

Netflix woos Japan with new original series about a reporter

By Yuri Kageyama
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — Netflix is producing and shooting an original series set in Japan about a journalist who challenges authority, hoping to woo the nation that's hooked on watching good old TV.

Good timing. The series' heroine is based on a muckraking real-life reporter, Isoko Mochizuki, who has doggedly questioned a politician who has just become prime minister, Yoshihide Suga.

Suga took office last month after his boss, Shinzo Abe, resigned over health problems.

The Netflix series called *The Journalist* is based on the story of Mochizuki, a reporter for the *Tokyo Shimbun*, who kept asking questions of Suga at his news conferences as chief government spokesman, despite being cut off, ignored, or ridiculed. That's a sight common in the U.S. and some other nations but rare in hierarchical, orderly Japan.

The series will be directed by Michihito Fujii, who was behind a 2019 award-winning movie that Netflix has adapted for the series. For the Netflix series, Ryoko Yonekura, an actress known for portraying tough women, plays the reporter who, like Mochizuki, goes after cover-ups and scandals. It's slated for global streaming next year, Netflix announced.

The series was decided on long before it became clear that Suga was destined to become prime minister.

"People were before looking for the lowest common denominator, a story that has travel ability," Greg Peters, Netflix's chief operating officer and chief product officer COO, told The Associated Press.

"What we see is that the stories that



JAPAN JOURNALIST'S JOURNEY. Kaata Sakamoto, left, director of content acquisition for Netflix, and filmmaker Shinsuke Sato attend a livestream held from the Netflix Tokyo office last month. After five years in Japan, Netflix now has 5 million households that have signed up for the video-streaming service. Sato directs a live-action adaptation of cult manga, *Alice in Borderland*, for Netflix. (Netflix via AP)

connect with people around the world are stories that are authentic, that are anchored in the local culture, a local time that really speak a place," he said.

After five years in Japan, the video streaming service has 5 million subscribers, up from 3 million last year as the coronavirus pandemic has people looking for entertainment while they stay home. That's still a fraction of the 193 million global paid members Netflix has, 73 million of them in the U.S. and Canada.

Netflix's image in Japan suffered over the death earlier this year of Hana Kimura, who was in the reality show "Terrace House." The female professional wrestler was found dead in an apparent suicide after becoming a target of social-media harassment.

"Terrace House" aired in Japan as a Fuji TV show in 2012, made with production company East Entertainment. Netflix, based in Los Gatos, California, said the

series was licensed, although it's billed as "a Netflix original series."

Netflix acquired global streaming rights for the show from 2015. The episodes where Kimura appeared have been removed, but other episodes still air on Netflix.

"Our hearts go out to Miss Kimura's family at this terrible time. Given this tragedy, all production and the launch of any new episodes have been postponed indefinitely," Netflix said in a statement.

In Japan, Amazon Prime Video is No. 1 in streaming services, and the smaller Hulu Japan, U-Next, and Yahoo! Japan's GyaO are also rivals. Netflix's fee starts at 800 yen (\$7.50) and goes to 1,800 yen (\$17) in Japan.

Amazon does not give a breakdown by nation for its 150 million global Amazon Prime users, but its subscribers are estimated to be about three times Netflix's.

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Indian couple run street-side classes for poor students

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smartphones.

"There is only one mobile phone in my family and it is usually with my father. I can't study online," said Nitin Mishra, a ninth grader in Virendra's math class. Mishra's mother works as a part-time maid and his father is unable to find employment as India's economy has been hit hard by the pandemic.

The street-side classes have grown as dozens of children showed keen interest. Now the Guptas — with help from their driver, Heera — teach three different groups three times a week, morning and evening.

After class, the children are treated to homemade lemonade and cookies prepared by Veena.

The Guptas say teaching the kids makes them feel closer to their grandchildren, who live abroad.

"My father would make me spend my summer vacation learning the next year's curriculum in advance," said Virendra, who served as Indian ambassador to several countries including South Africa.

"That really boosted my confidence and made me interested in schoolwork. And that is what I am trying to do with these children, so when their school reopens, they are slightly ahead of their class."

Veena said she hopes to recruit more volunteers to teach the street-side classes.

"It is not about the money that people can contribute and give, it is about their time," she said. "They should take out a little bit of their time, an hour or so, if not every day, every alternate day, and come and help these children."

While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have tales of kindness. "One Good Thing" is a series of AP stories focusing on glimmers of joy and benevolence in a dark time.

The U.S. reckoning on race, seen through other nations' eyes

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just months after Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama, Soviet broadcasters portrayed U.S. policies toward Black citizens as "indicative of its policy toward colored peoples throughout the world."

Karl Jacoby, a professor of American

history and co-director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race at Columbia University in New York, said that the U.S. moved to end segregation and push forth the Civil Rights Act as it competed for influence with the Soviet Union in part because "it was untenable to try to be the leader of the democratic world and be undemocratic at home."

"This is really a very old pattern — that the United States finds itself very vulnerable on the international stage because of the hypocrisy of its stated ideals and the actual reality of the treatment of a lot of its citizens," he said.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel leveraged that vulnerability when he referred to U.S. "imperialism" and the "irrational and unsustainable production and consumption system of capitalism" in his speech at the U.N. General Assembly. He said the U.S. was facing "an abundance of practically uncontrolled expressions of hatred, racism, police brutality, and irregularities in the election system."

And Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, not recognized by Washington as his nation's legitimate leader, blasted U.S. "arrogance." He said the Trump administration's current path will lead to isolation and condemnation, including from U.S. citizens "who have taken to the streets to protest against racism, against police brutality, against abuse."

Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba are all under U.S. sanctions, which have tightened under President Trump. The three nations also restrict protests and free speech within their own borders, sometimes harshly:

- Last year, Iranian security forces killed at least 300 in anti-government protests and suppressed media coverage, according to Amnesty International.

- Venezuela is in the midst of one of the world's worst refugee crises and a third of the country faces hunger. A U.N. Human Rights Council has accused Maduro's government of crimes, including torture and killings. The U.S. and nearly 60 other nations have called on him to step down.

- In Cuba, there have been dramatic openings in past years, but it remains a one-party communist state where dissent is punishable.

Thomas Carothers, author of *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization*, said that it becomes harder for the United States to be an effective promoter of democracy abroad when U.S. democracy falls short of its own standards.

"Unquestionably, President Trump has less interest in supporting democracy abroad than any other president in recent American history," said Carothers, who is senior vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Kleinfeld says the world as a whole is facing a problem of governance.

"Democracies may not always be doing well, and the United States is certainly not doing well," she said. "But there is a chance in democracies that they can do better. They can at least elect their leaders and try to do better."

Tiny airborne particles may pose big coronavirus problem

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people can be difficult in homes that house multiple generations. Some old buildings have windows that were "nailed shut years ago," he said. And "we have far too many communities where they simply don't have access to clean water to wash their hands."

It might seem strange that for all the scientific frenzy to study the new coronavirus, the details of how it spreads can still be in doubt nine months later. But history suggests patience.

"We've been studying influenza for 102 years," says Milton, referring to the 1918 flu epidemic. "We still don't know how it's transmitted and what the role of aerosols is."

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

Difficulty level: Medium #41793

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last issue's puzzle

Puzzle #85237 (Easy)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

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

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