norodom Sihanouk in 1957 by Sri Lanka to commemorate the 2,500th anniversary of Buddha's birth.



**RELIC RECOVERED.** A golden urn is seen after being recovered in the southern Cambodian province of Takeo. Police in Cambodia said the precious golden urn stolen last year contains what are considered to be remnants of Buddha's body. The urn was taken from a mountain shrine 25 miles outside the capital in mid-December. (AP Photo)

## 2013 Most Honored Elder Award Recipient

Lourdes J. Cereno Markley

Lourdes J. Cereno Markley was born July 21, 1940 in Naguilian, La Union province, the Philippines to Encarnacion Rimando Bacalzo and Gabriel E. Cereno, the third of four children. Lourdes travelled to the U.S. at the age of 23 with the help of her uncles. She attended Seattle University in Seattle, Washington, earned



AR Photo/Jan Landis

a bachelor's degree in education, and taught for several years. She met Charles Markley in an acting class at Seattle Community College in 1966 and the two were married on December 31, 1970. They moved to Portland in 1972. Lourdes worked as a secretary at U.S. Bank while her husband attended law school. They are proud parents of three children — Julia, John, and Maria — and two grandchildren, Gus and Zorina. While raising her children, Lourdes volunteered as an advocate for the Hmong community and was involved in the Fil-Am Association of Portland & Vicinity. Lourdes returned to teaching

when her youngest child was in high school and worked as a substitute teacher from 1994 to 2012. Lourdes is a lifetime member, co-founder, and former president of the Oregon chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society. She is an active participant with Portland State University's Kaibigan organization as well as a member of Toastmasters and the Multnomah Athletic Club. Lourdes serves Madeleine Parish — which she joined in 1975 — as a reader during Sunday mass. She is also a member of and volunteer teacher with AARP. A great believer in family, she sponsored two of her sisters, Emma and Ciony, as well as Ciony's two children, to immigrate to the U.S.

The Asian Reporter Foundation is accepting nominations for its 2014 "Most Honored Elder" awards.

The recognition banquet will be held Thursday, April 17, 2014 at northeast Portland's TAO Event Center. Nomination forms and guidelines for eligibility are available for download at <www.ARFoundation.net>.

The nomination deadline is Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at 5:00pm.

## Creator says game over for maddening Flappy Bird

By Tran Van Minh  
The Associated Press

**H**ANOI, Vietnam — The young Vietnamese creator of hit mobile game Flappy Bird has removed it from the App Store and Google Play saying it ruined his life.

The game that was uploaded in 2013, but only surged to the top in downloads earlier this year, was removed this month.

The success of the game that based its appeal on being simple and also maddeningly difficult made its creator, Nguyen Ha Dong, 29, a minor celebrity.

The game was downloaded more than 50 million times on App Store alone. In an interview with The Verge website, Dong said Flappy Bird was making \$50,000 a day in advertising revenue.

But tech blogger Carter Thomas said the sudden popularity of Flappy Bird might

have been due to the use of fake accounts run by computers to create downloads and reviews.

Thomas said he couldn't prove his suspicion and that the success of Flappy Bird might also be explained by it being "just a wildly viral game."

Dong, from Hanoi, wrote on Twitter that the internet sensation caused by the game "ruins my simple life" and he now hated it.

"I will take Flappy Bird down. I cannot take this anymore," he wrote.

Dong had agreed to talk to The Associated Press about the game in an interview, but cancelled.

On Twitter, he didn't address the inflated download allegation, but denied suggestions he was withdrawing the game because it breached another game maker's copyright.

"It is not anything related to legal issues. I just cannot keep it anymore," he wrote.

**Go paperless!**

Read The Asian Reporter — exactly as it's printed here — online!  
Visit <www.asianreporter.com> and click the  
"Online Paper (PDF)" link to download our last two issues.