

## アフリカからの便り その2

前回は中部アフリカで未来を拓く若者の話でしたが、今回はケニアのマラソンナーの育成に熱き情熱を注ぎ、昨年末に東アフリカの地に眠った知人:小林俊一さん(享年 79 歳)\*を悼み、ここに紹介したいと思います。

私たち日本に住む人にとって遠い存在のケニア。『ライオンキング』にイメージされるサバナの草原と野生動物の国として知られているほか、世界的なマラソンランナーを数多く輩出する国として知られています。2021年の世界マラソン選手ランキングベスト100を見ると、実に半数以上の52名がケニア人選手です。特にトップ10の内7名がケニア人選手で、「オリンピックでメダルを取るよりケニア代表になる方が難しい」と言われているほどです。

年齢が私より丁度ひと回り上の小林さんとの付き合いは、今から40年以上前にケニアで共にスワヒリ語を学んでいた時に始まります。自身も高校時代に陸上競技ランナーであった小林さんは、ケニアで才能あふれる選手を見出して日本の大学・実業団の陸上競技部に紹介する事業を最初に手がけた人なのです。

小林さんが育てた著名選手には、ソウルオリンピック(1988年)で銀メダルに輝き、昨年の春に旭日双光章を叙勲されたダグラス=ワキウリ D. Wakiuhuri さん、アトランタオリンピック(1996年)で銅メダル、シドニーオリンピック(2000年)で銀メダルのエリック=ワイナイナ E. Wainaina さん、北京オリンピック(2008年)で金メダルの故サムエル=ワンジル S.K.Wanjiru さんなどがいます。

当時、30歳を過ぎた小林さんは大学卒業後7年間勤めた酒造会社を退職し、カメラ1台でケニアに渡り、野山を走り回る若い人々を見ては目を細め、いつもビール片手に爽やかな弁舌でケニアと日本の友好の夢を語る情熱的な人でした。小林さんはケニア選手を追っかけ、1977年に開催された東アフリカ陸上選手権大会に同行し、その時撮した1枚の写真が決勝判定を覆して一躍有名になったエピソードは今でも鮮明に覚えています。

\*小林 俊一[1946-2021]さん;神奈川県三浦市生まれ。神奈川県立横須賀高校から早稲田大学へ。サントリー株式会社(当時)で営業職を経て、ケニアに居を移しスポーツプロデューサーとして活躍。パートナーのいくみさんは群馬県出身。一人息子の小林 走(そう)さんは、元プロテニス選手・テニス指導者;杉山 愛さんと結婚。今は二児のパパまとか。



DAILY NATION FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021

Sports

**TENNIS**  
**Murray handed wild card for Australian Open**  
Former men's tennis world number one Andy Murray has been handed a wild card invitation for the Australian Open, organisers announced yesterday, praising him for his "fighting spirit". Murray, 35, is expected to play in his 12th Grand Slam final in Melbourne. However, towards the end of last season, he recorded two hip-to-shoulder injuries that prevented him from competing in the Italian Open and the French Open.

**CRICKET**  
**Pakistan star recovering well after heart scare**  
Pakistan Test opener Ahsan Ali has a long road to recovery following surgery after he was forced off the field with chest pain during a dramatic, match officials said yesterday. The 31-year-old left on Tuesday while batting for Central Punjab in a Quaid-e-Azam Trophy match in Rawalpindi and was rushed to a hospital. He underwent two angioplasty procedures after being diagnosed with Acute Coronary Syndrome. A Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) statement said (AFP).

**CRICKET**  
**'Hurting' England not giving up on Ashes**  
England are "hurting" but determined to rise to the challenge and clear their way back into the Ashes series against Australia, batsman Dawid Malan said yesterday. After slumping to nine wickets in Brisbane and then by 275 runs in Adelaide, the visitors will enter the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday for the third Test on Sunday needing to win. If they don't, the five-Test series is over with Australia retaining the urn as holders (AFP).

**CRICKET**  
**USA defeat Ireland by 26 runs in T20 contest**  
The United States scored a dominant and decisive T20 cricket triumph over Ireland on Wednesday to get the most important series in their history off to the best possible start. A brilliant 65 from Gajanan Singh helped the hosts reach a competitive 188 for six in their 20 overs and more disciplined bowling from Saazibh Nazeemullah and Ali Khan helped keep the Irish at bay to secure an opening victory in the three-game set. The first T20 home series ever against a Test nation (AFP).

**OLYMPICS**  
**NHL players won't be at Beijing Winter Olympics**  
National Hockey League players will not compete at February's Beijing Winter Olympics, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman confirmed Wednesday due to COVID-19 disruptions. The league passed its season on Wednesday after 56 games had been postponed due to COVID-19 outbreaks among clubs, with plans to reschedule those contests during the February 22 window of the Games in China (AFP).

Obituary Kobayashi, a long-distance runner, arrived in Kenya equipped with just a rucksack, seeking adventure

# Kobayashi: The man who opened Japan's doors for Kenyan athletes

**BY PETER NJUGA**  
Kenya has lost one of the most remarkable human beings in sport. Susachi Kobayashi, the former Japanese national who mentored Samuel Kanyo, the recipient of the Kenyan Olympic medalist for this country. Kobayashi died on Saturday and was interred on Tuesday at the Langata Cemetery in Nairobi.



His family and friends will tomorrow place 50 trees at the Ng'ara Forest Botanic Garden in his remembrance. Kobayashi's charges read like the who's who of our generation: Douglas Wakihuri, Patrick Njiru, Thomas Onsano, Charles Kamathi, Julius Gitahi, Philip Moina, Isaac Macharia, Alex Njiru, David Miano, Thomas Onsano, Mary Wajigi and Esther Mwangi, just to mention a few of them. The first World Championships marathon gold medalist, Douglas Wakihuri, was at hand to help the widow, Thom Kobayashi, on the old man. Soon, he was joined by everybody who passed through the veteran's hands.

**Who is Susachi Kobayashi?**  
It is very unfortunate that Athletics Kenya, the sporting organisation regarded to care for all, ignored this passing away parade of a great man. And so did the leadership of the general athletics region where Kobayashi tapped a stellar cast of talent. History will judge some of them harshly. Susachi Kobayashi's sport lives. Who is Susachi Kobayashi? Many years ago, young Kobayashi, a long-distance runner, arrived in Kenya equipped with just a rucksack and no money. He met Miano, and together they formed a lasting love story Kobayashi then came to central Kenya to work talent.

**Susachi Kobayashi, the amiable, Kenya-based Japanese national who opened doors to Japan for Kenya's elite athletes. He died last Saturday. (L to R) NJUGA**  
Susachi Kobayashi had studied the trend of athletics in central Kenya, based on the efforts of Jess Kereyita and Mary Chege, the bodies of athletes then seen as high society sport. He later met current Athletics Kenya treasurer David Miano to form one of the most successful sporting partnerships in Kenya's history. Miano was not the motivating factor. All they needed was to put a smile on young poor people's faces. They channelled out talent with the efficiency of a machine gun. Single this for Wainaina (1996 African Olympic Games bronze medalist), Julius Gitahi (Commonwealth Games 10,000 metres champion), Charles Kamathi (the first man to halt the invincible Haile Gebrselassie reign at the 2005 International National Championships) and, of course, Samuel Kanyo Wajigi.

The list is endless, and also includes Thomas Onsano, Philip Moina, Delilah Njiru and Stephen Mugo from Kisumu. Kobayashi's defining moment was in 2008 when he delivered the youngest Olympic marathon champion, Wajigi. Kobayashi's other great find was John Njiru. Njiru was sickly finishing 77th in the then highly competitive 1987 National Cross-country Championships. An excited Kobayashi — whose photo mural remains a consistent reminder of his heritage etched at the World Athletics regional Development Centre at Kasarani Stadium — walked into the then Nation House, and proclaimed: "We have a champion. Forget number 1 in Njiru's strong like a horse," my mentor Gadhing Njiru recalled. True, Njiru went on to win the World Cross-country Championships five times. He remains the last Kenyan to win the 5,000 metres Olympic gold medal 14 years ago. Kobayashi was also a strict disciplinarian. He would send the Japan-based athletes back home if they misbehaved. The place he would have these young people was always at Nairobi's Ngara Hotel, where he treated them with *nyama choma* and *injera*. Isaac Macharia, the most read Kenyan athlete, recalled how Kobayashi mentored Wajigi: "I didn't see under his shade, but he made sure that Wajigi would become a great champion." Bally ace Patrick Njiru recalled how they became part of the Japanese community. "Kobayashi's departure has left a void. He was my friend and a great inspiration to many Kenyans," said Njiru.

**Positive changes economically**  
Miano is equally devoted. A former school teacher who took in so many young people like the Njiru sisters Margaret and Jane, under his shield, Miano recalls how during his first meeting with Kobayashi in Japan they decided to fish for talent in the central and Nyanza regions. "We in central region will never remember and celebrate Kobayashi for having had a hand in the positive changes experienced by many many families that have family members in athletes in Japan," says Miano. "We started the programme with him in late 80s which eventually became a blessing to many central regions." Indeed, this was the precursor to a pot full of talent in an area rich in topography where national coaches Charles Makori and Alex Williams discovered the "Agony Hill" in Njiruhara that produced the 1968 and 1972 Olympic champions. In 2018, during the National Athletics Championships at Nyayo National Stadium, a frail Kobayashi engaged me for the dying athletic activity in central region, and in his jocular mood invited me for the last photo. "We take this last photo. Next time you'll be in the cemetery," I'll take the photo because next time I will be lying in the mortuary in just. And it has come to pass. Wakihuri remains one of Kobayashi's most devoted athletes, having been honoured in Kenya with the "Order of the Grand Warrior of Kenya" and, just recently in Japan with the "Order of the Rising Sun." "The Monday after January Day last week I went to see Kobayashi and showed him the two medals, thanking him for making me who I am today. Wakihuri reflected yesterday. "He told me when the athlete he has nurtured, I have done well and in fact he should thank me. That was the last conversation we had. I'm privileged to have made it to the rank of team to show him my gratitude." Wakihuri, and many others believe Kobayashi should be honoured posthumously for his desire was to see athletics grow across the country. As Kobayashi once intimated to me, Kenya is a land of talent and our children are blessed only of sports can be evenly supported at grass root level. Kobayashi died aged 79. His vision lives on. njp@gmail.com



The Monday after January Day last week, I went to see Kobayashi and showed him the two medals, thanking him for making me who I am today. Douglas Wakihuri

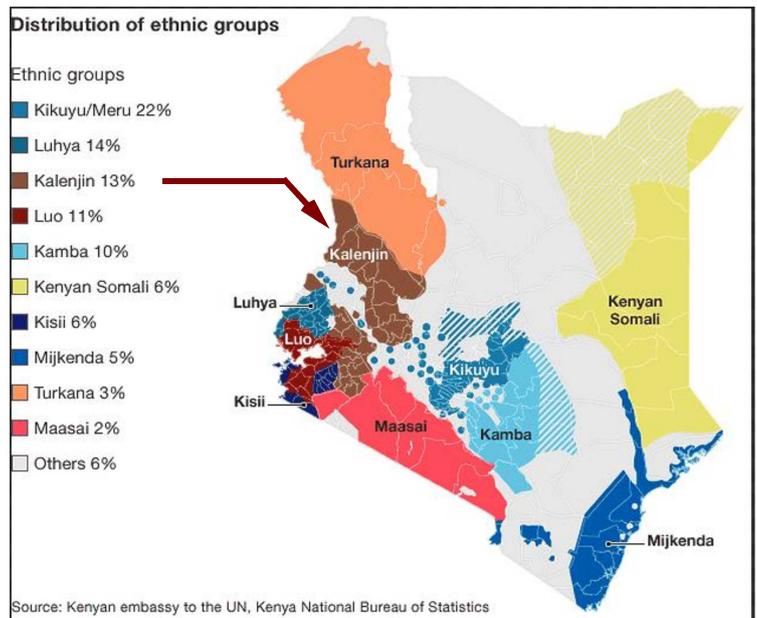
小林さんの訃報を伝えるケニアの日刊紙"Nation"2021年12月24日

ただ、5000万人の人口に60を超える部族\*(ここでは同じ言語を話すグループの意で用いている)がいるとされるケニアで、すべての部族が長距離ランナーに向いているわけではありません。むしろ少数派であり、ランナーとして素質がある部族はわずか3部族に過ぎないのです。それが首都ナイロビの北部・西部のリフトヴァレー地域に住むカレンジン Kalenjin(カレンジン諸語を話す人)で、しかもその一部の部族に限られています。小林さんは、この地にある中学校や高校を幾度となく訪れ、選手の「発掘」「派遣」を行ったのです。

日本ではケニアと言えば、なぜか槍を持った少数派のマサイ族が有名ですが、ケニア国民の内、カレンジンもわずか13%程度。彼らの多くは、名前が「チェ○○」「キプ○○」で始まる人が多いのも特徴です。

赤道直下に位置しているケニアですが、実はアフリカ大陸は台地状の大陸で熱帯雨林の低地ジャングルは少なく、首都ナイロビやカレンジンの居住する地域は標高2000メートルを超える高原です。日本で言えば標高1000メートルの軽井沢より高く、富士山五合目と同じぐらいなのです。リフトヴァレーについては「地理」や「地学」の授業で習った人も多いでしょうが、アフリカ大陸を分断する大陸の割れ目で、ナイロビから車で1時間も行くと1000メートルを超える切り立った断層の縁に到着します。その先にある低地がサバナの草原で、いくつも点在する火山、自然公園として残された土地を見ることができます。しかし、過ごしやすい高原地帯 Highland は19世紀の植民地時代にイギリス人達のプランテーションとなり、主要民族であるキクユを始め、カレンジンなど農耕を主な生業とする現地の人々は水の得にくい隅っこの不便な土地に追いやられたのです。彼らはそこで長い通学路の山野を駆け巡って走る技術を磨いたのかも知れません。身体的には膝から下のふくらはぎが細く長く、かかとをつけずに長距離を走る技術を手に入れたのでしょうか。

まだまだ現在のような科学的トレーニングが実証される以前から、小林さんはこうした素質を持ったまじめな若者を見抜く鑑識眼を持ち合わせていたと言えるでしょう。昨夏には、東京オリンピック・パラリンピック開催の直前に一時帰国されていましたが、コロナ禍でお目にかかれず、その時のメールが最後の通信になってしまいました。12月になって体調を崩し、12月18日に帰らぬ人となりました。年末にはD.ワキウリさんのアレンジによってリフトヴァレーの一角にあるナイロビの森とナイロビ市内から2時間離れた知り合いのゴルフ場の2箇所、樹木葬の形で埋葬されたと、パートナーのいくみさんから連絡をいただきました。ご冥福をお祈りします。ずっと彼の地でも走り続けてください。



ケニアの主要部族の分布(国連資料より)

\*部族という言葉の使用については様々な見解があるが、ここでは同じ言語を話す小グループの意で用いている。