



Judgement Day

In what is a bit of a coincidence, I am writing this week's story on the train, just as I did last week. And I'm on the train for the same reason - a trip to a TV studio for a filming session. Lest you get the wrong impression, and have the idea that I do this every week, I should mention that this is a case of 'when it rains, it pours'; in a typical year I only have a couple of TV appearances at most.

But it's not TV that is the topic of our story today - it's the newspaper. And more exactly, the newspaper that serves our local area of Tokyo (local in this context being a region of around 4 million people). And more exactly still, it's a display ad running in the issue published on Friday, two days before today's A Story A Week comes out.

木版館

版画家デービッド・ブルは、
新しい企業で自分を試してみたいと思う、
意欲的な若者を期待しています！
日本の伝統工芸に触れてみたい方歓迎。

スタッフ募集

- 版画摺師見習い
- 木工品制作に関わる仕事
- 企画・経理・宣伝に関わる運営全般

● 完全フレックス制 ● 時間給(能力向上の時点で増額)

〒198-0052
青梅市長瀬8-4-5
<http://mokuhankan.com/jp/>

ホームページから
ご連絡ください。

The ad is mine, and is the first actual 'advertising' that I have ever done. Am I promoting my new print series? No, I would never do such a thing as advertise prints; I have no desire whatsoever to 'push' them on people. The advertisement is for staff.

Roughly translated the content is something like this: 'Woodblock Printmaker David Bull is looking for a few enthusiastic young people to join him in some new ventures.' It then goes on to describe that there are some

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new positions: for printer trainees, a person for general office and support functions, and one for woodwork projects.

Printer Tsushima-san is progressing well, but she is coming 'on line' only slowly, and if I don't get more trainees started on the same path very soon, it'll take decades to build a flourishing workshop! More critically, with my new series now announced and scheduled for an April start, I can no longer delay getting some help for building the wooden cases for that project. And with the current three helpers being joined by these new members, a general office helper is also going to be necessary.

Looking for new people through the impersonal method of newspaper advertising certainly isn't my first choice, but the 'word of mouth' method that I had been hoping would do the job simply hasn't produced any results. Nothing has turned up, and I cannot wait any longer. I am facing a 'window of opportunity', and it is far from clear just how long it will stay open (if in fact, it hasn't already closed).

When I was planning these expansions in our staff over the past half a year or so, I was making the final few prints in my previous series - the 'Mystique of the Japanese Print'. I had upwards of 160 subscribers, and the savings had been slowly accumulating. I have worked out a rough budget for the next half a year or so (including the projected new staff members) based on both tapping into these savings and using the revenue from the next series.

The transition from my previous print series to the new one is not 'automatic' though. After shipping the final Mystique series, those 160 subscribers all became 'Finished' in my database. 160 dropped to 0, and my monthly income followed suit. Then, following the public announcement of the new [Arts of Japan](#) series, subscription requests started coming in, and the number of people switching back to 'Active' (and new people joining) began to climb.

But it has been climbing *very* slowly indeed, as one might expect in the current difficult economic environment. There is no way that it will soon reach that 'dream' level of 160. But if it doesn't grow much above the 40-odd level where it stands as I write this, these new people will be very short-lived members of our team indeed!

Well, it can't be helped. To pull back at this point and wait for things to 'recover' would mean years of delay. I've got to grab this chance, and try and get these people trained to an efficient level - where they can contribute to our revenue - as quickly as possible.

So (by the time you read this) the ad has run, and the interviews will soon be beginning. As another 'leader of men' - on a rather different scale! - once said at a moment of decision: *Jacta alea est!*

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