

# Suicides of 84 Newsworthy Japanese between 1912 and 2015

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** I have reviewed the suicides committed by 84 newsworthy Japanese collectively, since 1912.

**Methods:** Print databases in English (such as *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*) and electronic databases (such as *www.generalists.dk* and *wikipedia*) were used to locate references to suicides between 1912 and May 2015. The 1912 (the death of Emperor Meiji followed by subsequent suicide of General Marasuke Nogi) was taken as a convenient starting point, as it came to be marked as the year in Japan became recognized as a newly industrialized country, a first in the Asian continent.

**Results:** Among the 84 newsworthy Japanese studied, 46 were by military men and 38 were by non-military celebrities (31 men and 7 women). Twelve among the 38 had literary reputations within a short span of 49 years (Takeo Arishima in 1923, and Yasunari Kawabata in 1972). Few of the reported suicides (such as that of Kawabata, Hideto Matsumoto and Juzo Itami) have been doubted. Since 2001, accusations of research fraud either by the principal or by the principal's co-authors in research publications had resulted in the suicides of three men scientists.

**Conclusion:** Overall, predominance of men among the studied sample reflects the tenor of 20th century life in Japan. First, recruitment to military ranks was restricted only to men in the first quarter of the 20th century. Thus, all 46 suicides in the military were by men. Secondly, among the 38 non-military celebrities who committed suicide between 1923 and 2015, 31 were men as well.

## KEY WORDS

celebrity, literati, military men, scientists, university students

## INTRODUCTION

In the past 50 years, there have been a plethora of studies on suicides by Japanese by native scholars and non-native academics<sup>(1-17)</sup>. However, with the exception of a few like Marasuke Nogi<sup>(18-20)</sup>, Yasunari Kawabata<sup>(21,22)</sup> and Yukio Mishima<sup>(21,23-28)</sup>, suicides of other newsworthy Japanese have not been studied in-depth. Even Mamoru Iga<sup>(9)</sup>, in his 1986 monograph on suicide and economic success of modern Japan, while covering the suicides of five elite Japanese literati (Arishima, Akutagawa, Dazai, Mishima and Kawabata), had glossed over the suicides of Japanese military men in 1940s, with only two sentences. These being, "At the end of World War II, Admiral Onishi and Defense Minister General Anami killed themselves in order to protest the declaration of the termination of the war. About ten army officers followed Anami to death. There were, in all, more than 584 suicides of the same nature at that time."

In my view, the primary reason was the avoidance of politically sensitive themes (such as kamikaze deaths) during the post-War period when war memories were fresh and the principal combatants who participated in the Second World War were living. Even if passing mention is made, researchers omitted mention of names who committed suicide. A good example is an introductory paragraph by Fuse<sup>(7)</sup>. To quote,

"It is still fresh in our memory that as recently as World War II countless numbers of Japanese military officers committed *seppuku* in Pacific Islands before the eyes of stunned American fighting men. Immediately after the end of the war in 1945, moreover, the serene outer ground of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo was dyed with blood by some Japanese men and women, both military and civilian, who calmly committed *seppuku* in tens and hundreds as an 'apology' to the Emperor for having lost the war."

Non-availability of adequate data in non-Japanese languages, as well as whatever available material lying buried in the Japanese language publications also contributed to this lethargy.

In an interesting study, Orbell and Morikawa<sup>(29)</sup> had analyzed the contents of 661 military men (approximately, 17% of the total, according to the authors) who had died in the Kamikaze campaign during 1944-45. However, Lamont-Brown<sup>(30)</sup> had reported that the generally accepted totals of Kamikaze sorties (between Oct. 1944 and Aug. 1945) were 2,940, the maximum number being 1,162 in April 1945. This number upgrades the analytical content of Orbell and Morikawa<sup>(29)</sup> study to 22.5%. In between these two studies, anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney published an ethnographic analysis of the diaries left behind by four kamikaze pilots<sup>(31)</sup>.

Recently, Ueda *et al*<sup>(32)</sup>, had reported a study on 109 celebrities in Japan from 1989 to 2010, based on media archive. Unfortunately, with the exception of the suicide of Toshikatsu Matsuoka (a politician/Cabinet Minister) in 2007, Ueda *et al*<sup>(32)</sup>, failed to identify their study sample of 106 celebrities. Two individuals (Shokei Arai and Youjiri Nakahima) specifically identified in this study, hardly qualify as 'newsworthy' (i.e., state of being well known), other than the fact that they were subordinates of socially prominent superiors, at the time of their suicides.

An inspiration for the present study was a brief research report by Zhang *et al*<sup>(33)</sup>, who had analyzed 72 celebrity suicides between 1822 (politician Viscount Castlereagh/ UK) and 1994 (solider-politician Lewis Puller/ USA) and inferred that strain theory of suicide could account for these suicides. The method used by Zhang *et al*<sup>(33)</sup>, was to choose a sample of 'famous individuals who have died by suicide and for whom a detailed biography has been written'. In their sample of 72 international celebrities, only two (Fumimaro Konoe and Yukio Mishima) were Japanese. Thus, I make an attempt in this paper to com-

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**Table 1. Biographical Synopses of Japanese Military Men who committed suicide (1912-1949)\***

Military Men	Year of Birth-Date of Death <sup>△</sup>	Age at Suicide	military rank
Maresuke Nogi	1849 - 1912.09.13	62	army general/war hero
Michitaro Komatsubara	1886 - 1940.10.06	54	army lieutenant general
Kensaku Oda	1888 - 1943.01.21	54	army lieutenant general(p)♦
Yoshitsugu Saito	1890 - 1944.06.07	53	army lieutenant general
Keiji Igeta	1894 - 1944.07.06	49	army lieutenant general(p)♦
Chuichi Nagumo	1897 - 1944.07.06	56	navy admiral
Genzo Minakami	1888 - 1944.08.04	55	army lieutenant general(p)♦
Hideyoshi Obata	1880 - 1944.08.11	64	army general(p)♦
Yoshimi Tamura	1897 - 1944.08.11	47	army lieutenant general(p)♦
Kunio Nakagawa	1898 - 1944.11.24	46	army lieutenant general(p)♦
Gonjiro Murai	? - 1944.12.31	?	army lieutenant general(p)♦
Tadamichi Kuribayashi	1891 - 1945.03.17	53	army general
Takeichi Nishi (Baron)	1902 - 1945.03.22	42	army lieutenant colonel & 1932,1936 Olympian
Tokutaro Nakajima	? - 1945.06.22	?	army lieutenant general
Takeo Fujioka	? - 1945.06.22	?	army lieutenant general
Isamu Cho	1895 - 1945.06.22	50	army lieutenant general
Mitsuru Ushijima	1897 - 1945.06.23	57	army general
Ryosuke Nunoi	1909 - 1945.07.21	36	paymaster captain & tennis player
Shiro Makino	1893 - 1945.08.10	52	army lieutenant general
Seichi Yamada	1893 - 1945.08.15	51	army lieutenant general
Anami Korechika	1897 - 1945.08.15	58	army general/war minister
Kumaichi Teramoto	1889 - 1945.08.15	56	army lieutenant general
Kiyoshi Okamoto	1894 - 1945.08.15	51	army lieutenant general
Masami Kumabe	1903 - 1945.08.16	42	army major-general
Takijiro Onishi	1891 - 1945.08.16	54	Vice Admiral
Gida Akiyama	1886 - 1945.08.17	58	army lieutenant general
Jizio Nakamura	? - 1945.08.18	?	army lieutenant general
Shizuichi Tanaka	1887 - 1945.08.24	57	army general
Hajime(Gen) Sugiyama	1880 - 1945.09.12	65	army field marshal
Yoshie Shirokura	? - 1945.09.13	?	army lieutenant general
Yoshio Shinozuka	1884 - 1945.09.17	61	army lieutenant general
Hitoshi Hamada	1895 - 1945.09.17	50	army lieutenant general
Toyoji Hirano	? - 1945.09.20	?	army major general
Shigeru Honjo	1876 - 1945.11.20	69	army general
Toshio Nomi	1894 - 1945.12.13	51	army lieutenant general
Fumimaro Konoe	1891 - 1945.12.16	54	Prime Minister
Chiichi Okada	1890 - 1946.02.12	55	army lieutenant general
Mikio Uemura	1892 - 1946.03.23	53	army lieutenant general
Hidezo Hitomi	1888 - 1946.04.13	57	army lieutenant general
Rikichi Ando	1884 - 1946.04.19	62	army general?
Tatsumi Kusaba	1888 - 1946.09.17	58	army lieutenant general
Kyoji Koizumi	1886 - 1946.12.10	60	army lieutenant general
Seitaro Uemura	1883 - 1947.03.11	63	army lieutenant general
Hatazou Adachi	1890 - 1947.09.10	57	army lieutenant general
Kaoru Motoizumi	1893 - 1948.07.15	55	army major general
Hosaku Imamura	? - 1949	?	army lieutenant general

\*arranged according to chronological date of death

△ wherever a question mark appears next to the name of the individual, the year of birth was not recorded in the source material.

♦ posthumous rank

Main Source: [www.generals.dk](http://www.generals.dk) website

pile a check list of 84 newsworthy Japanese who committed suicide in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, since 1912.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

'Newsworthy Japanese' are defined for this study as, individuals who had gained *some degree of recognition* in their chosen endeavors

during their lives, whose death became newsworthy in print and/or other social media of the day. Secretaries or personal assistants of prominent politicians or businessmen who had committed suicide (without gaining any degree of recognition, other than holding such a position for a prominent individual) are excluded in this selection. Print databases checked were 9 volumes of Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan<sup>34</sup>. Newsworthy individuals who committed suicide from 1912 to 2015 were included in this study. Year 1912 (the death of Emperor Meiji followed by subsequent suicide of General Marasuke Nogi) was taken as a

**Table 2. Biographical Synopses of non-military newsworthy Japanese who committed suicide (1923 - May 2015)\***

Non-military Japanese	Year of Birth-Year of Death	Age at Suicide	Status in Society
Takeo Arishima	1849 - 1923	45	novelist, diarist
Ryunosuke Akutagawa	1892 - 1927	35	short story writer
Masanosuke Watanabe	1899 - 1928	29	labor activist/politician
Misuzu Kaneko (Teru Kaneko)	1903 - 1930	26	poet
Shungetsu Ikuta (Seihei Ikuta)	1892 - 1930	38	poet
Kajiro Nishinoumi II (Kyuuhachi Makise)	1880 - 1931	50	sumo wrestler (25 <sup>th</sup> yokozuna)
Jiro Sato	1908 - 1934	26	tennis player
Shinichi Makino	1896 - 1936	40	novelist
Chujiro Hayashi	1878 - 1940	61	naval physician
Seigo Nakano	1886 - 1943	57	politician, Nazi admirer
Osamu Dazai (Shuji Tsushima)	1909 - 1948	48	novelist
Hidemitsu Tanaka	1913 - 1949	35	novelist & 1932 Olympian
Michio Kato	1918 - 1953	35	novelist/ playwright
Yutaka Taniyama	1927 - 1958	30	mathematician
Sakae Kubo	1901 - 1958	57	novelist/playwright
Ashihei Hino (Katsunori Tamai)	1907 - 1960	52	war novelist
Kokichi Tsuburaya	1940 - 1968	28	marathoner (1964 Olympic bronze medalist)
Kentaro Kawatsu	1915 - 1970	54	swimmer (1932 Olympic bronze medalist)
Yukio Mishima (Kimitake Hiraoka)	1925 - 1970	45	novelist, short story writer, playwright
Yasunari Kawabata	1899 - 1972	72	novelist (1968 Nobelist in literature)
Yukiko Okada (Kayo Sato)	1967 - 1986	18	pop idol singer
Juzo Itami (Yoshihiro Ikeuchi)	1933 - 1997	64	movie actor/director, essayist
Hideto Matsumoto	1964 - 1998	33	pop musician
Tokusaburo Arashi (Ichiro Yokota)	1934 - 2000	65	kabuki actor
Mitsuo Kagawa	1923 - 2001	78	archeologist (emeritus)
Isao Inokuma	1938 - 2001	63	judoka (1964 Olympic gold medalist)
Kyoko Togawa	1964 - 2002	37	movie actress
Yasuo Kawasaki	1964 - 2006	42	research scientist
Toshikatsu Matsuoka	1945 - 2007	62	politician/ Cabinet minister
Yukiko Shimizu	~1960 - 2009	49	TV actress. Comedian
Kazuhiko Kato	1947 - 2009	62	musician/ band leader
Miyu Uehara (Mutsumi Fujisaki)	1987 - 2011	24	glamor model
Hideki Irabu	1969 - 2011	42	professional baseball player
Tadahiro Matsushita	1939 - 2012	73	politician/Cabinet minister
Keiko Fuji (Junko Abe)	1951 - 2013	62	enka singer
Yoshiki Sasai	1962 - 2014	52	physician/stem cell scientist
Ryoichi Kishi	1964 - 2015	51	engineer/polymer scientist
Kunihiko Kase	1941 - 2015	74	musician ('The Wild Ones' group)

\*arranged according to chronological date of death

◆Birth names are given within parenthesis.

convenient starting point, as it came to be marked as the year in which Japan became recognized as a newly industrialized country, a first in the Asian continent. Furthermore, electronic databases (such as *www.generals.dk* and Wikipedia) were used to locate references to suicides as well.

In 2010, while teaching at the Gifu Pharmaceutical University, I solicited a report from 111 sophomore students who analyzed the circumstances of suicides of their favorite newsworthy Japanese for a course in Pharmaceutical English. Preliminary data from these reports are also included in this study.

## RESULTS

Biographical synopses of 46 Japanese military men who committed suicide between 1912 and 1949 are presented in Table 1. Years 1944 and 1945 saw 33 of the 46 military men dying by suicide. Among these 33 deaths, 13 (including that of Fumimaro Konoe, who served as prime minister during 1937-1939 and 1940-1941) occurred after the termination of the Second World War on August 15, 1945. For 7 among the 46 individuals, birth year details are unavailable in the checked database.

As such, the age range of the remaining 38 individuals was between 36 and 69.

Table 2 provides biographical synopses of 38 newsworthy Japanese, who committed suicide between 1923 and 2015. Among these 38 individuals, 31 were men and 7 were women. Their societal status is also indicated. The age range of these 38 individuals was between 18 and 78. Twelve among the 38 had literary reputations; namely, Takeo Arishima, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, Misuzu Kaneko, Shungetsu Ikuta, Shinichi Makino, Osamu Dazai, Hidemitsu Tanaka, Michio Kato, Sakae Kubo, Ashihei Hino, Yukio Mishima, Yasunari Kawabata (1968 Nobelist in literature). Those with artistic talent who committed suicide included five musicians (Yukiko Okada, Hideto Matsumoto, Kazuhiko Kato, Keiko Fuji and Kunihiko Kase) and four movie/stage/TV actors (Juzo Itami, Tokusaburo Arashi, Kyoko Togawa and Yukiko Shimizu). Six prominent sportsmen, each representing different sport (Kajiro Nishinoumi II, Jiro Sato, Kokichi Tsuburaya, Kentaro Kawatsu, Isao Inokuma and Hideki Irabu) also succumbed to suicide between 1931 and 2011. Among these six, Kawatsu, Tsuburaya and Inokuma were Olympic medalists.

Table 3 provides details about three individuals who failed in their suicide attempt. Among these three, Hideki Tojo was subsequently hanged as a war criminal. Other two (Akira Kurosawa and Frank Nagai)

**Table 3. Newsworthy Japanese with Failed Suicide Attempt\***

Newsworthy Japanese	Year of Birth-Year of Death	Age at Suicide attempt	Status in Society
Hideki Tojo	1884 - 1948	61 (in 1945)	Prime Minister
Akira Kurosawa	1910 - 1998	61 (in 1971)	movie director
Kiyoto (Frank) Nagai	1932 - 2008	43 (in 1985)	singer

\*arranged in chronological sequence of failed suicide attempt

**Table 4. Rank Order of Popular Suicides (1912-2009) among a Sample of University Students**

Rank Order	Newsworthy Japanese	Year of Suicide	Sample of 111 University Students	
			Number	Percent
1	Ryunosuke Akutagawa	1927	22	19.8
2	Osamu Dazai	1948	21	18.9
3	Hideto Matsumoto	1998	13	11.7
4	Yukiko Shimizu	2009	12	10.8
5	Maresuke Nogi	1912	10	9.0
6	Yukio Mishima	1970	6	5.4
	Yasunari Kawabata	1972	6	5.4
	Juzo Itami	1997	6	5.4
7	Kokichi Tsuburaya	1968	5	4.5
8	Kazuhiko Kato	2009	3	2.7
9	Misuzu Kaneko	1930	2	1.8
	Fumimaro Konoe	1945	2	1.8
	Toshikatsu Matsuoka	2007	2	1.8

had natural death subsequently after living for more than 20 years following their failed suicide attempt.

Rank order of popular suicides chosen by a sample of 111 Japanese university students in 2010 is presented in Table 4. Akutagawa, Dazai, Hide of X-Japan music group, Yukiko Shimizu and Nogi ranked among the top 5 listing. The reasons for this ranking are self-evident. Yukiko Shimizu's suicide occurred in the same year (2009) when this survey was taken, and it was covered by the media prominently. Year 2009 was also the birth centenary year of writer Osamu Dazai, which received much media attention. Writer Akutagawa's suicide was ranked as number 1, probably because students had read his stories during their school years. General Nogi's *seppuku* suicide was considered by some students as representing the traditional courageous spirit of Japanese for taking responsibility for one's deeds.

## DISCUSSION

On the suicides of military personnel (Table 1) and literary talent (Table 2), I quote a paragraph from Edwin Reischauer's monograph, which is as follows:

"Except for a rash of such [*seppuku*] suicides by prominent personages, mostly military, at the end of World War II and these were perfectly understandable even from a Western point of view - the last notable case of genuine *seppuku* was that of the Russo-Japanese War hero, General Nogi, and his wife in 1912 to follow the Meiji Emperor in death. The spectacular *seppuku* of the great novelist Mishima in 1970 was more a matter of dramatic posturing than an act of duty or valid political protest, and it left the Japanese public, though thrilled by the drama, somewhat puzzled and contemptuous. Incidentally, the large number of prominent literary figures who have taken their own lives, though in more prosaic ways, is more a commentary on the introspective nature of modern Japanese literature than a sign of the prevalence of suicide in Japanese society."<sup>35</sup>

I'm of the opinion that Reischauer's contention about the introspective nature of modern Japanese literature which had led many literati to commit suicide is too simplistic. The suicides of 12 literati among the 38 non-military, newsworthy Japanese happened within a short span of 49 years (Arishima in 1923, and Kawabata in 1972). One should take into consideration, the strains of creating literature under the then prevailing socio-political currents. Some literati (Arishima, Akutagawa,

Dazai, Tanaka and Mishima) also indulged in extra-marital affairs which could have accentuated their life stresses. A notable omission in Iga's treatise<sup>8</sup>) was the suicide of woman poet Misuzu Kaneko (1930). In her case, disreputable male-dominant behavior of her spouse had a significant role in contributing to her suicide.

Since 2001, accusations of research fraud either by the principal or by the principal's co-authors in research publications had resulted in the suicides of three men scientists; Mitsuo Kagawa<sup>36,37</sup>), Yasuo Iwasaki<sup>38</sup>) and Yoshiki Sasai<sup>39,40-42</sup>). A report published by a Working group<sup>43</sup>) three years later on the research fraud committed by Dr. Akio Sugino (a former professor at Osaka University) to whose group Iwasaki was a member, made no mention about the suicide of Iwasaki at all. Similarly, false modesty practiced by Sasai's colleagues<sup>41,42</sup>) in not identifying his cause of death, when it was obviously known, deserve criticism as well.

Of the three individuals whose suicide attempts failed (Table 3), the following could be inferred. The common cause could have been dependency over failure in personnel decision making coupled with mental stress. For, Hideki Tojo it was losing the Second World War; for Akira Kurosawa, the cause was box office failure of one of his movies; for Frank Nagai, the cause was related to a lie on fatherhood of a child born to his mistress. That Tojo had planned to commit suicide in September 1945 after Japan's defeat was well known. His biographer Browne had recorded the following:

"Tojo was in no doubt that he would be high on the Allied wanted list. One of his first acts had been to ask Dr. Suzuki, a neighbor whose house faced the Tojo residence, to show him exactly where his heart was. So that there could be no error, he went to the extraordinary length of getting the doctor to mark the spot on his chest with sumi ink used for brushwork."<sup>44</sup>)

Tojo shot himself pointing the revolver to his heart, and failed. There were obvious gossips that Tojo faked his suicide attempt. But opposing views were told by two, including that of Mrs. Katsuko Tojo, his wife. Tokosaburo Shiobara, who served as a defense counsel at the International Military Tribunal, had stated the reason why Tojo missed his heart was the mark placed at his chest got smeared by perspiration. Mrs. Tojo was of the opinion that, her husband was left handed and probably had held the pistol by his left hand and 'because he tried to hit his heart on the left side with his left hand, the bullet entered below and missed it."<sup>44</sup>)

As per the failed suicide attempt of movie director Kurosawa in 1971, he had implied a medical reason, in one of his interviews later. To quote, "I think I was suffering from some kind of neurosis. I also had a bad case of gall stones, and it wasn't until long afterward that it was diagnosed and successfully operated. I didn't realize until after the surgery that I had been in pain for years, and I'm sure it had been affecting my spirits."<sup>45</sup>)

To comprehend the data presented in Table 4, I provide below excerpts from the impressions recorded by students on the suicides of eight newsworthy Japanese in the chronological order of their occurrence. In this selection, I have chosen examples of suicides (apart from Nogi and Kawabata) about which not much published information is available.

Maresuke Nogi (1912): "After investigating him I feel something good which people of today don't have. And I thought Nogi had a great sense of responsibility in various aspects." - Yoshifumi.

Ryunosuke Akutagawa (1927): "Akutagawa is one of the most famous writers in Japan, but I didn't know he committed suicide. I was so shocked and also embarrassed that I didn't know the fact, even though I have read his work *Rashomon*, when I was a junior high school student." - Hiromi

Misuzu Kaneko (1930): "She composed a total of 512 poems until her death at the age of 26. In 1926, she married, against her will, the head clerk of her family's book store, after submitting to pressure from her parents. Her husband did not share Misuzu's love for poetry. He also proved to be a womanizer and failed to support Misuzu after the birth of their only child. Misuzu contracted venereal disease from her husband, while struggling with child care. After she filed for divorce, when she

lost the custody battle of her daughter to her former husband, Misuzu committed suicide by taking sleeping pills. She lived at a time when equality concept between men and women was absent in Japan. She protested against such unnatural belief by her suicide. We can study her poems and gain a lot." - Yuko

Fumimaro Konoe (1945): "He was the only prime minister of Japan to commit suicide. He was named as Class-A war criminal at the end of Second World War. Konoe had only two choices; to commit suicide or be killed. He chose the former step to protect his pride." - Yuta

Yasunari Kawabata (1972): "The suicide of Yasunari Kawabata often become a topic of conversation. He was one of the most successful novelists in Japan, and people wonder why such a person had to commit suicide. More mysteriously, he didn't leave any suicide note/letter. Thus, some familiar with him even now say that he didn't kill himself but died by accident. If he committed suicide because he couldn't write anymore, I think that's the life he lived. But, if he committed suicide because of the problems unrelated to his literary skills, we may have to find reasons to make writers like him ignore committing suicide." - Kenju

Juzo Itami (1997): "There are various theories about his suicide. First was that he investigated the hospital waste problem before his death. A high ranking government official who was in the Environmental administration section of Health and Welfare Ministry was indirectly linked as a suspect of Juzo Itami 'murder', Second was that he planned to make a movie about a religious organization. Thus, he was killed by a member of such religious organization. Third was that, Itami's hand and feet were restricted by force (There is a theory of vein injection too), and then pushed down from a roof top by [perpetrators of the crime]."-Tomoaki

Hideto (Hide) Matsumoto (1998): "While authorities deemed Matsumoto's death a suicide, several of Hide's friends and colleagues stated that they believed it to be an accident. Among them were X-Japan's co-founder Taiji Sawada. This notion was supported by the fact that no suicide note was left and Sawada theorizes in his autobiography that at the night of his death, 'Hide may have been practicing a technique to relieve upper back and neck pains which guitarists can suffer from continuous use of a shoulder strap. The technique involved was practiced by the X-Japan members during their touring days and required the use of a towel and a door knob or handle.' According to Sawada, Matsumoto may have fallen asleep in his intoxicated state, becoming caught and strangling himself. I can't accept his suicide attempt. I loved X-Japan and Hide. I also think he was able to avoid this accident. Excess drinking caused him this accident. I really regret Hide's untimely death. During my leisure time, I want to visit his grave." - Saori

Isao Inokuma (2001): "He was a judo athlete and he won a gold medal at 1964 Tokyo Olympics, and at the 1965 World Judo Championships. In 2001, when he was 63, he stabbed his abdomen with cutlery and died at the President's room. Because of cutlery evidence and two or more testaments prepared at the President's room, the cause of his death was inferred as suicide. It was thought that the debt due to business slump of his company was the immediate cause. I thought that he was unmarried at the time of death might have had an impact. If he was married, his wife might have offered support to him, and it might be able to prevent his death. In my opinion, committing suicide even though a reason exists shouldn't be permitted." - Kyoshiro

It appears that few of the reported suicides (Kawabata, Itami and Hide) have been doubted. While some ascribe that Kawabata and Hide died in accidents, other views hold that Itami's death was a homicide. Assuming the validity of police report, Jerome Young<sup>46)</sup> had commented on the suicide of Itami. Whether the concept of shame<sup>47)</sup> played a role in the deaths of Itami as well as the three suicide deaths of scientists (Kagawa, Kawasaki and Sasai) deserve further investigation.

Overall, predominance of men among the studied sample reflects the tenor of 20th century life in Japan<sup>11,17,48-50)</sup>. First, recruitment to military ranks were restricted only to men in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, all 46 suicides in the military were by men. Secondly, among the 38 non-military celebrities who committed suicide between 1923 and 2015, 31 were men as well. This indicates that men dominated the social life in literature, sports, politics, entertainment and natural sciences in preference to women. The accepted fact that men rather than women commit suicide in many countries (including Japan) should also not be ignored<sup>51)</sup>.

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