

# THE CANADIAN

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN



## FROM CANADA TO THE WORLD

Saskatchewan's new Japan office exports vital food,  
oil and tech goods throughout Asia and beyond

P10



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## The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

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The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan is a private sector, not-for-profit business organization founded in 1975 to promote the development of commerce between Canada and Japan.

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Representing some 35 business industries, the CCCJ is a member-driven, member-focused organization and is the longest-serving Canadian chamber of commerce in Asia. With more than 400 members, the CCCJ represents a broad cross-section of businesspeople, including entrepreneurs, from Canada, Japan and other countries. The membership comprises Canadian companies and individuals with ties to Japan, and Japanese companies and individuals with ties to Canada.

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# STRONG TIES

By Alec Jordan  
Editor-in-Chief, *The Canadian*



**Our latest issue finds us with a new set of interesting glimpses into the many links that bring Canada and Japan together.**

I found it fascinating to learn so much about Saskatchewan (page 10), with its impressive contributions to the global economy, particularly in the form of what Premier Scott Moe calls the three Fs. Read on to find out what they are. I'm certain that the Saskatchewan Japan Office, headed by Paul Pryce, will do an excellent job of deepening and developing connections between the province and this country.

## CONNECTED WORLD

There was plenty to digest at the Foodex trade show (page 16), which marked its return this year after taking a hiatus in 2020. Although travel restrictions meant that Canadian

exhibitors couldn't make the trip, many of them had support from partners here, who found ample opportunity to make contacts and develop new business.

On a geopolitical level, one of the keenest areas of interest these days is the Indo-Pacific. Developments there are high in the minds of political, business and military leaders around the world. During a recent webinar (page 18), academics together with policy experts from both sides of the Pacific shared their views on current and future bilateral policies to maintain a free, open Indo-Pacific region.

## PEOPLE IN FOCUS

As we learn from our profile of news media entrepreneur Khaled Iwamura (page 26), sharp, detailed reporting about what's going on in your immediate area can be exactly what your audience is looking for. Moreover, the Mississauga, Ontario-based Iwamura found an

opportunity to connect with his Japanese roots through Japan Festival Canada, which launched in 2016, and has grown to become the largest Japanese cultural festival in North America.

We were happy to be able to catch up with Lowell Sheppard (page 23), as well as even get a scoop on his latest plans for the coming year, as he continues to prepare for his solo journey across the Pacific. His upcoming endeavours are enviable and inspiring.

And we spoke with Shane Busato (page 24), a Toronto native who serves as head of the communications team at Tokyo American Club. In our conversation with him, we discover some of the connections that the Club has with the Canadian community here, and learn about a major milestone that the Club has just marked.

Thank you as always for your continued readership, and until our next issue, take care, stay safe and enjoy the summer. 🍁

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# RUNNING OUR RACE

By Neil van Wouw

Chair

Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

**We've now been living over a year with the pandemic and the challenge continues, with the end not yet in sight. Much like being in the middle of a marathon, there are times when we've hit our stride and we feel that momentum will carry us through. And at other times, the tiredness hits and we just want it to be over.**

One thing we do know is that when we finally get through it all, we will be forever changed. How we live and work will be different from how it was in pre-pandemic days. It's true for our personal and professional lives — and for the chamber.

## ADAPT AND IMPROVE

I think we've all seen amazing leaps in our ability to manage online meetings and digital tools, a step up in skills and changes in work processes we could not have even imagined in the early days of last year.

And the new normal has made us reflect on how the chamber operates. Our strict rules about maintaining office hours have been replaced by a flexible work-from-home schedule, which still allows us to stay in close contact. Being able to easily leverage speakers from around the world has let us put on events that simply would not have been possible before.

Still, there is no way to replace the great networking and enjoyment we experience with in-person events. We continue to monitor the Covid-19 situation day by day, with an eye on the right timing and aiming to hold the safest events possible.

## IN GREAT HANDS

Speaking of change, this is also the time of year when we prepare for our annual Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) board of governors elections. This marks the end of my two terms as chair and the first time since 2011 that I will not be on the board — though I do plan to stay involved in several committees.

It's been a true honour to serve the chamber as chair these past four years. It's been particu-

## The more participation we have, the more we can achieve.

larly gratifying to see our board become more diverse and engaged, and to see increased membership involvement across a wide spectrum of committees.

As co-chair of the nominations committee together with Ai Nakagawa, I'm confident that this trend will continue and the chamber will be in great hands when you make your decision from our excellent field of candidates in the upcoming June election.

## YOUR CHAMBER

Even though nominations are closed for this year, if you haven't done so already, please consider getting more engaged with the chamber — for example, by joining a committee. Although our all-committee hackathons have been on hiatus during the pandemic, we have had several drop-in online events, during which we got as many committee chairs to attend as possible, to explain what their committees do and welcome new members. Keep an eye out for more of these.

The value I received as a chamber member was turbocharged once I joined my first committee in 2011. Less than a year later I was a governor, then vice-chair in 2016 and chair in 2017. Through all of this, the best thing about the chamber has been the great friendships and connections I have made, working together on projects large and small.



I think there are two main reasons that people hesitate to get involved. The first is a feeling that it is probably difficult and time consuming to climb the hierarchy to the inner circle of the organization.

If you don't already know this about the CCCJ, you will be pleasantly surprised at how flat our organization is and how easy it is to jump right in and be in the middle of it all.

The second reason is about value for time. Not surprisingly, our members are typically very busy — and as many are senior managers, directors and CEOs of companies, they are already accomplished leaders. However, there are different kinds of leadership skills applicable to different organizations, and even a small organization like our chamber can provide learning opportunities, insights and skills that can cross over to very different professional arenas. I think this is partly because of the nexus that foreign chambers have as business associations with strong embassy and government ties, which are involved in community projects one moment and international trade issues the next.

As the go-to business association for stakeholders of the Canada-Japan relationship, we are a membership-driven community that derives its strength from a diverse and collaborative membership. The more participation we have, the more we can achieve. The only thing missing is you. 🍁



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## Poll: top two nations named

As reported in an April 16 story on *WBIW.com*, Canada has taken the number one place — followed by Japan at number two — in the *Best Countries 2021* report.

Jointly produced by U.S. News and World Report, the BAV Group (a unit of global marketing agency VMLY&R) and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the report is based on surveys of top business figures, university-educated people of at least middle class and members of the general population in 78 countries. Among the various categories of the report, Canada also ranked first for quality of life and social purpose, which is a new category this year.

## Surgical tool firm set to expand



According to a May 9 story in *Kitchener Today*, Intellijoint Surgical Inc., a company producing a surgeon-controlled navigation tool that can be used when doing hip and knee replacements, is expanding to the Japanese market. Based in Kitchener, Ontario, the firm has already found success in Canada, the United States and Australia, and its technology has been used for more than 20,000 hip replacement procedures since 2016.

The company said that its products would be distributed with a partner that has a strong presence in Japan. According to Armen Bakirtzian, co-founder and CEO of the company, Japanese demographics and the fact that surgical navigation products are reimbursed by the Japanese government were factors in the decision to expand to Japan.

## Tour firm offers online tours of Prince Edward Island

With travel plans on hold due to the pandemic, the Prince Edward Island tour company P.E.I. Select Tours has been running online tours of the area for Japanese tourists, the CBC reported on May 2. The company, which specializes in tours for Japanese visitors, began holding the virtual visits in October 2020. The *Anne of Green Gables* books, written by L.M. Montgomery and set in Canada's smallest province, are extremely popular in Japan, and have inspired many tourists to come and see Prince Edward Island for themselves.

About this new offering, Kelly Doyle, owner and operator of P.E.I. Select Tours, said, "We're just trying to keep our head above water and keep the interest from Japan healthy and, hopefully, take it all back up where it left off in 2019."

## Foreign ministers discuss Indo-Pacific

According to a May 3 news release issued by Global Affairs Canada, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau met with his Japanese counterpart, Toshimitsu Motegi, to discuss bilateral efforts to maintain peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. During their discussion, at the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting in London, the ministers agreed on six specific areas of cooperation: the rule of law, security, energy security, health, trade promotion, and the environment and climate change.

Following the meeting, Garneau said: "Today, Canada and Japan build on a strong and longstanding partnership to strengthen cooperation to advance common interests in the region and ensure it remains free and open."

## Chef honoured for food culture influence

Wan Tat Kong, a Canadian citizen who resides in Hong Kong, was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, by the Japanese government for his work in promoting the export of Japanese food to Hong Kong.

An April 29 article on *DotDotNews* reports that Wan worked as a chef in Canada and Japan for about 40 years. Since 2015, he has provided cooking demonstrations at the Japan Pavilion during the annual Hong Kong Food Expo, where he has promoted the use of Japanese ingredients in Chinese cuisine. Wan has also advised local Japanese governments on how to promote their ingredients in Hong Kong.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK.COM/MASTER WAN HK

# FROM CANADA TO THE WORLD

Saskatchewan's new Japan office exports vital food, oil and tech goods throughout Asia and beyond

By Alec Jordan

**Saskatchewan is a province of stark contrasts. While its winters can be bitterly cold, the area has recorded Canada's highest temperature and the nation's sunniest climate. And it is home to the largest sand dunes in the world north of the 58th parallel.**

The province is also a land of abundance. It is rich in natural resources, and yields a wide variety of products that grow in the soil and can be found beneath it. Historically, wheat has been an important Saskatchewan product and, as a symbol of the province's productivity, features prominently on the Saskatchewan flag. The province is also a strong producer of other crops that include lentils, oats, barley and flax.

Second only to Alberta's figures are the province's production of beef cattle and oil, while its potash and uranium output make it one of the world's leaders.

Through their support for agricultural and environment-friendly natural resource development, the province's leadership secures economic vitality, prosperity for its citizens, and establishes Saskatchewan as a strong force in the global economy in this decade and the one to come.

## BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

Announced in November 2019 by Premier Scott Moe, the Saskatchewan Growth Plan 2020–2030 is key to establishing the province's economic strength. As quoted in a press release following announcement of the plan, Moe

explained that the plan builds on the province's already impressive developments, with a view to creating a better future for its citizens.

"Our province" he explained, "has seen unprecedented growth since 2007 and this plan sets the stage for a strong, innovative economy that will drive growth over the next decade. Our government has always maintained that growth itself is not the goal; rather, growth will afford the ability to invest in a better quality of life for Saskatchewan families and communities. That is the purpose of growth."



**Scott Moe**  
Premier of  
Saskatchewan







## In addition to these business ties, there are cultural and academic links between Saskatchewan and Japan.

With a set of 30 goals to be reached by 2030, the Saskatchewan Growth Plan sets ambitious targets. Along with aiming to reach a population of 1.4 million people and create 100,000 jobs, the plan seeks a 50 per cent increase in exports from the province.

It is also proposed that a number of targets be set related to exports and the province's natural resources, including:



Augmenting **agri-food exports** to **C\$20 billion**



Raising **crop production** to **45 million metric tonnes** and **livestock cash receipts** to **C\$3 billion**



Hiking **oil production** 25 per cent to **600,000 barrels per day**



Boosting the annual value of **uranium sales** to **C\$2 billion**



Increasing the annual value of **potash sales** to **C\$9 billion**



Expanding the number of **international markets** to which Saskatchewan exports more than **C\$1 billion** in goods



Building up Saskatchewan's **export infrastructure**

Crucial to the province's economic output are what Moe refers to as the three Fs — food, fuel and fertilizer. To bolster these industries, the provincial government has put in place a number of policies. These include a new chemical fertilizer incentive and the reinstatement of provincial sales tax exemptions for exploratory activity and downhole drilling, which can help increase mining exploration and the value of mining exports.

### CURRENT EFFORTS

Throughout the province, recently completed projects and those still underway are helping to increase productivity in a number of industries.

In Battle Creek, North American Helium Inc. has just opened a C\$32 million helium purification plant. As the nation's largest such facility, it is capable of producing 1.4 million cubic metres of gas. It has a wide variety of applications, such as medical research, semiconductor manufacturing and fibre optics.

In June 2020, Proton Technologies established a pilot plant in Kerrobert that will be used to extract hydrogen from disused oil and gas wells. This is the first time the technology has been used for commercial purposes. Once completed and at full capacity, the facility will be able to generate 500 tonnes of hydrogen a day.

Last autumn, construction began on the Saskatchewan Research Council's rare earth processing facility, the first of its kind in Canada.

The government of Saskatchewan announced C\$31 million in funding for the project in August 2020.

The facility is expected to be operational by late 2022, and will herald the establishment of a rare earth element supply chain in the province. Rare earth elements include neodymium and cerium, and are widely used in the manufacturing of high-technology products.

Equal strides are being made in the area of food. The Regina-based agriculture processor Viterra announced in April that it was making a significant investment in a canola-crush facility in the capital city of Saskatchewan. Capable of processing 2.5 million metric tonnes of canola seed per year, the facility is expected to be the largest of its kind in the world when complete. Construction of the facility is set to begin in 2022 and it should be operational by 2024, creating 100 full-time jobs.

Also in April, Cargill Inc. revealed a C\$430 million investment in a new, state-of-the-art canola processing facility, which should be online by early 2024 and will create 50 full-time jobs.

And in March, Richardson International Ltd. announced it would be expanding its canola crushing plant in Yorkton. Once the upgrade is complete, the facility will have a capacity of 2.2 million metric tonnes per year.

### GOING GLOBAL

Along with its domestic endeavours, Saskatchewan has taken steps that will help it achieve the export-related goals that are part of the Growth Plan.

It was stated that, in conjunction with the plan, Saskatchewan would establish international offices in Japan, Singapore and India to complement its existing office in China. The move is intended



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to learn more about agri-food opportunities in Saskatchewan.

[saskatchewan.ca](http://saskatchewan.ca)

**Saskatchewan**  
Canada 



Saskatchewan Japan Office Managing Director Paul Pryce at the Embassy of Canada to Japan

to help meet the plan goals through efforts that include attracting investment, promoting exports and establishing research partnerships. The Japan, Singapore and India offices opened in January. Saskatchewan has had an office in China since 2010.

Moe explained that the offices would play a major role in helping Saskatchewan reach its economic goals: “Our government has made it a priority to increase our exports and enhance trade, and these new offices will be an important tool to help achieve those goals. They will strengthen our trade relationships and help bring high quality, sustainable Saskatchewan products to the world.” He added that the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership would yield a wide range of opportunities for Saskatchewan exporters.

Saskatchewan Minister of Trade and Export Development Jeremy Harrison echoed these ideas: “Saskatchewan has what the world wants and needs. But in an increasingly volatile trade environment, we need to diversify our export markets, while continuing to showcase to the world what a resilient and great place our province is for investing. Our exports have seen significant growth in the past decade to major Asian markets, which we need to keep and grow during our economic recovery and to achieve those aggressive targets in the Growth Plan 2030.”

Harrison pointed out that opening these offices will play an important role in continuing to expand the province's economy in the wake of Covid-19: “International offices and a sustained international presence are key components of our strategy to grow Saskatchewan's economy as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. Today,

a continued focus on export development and trade growth is as essential as when we laid out our ambitious plan in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan 2030.

“Our economy and quality of life in Saskatchewan are dependent on trade and, as government, we play a vital role in helping to get our products to international markets. Our people, businesses and industries provide the products a growing world needs with a track record of environmental and economic sustainability. Having Saskatchewan staff in these offices will help ensure we are able to export our products across the globe. And establishing long-term business relationships really does make a difference in business cultures that exist in Japan and other Asian countries.”

The office in Japan opened in January 2021. Officially known as the Saskatchewan Japan Office, it is co-located with the Embassy of



**Jeremy Harrison**  
Saskatchewan Minister  
of Trade and Export  
Development

Canada to Japan. Managing Director Paul Pryce joined the Government of Saskatchewan in October 2020, before coming to Japan in March.

He has a background in international relations, having worked from 2014 to 2020 for Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He served as principal advisor to the Consul General of Japan in Calgary, whose jurisdiction encompasses Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

Earlier in his career, Pryce worked with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, when he became involved in the ceasefire talks during the 2008 war in Georgia and assisted Montenegro in holding its first post-independence elections.

Raised in Saskatoon and Weyburn, Pryce has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Calgary and a master's degree in international relations from Tallinn University in Estonia.

He will be leading Saskatchewan's efforts in a principal market. As Moe has pointed out: “Japan represents an important market for Saskatchewan exports and we have a rich history of providing the food, fuel and fertilizer that Japan needs and will continue to need into the future.”

Moe added that the business ties are deep, and involve a range of significant products: “Saskatchewan and Japan have a long and rich trading history. Japan has developed to be Saskatchewan's third-largest market for our products. They include items — such as potash — that we have been exporting to Japan for nearly 50 years, as well as our largest export to the country: canola seeds.”

He went on to explain that Japan is more than an export destination; it is a connecting point to other markets: “Japan continues to be a growing export market destination for Saskatchewan products, and also serves as a launch point for our products to be delivered to the entire east Asian region.”

### TRANS-PACIFIC TIES

For business leaders as well, the opening of the offices represents a significant opportunity. According to Rick Toney, former chair of the

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**“Our government has made it a priority to increase our exports and enhance trade, and these new offices will be an important tool to help achieve those goals.”**





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**“Our people, businesses and industries provide the products a growing world needs with a track record of environmental and economic sustainability.”**

Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, the Japanese market is vital for the province's beef producers. He explained: “There is great growth potential for the beef industry in Japan and it will be very beneficial to have Saskatchewan officials on the ground, looking out for our interests.”

Bernie McClean, director of the Canadian Canola Growers Association, said that opening the offices is important for the industry as a whole: “These offices are good news for Saskatchewan canola growers, the value chain and the entire agriculture sector in the province.”

“Three new Saskatchewan offices in Asia are going to help farmers and industry grow new markets and expand others, all with the goal of driving the value of our exports,



**Rick Toney**  
Former chair of  
the Saskatchewan  
Cattlemen's Association

which is essential to the province's economy,” he added.

In addition to these business ties, there are cultural and academic links between Saskatchewan and Japan. In 2019, Regina and the Gunma Prefecture city of Fujioka signed a Friendship City Agreement, and there have been student exchanges between secondary schools in the two communities for many years. There are also numerous

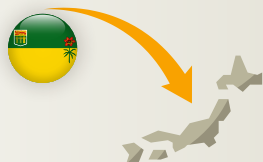


**Bernie McClean**  
Director of the  
Canadian Canola  
Growers Association

partnerships and exchanges between universities in Japan and Saskatchewan, involving the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

It is clear that Saskatchewan — with its impressive array of natural resources and the business ties that are being strengthened through its international offices in Asia — is optimally poised to achieve the ambitious targets it has set for the end of the decade. 🍁

## SASKATCHEWAN TRADE BY THE NUMBERS



In 2020, Saskatchewan's exports to Japan totaled **C\$1.23 billion** making it the **third-largest destination market**.

The **top three agriculture export commodities** in 2020 were

Exports to Japan 🇯🇵

In 2019, percentage of the **world's exports**



**canola seed**

C\$3.6 billion

C\$698 million

21%



**non-durum wheat**

C\$2.7 billion

C\$255 million

35%



**lentils**

C\$2.2 billion

—

51%

# FOODEX 2021

Canada keeps presence among smaller turnout

By Julian Ryall

**The coronavirus pandemic continues to play havoc with business and trade around the world, yet the food and drink sector in Canada appears to have shrugged off negative impacts better than might have been expected. The flow of imports to the significant Japanese market are holding up well.**

Companies able to take part in the annual Foodex trade show, at Makuhari Messe convention center in Chiba, agreed that the fair was quieter than it had been two years ago, when last staged. Nevertheless, given that the event has grown to be the biggest of its kind in Asia, participants found the conversations they had were most instructive.

## IN THIS TOGETHER

As well as being able to catch up with long-standing partners in the industry and make new contacts — who in the future may well turn into clients — exhibitors were able to speak at length with others in the business, due to the relatively low footfall at this year's event.

Participants thus were able to identify emerging Japanese trends, from which Canadian companies are in a strong position to benefit.

"The meetings that I have had so far have been really serious, and I would much rather have one good business meeting than deal with 100 tire-kickers," said Mary Beth Takao, senior commercial officer for the Alberta Japan Office.

"As well as those solid conversations, I also think that our existing partners are really glad to see us here again," she said. "It's a sign that we're

committed to the market — they truly appreciate that, and it goes a long way in a country where it takes a long time to build up strong business relationships and gain traction.

"Yes, business has been challenging and the restaurant sector has been struggling, but I'm getting a sense of empathy from the people that I've been speaking to, the sense that we're all in this together — and that's exactly how we are going to get out of it, too," she said.

## HEALTHY MARKET

Those discussions have also been the source of inside information, notably that Japanese consumers are increasingly looking for healthy and organic products. The sector has been strong in North America and Europe for nearly 20 years, and Japan is catching on to the idea, Takao believes.



**Mary Beth Takao**  
Senior commercial  
officer for the Alberta  
Japan Office

"People are definitely looking for healthy products and maybe that is a reflection of everything that has been happening with the coronavirus, but they are, suddenly, really into it," she said.

Canola oil and flax seed products were in demand at Foodex, along with low-salt products, while Japanese food importers "want more honey than we can send them," Takao added.

Alberta honey is one product that is benefiting from the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade pact, she explained, with the tariff of 25.5 per cent on natural honey slashed to 12.7 per cent as of April 1 this year. It will be completely eliminated as of April 1, 2023.

Other winners under the trade deal include cherries, with the tariff cut from 8.5 per cent to 1.7 per cent as of April 1 this year and due to be abolished in two years' time. Canadian exports of cherries have risen in value from about C\$20,000, after the fruit was granted preferential access to Japan in 2018, to have been worth C\$1.7 million in 2020.

With prices about to drop further, the outlook for Canadian exporters is positive. Meanwhile, the 12 per cent tariff on frozen cherries has already been removed and the 13.8 per cent tax on frozen sour cherries will also go in 2023.

Canadian meat products have also fared better under the CPTPP, with Japan easing tariffs on pork and beef imports. Beef tariffs were cut from 38.5 per cent prior to the agreement to 25 per cent on April 1. This has helped to make Canada the third-largest supplier of beef to Japan, after the United States and Australia.

Overall, in 2020 agriculture and seafood products accounted for nearly 40 per cent of all Canadian exports to Japan, for a total of C\$4.9 billion, up 3.48 per cent on the previous year. The figures are impressive and encouraging, especially given the trying circumstances.



**"We're all in this together and that's exactly how we are going to get out of it."**





Exports of oilseeds, primarily canola and soy seed, rose C\$139.8 million, a 10.1 per cent jump year on year, while grains climbed 14.8 per cent, marking an increase of C\$124 million.

Most impressive, however, was the performance of beverages. This was led by whiskey, exports of which soared 90.8 per cent or C\$12.8 million in value.

At the other end of the scale, Canadian exports of frozen french fries fared badly in 2020. Sales of the product fell more than 31 per cent, reflecting the closures or dramatic cut in operations that Japanese restaurants experienced as a result of the health crisis.



**Jamie Paquin**  
Owner of  
Heavenly Vines



**Masashi Tanigawa**  
President of  
Inochinomoto Co.

## CHANCE TO EDUCATE

Jamie Paquin together with his wife and business partner, Nozomi Mihara, run Heavenly Vines. It is the world's only all-Canadian wine store.

They were at Foodex as part of an ongoing campaign to convince wine aficionados that Canadian terroirs can be just as good as those in wine-growing regions of the world generally still considered traditional.

"Canada has sold itself as a land of maple syrup and the northern lights, but we want to show that Canada also has soil that is capable of producing wines that really are the equal of many others around the world," Paquin said.

"Our winters can be a challenge, of course, but many of our reds compare very favourably with Burgundies and Bordeaux," he said. "And Canada also has a quite remarkable range of climates, going all the way to the near-desert regions of the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia."

The problem, however, is communicating the quality of Canadian wines to the wider Japanese audience, many of whom simply assume that labels from France, Italy or Spain are what they should be buying.

"A lot of what we have to do is simply education, and we are working with a number of restaurants and recognized wine experts here to get that message across," he said. "And while

I don't think that Japanese will be huge buyers in the future, I do believe that we can convince a lot of people of the quality of Canadian wines, particularly at the higher end of the market."

## PARTNERING UP

With the Canada-based representatives of food and drink manufacturers unable to enter Japan because of the coronavirus restrictions, promotion was largely left to local partners, such as Masashi Tanigawa, president of Inochinomoto Co., who was at the trade show to promote the various products of Innofoods Inc.

Only founded in 1981 and still based in British Columbia, the company produces snacks that are vegan-friendly, gluten and genetically modified

organism-free, and only use the best ingredients, Tanigawa said. And he believes they are ideal for the Japanese market because of producers' commitment to quality and the incorporation of superfoods, including quinoa, hemp and flax seeds, as well as such other products as cranberries, cherries, cinnamon, pecans and, of course, maple syrup.

"We have had a good reaction from the people who have stopped by our display and tried some of the samples that we have," he said. "Companies here are looking for products that are healthy and from verified sources, but they also need to appeal to the Japanese palate to work."

"We are seeing rising demand for our products in Europe and the US, but Japan is a little behind this interest in organic and healthy foods and snacks," he said. "I'm sure these products can help to open the door and encourage more people to try organic foods. And as soon as they have tasted them, I'm sure they would buy them."

Innofoods products are currently available through Costco outlets across the country, but Tanigawa was hoping the food expo would introduce him to potential new partners.

"We came here to speak with supermarkets, distributors, retailers, café and restaurant operators and, after only the second day, I think we have found a new partner to work with," he said. "For us, it looks like being here has paid off." 🍁





# INDO-PACIFIC VS ATLANTIC

Webinar tackles regional trade, defense and politics

By Alec Jordan

**The Indo-Pacific region, which includes land areas and smaller seas that are connected to the Indian Ocean and the central and western Pacific Ocean, is the engine of global economic growth and center of geopolitical competition — particularly in regard to China's increasing economic and military involvement there.**

This ranges from creating artificial islands in the South China Sea, said to be designed for military purposes, to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an ambitious infrastructure strategy that involves investments in more than 100 nations in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Nations in the region — and those farther away, but with geopolitical interests affected by developments there — have established and maintain a number of organizations that seek to share information and promote a mutually accepted, rules-based order followed by all nations.

Canada and Japan are two of the countries keenly concerned with the Indo-Pacific. During the April 2019 visit to Canada of then-Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with him agreed on a commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) region.

This year, the commitment was further strengthened during talks between the Japanese

and Canadian ministers of foreign affairs — Toshimitsu Motegi and Marc Garneau — that took place at the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting in London on May 3 (page 9).

## TIMELY TALK

It has also been a topic of great significance for academics and those who influence policy decisions in both countries. Aiming to bring some of the key issues in this crucial region to the fore, a webinar was held that explored the development and execution of Canadian and Japanese policies, featuring leading thinkers on both sides of the Pacific. Taking place on March 2, the online event was titled Canadian and Japanese FOIP Visions: Purpose, Form, and Practice.

The webinar was moderated by Colin Robertson, vice president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, and the panellists were:



**Stephen Nagy**

Senior associate professor in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the International Christian University, and fellow at the Calgary-based Canadian Global Affairs Institute



**Shujiro Urata**

Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry fellow, and professor at Waseda University's Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies



**Akiko Fukushima**

Senior fellow at the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research and professor at Aoyama Gakuin University



**Cleo Paskal**

Associate fellow in the Asia-Pacific program and the Energy, Environment and Resources department at London-based Chatham House (also known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs)



**Jonathan Berkshire Miller**

Senior fellow with the Tokyo-based Japan Institute of International Affairs and director and senior fellow of the Indo-Pacific program at the Ottawa-based Macdonald-Laurier Institute



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the ASEAN-India leaders' summit in the Philippines, November 2017

Nagy was also the organizer of the event. Topics discussed during the webinar include how the term Indo-Pacific differs from terms such as Asia and Asia-Pacific; how strategies to engage with China fit into overall Indo-Pacific ones; the continuing role of Japan and Canada in multilateral organizations, such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting; and what Indo-Pacific nations expect Canada to contribute in terms of commitments to security, development, trade and investment.



## “It’s no longer an Atlantic-based world, it’s an Indo-Pacific-based world.”

development and political stability in the region with appropriate policy and behaviour, which may be learned and adopted through active communication and cooperation with Japan and other countries.”

### DYNAMIC REGION

The first speaker was Fukushima, who said that “with the Indo-Pacific, we are adding another layer to the regional architecture for cooperation” that works within a framework already established by organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific.

She added that the region is constantly changing, and that Japan has played an instrumental role in establishing the term Indo-Pacific within a global context: “The narrative of the Indo-Pacific has not been static, but remains dynamic and evolves. In the case of Japan, the FOIP initiative originated with former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s speech to the Indian Parliament on the occasion of the Conference of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, in 2007. Japan officially launched its strategy in August 2016.”

However, Fukushima explained that this initial launch was met by disapproval from China: “At the time of the launch, China criticized Japan’s FOIP as a containment strategy. However, Japan’s FOIP is more than a question of security. For example, Japan’s Diplomatic Bluebook 2020 clearly describes that it is not an exclusive concept, but an inclusive concept, by saying that no country is excluded from partnership.”

She described Japan’s three FOIP regional pillars as follows:

- Promotion and conservation of fundamental principles, such as rule of law, freedom of navigation and free trade
- Pursuit of economic prosperity through ensuring connectivity
- Commitment to stability through such approaches as maritime law enforcement, disaster risk reduction and non-proliferation

Fukushima pointed out that, since Japan’s launch of its FOIP strategy, the term has been employed in official declarations by Australia, India, France and Germany, among other nations.

### INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Urata then discussed the economic links of the FOIP initiative and its connections to the BRI. He said: “The Japanese government considers its FOIP [initiative] very important for Japan’s economic policy and a key for achieving the stability and prosperity of the international community by combining two continents — Asia, which is rapidly growing, and Africa, which possesses a huge potential for economic growth.”

One of the main reasons for establishing a viable FOIP policy, he pointed out, is the manner in which the BRI is executed. It tends to benefit China and the Chinese economy, rather than the nations in which the projects are taking place.

The issues regarding how the BRI is being implemented include the fact that Chinese businesses usually win contracts related to infrastructure projects around the world, although nations where those projects are located do not gain anything in terms of business opportunities, employment or technology transfers.

However, he said, the nations in the Indo-Pacific do want to benefit from both the BRI and Japan’s FOIP strategy, so it is important for this strategy to include China, which has proved willing to cooperate on aligning its infrastructure projects with global standards.

Urata added that, as Japan collaborates with other nations to refine its approach, “this does not mean to exclude or encircle China, because China can contribute to economic

### CRITICAL TIME

The first Canadian panellist to join the discussion was Nagy, who said that “Canadian interests in the Indo-Pacific are threefold: Canadians are interested in the region remaining resilient, prosperous and stable. And what’s directly connected to those three adjectives is this idea of a sustainable and transparent rules-based order. Key parts of making that happen is supporting infrastructure connectivity, strengthening good governance and championing human rights.”

He also addressed those who might believe that involvement in the Indo-Pacific is not in Canada’s interests. “I think this really misconstrues the idea. Canada being part of the institution building in the Indo-Pacific is really Canada contributing to stability, sustainability and a rules-based approach to institutional development within the region.”

His approach calls for the idea of working with nations such as Japan, Australia, India, Taiwan, Southeast Asian countries, the United States, the UK and EU members to craft a Canadian Indo-Pacific vision for engagement in the region. He pointed out five particular areas that this vision should include:

- Security cooperation
- Proactive middle power diplomacy
- Cyber and digital cooperation
- Supply chain resilience
- High-standard free trade agreements



The Neak Loeung Bridge (left) and Sihanoukville Port in Cambodia are examples of Japan’s FOIP strategy.





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India's Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor was developed with Japanese support.

Nagy stated that, while there are challenges inherent in establishing a workable FOIP vision, failing to help support the region could have serious consequences: "If the region is characterized by instability, stunted development and a might-is-right approach to rules, this will lead to what I call less predictable behaviour within the region, such as balkanization [fragmentation into groups that are not cooperative with each other] of trade in the digital economy and technology. It really will make it much more difficult for Canada to seize economic opportunities within the region."

"The erosion of a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific," he emphasized, "will make it much more difficult to deal with important and critical issues such as climate change and the level of militarization within the region. And all of these have the potential to cascade into unpredictable humanitarian economic crises."

### THIRD WAY

Beginning her remarks, Paskal pointed out that the importance of the region reflects a shift in geopolitical focus, one that simply can't be ignored: "I don't know how you could have any justification for not having an Indo-Pacific policy in this day and age, given the strategic and economic issues. Everything is revolving around the Indo-Pacific at the moment — it's no longer an Atlantic-based world, it's an Indo-Pacific-based world."

She said there are three key features of a successful FOIP approach, which she said Japan has attained. One is connecting with existing activities, such as military exercises in the region. Another is creating multilateral organizations that fit a specific purpose, such as the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, established by India,

Japan and Australia, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the United States, Australia, Japan and India.

But the third way, she said, has the potential to be the most influential: "This is to do something unique that only your country can do. And this is where Canada, I think, has some introspection to do, because currently around the world, we tend to either bolt onto existing organizations the most, or copy our closest colleagues in the way that we engage in the region."

She used the example of Oceania to show how Japan has strategically invested in infrastructure throughout this region, in response to the BRI. Japan's use of targeted investments that address the particular weaknesses of each nation allows it to achieve elements of its FOIP strategy.

As she concluded, towards the end of her remarks: "I think the particular value-added for Canada would be to find the elements within Canada that resonate the most with different elements of the Indo-Pacific." As one possible example of how this could work, she presented the idea of representatives from Canada's First Nations serving as advisers to indigenous communities of smaller nations in Oceania.

### NEW VIEWS

The final speaker was Berkshire Miller, who made a strong case for exactly what an Indo-Pacific strategy is not: "The Indo-Pacific idea is not meant to replace the Asia-Pacific idea. It's not meant to replace our traditional multilateral engagement with organizations such as ASEAN, and it's not meant as a punitive stick because of our tensions with China. Equally, it's not centered around us being sort of cajoled into this approach because of a hard edge to US administration, and their approach to China."

Simply put, the reason that we're engaging in the Indo-Pacific and developing a strategy, at least from my perspective, is because it's in our best interest to develop that strategy."

He raised one aspect to which Canada could bring its own expertise as part of its FOIP strategy, as it has been tackling the issue domestically for some time: "One thing that I don't think has come up in great detail so far is climate change, and the nexus with national security that climate change has. So I think this is something that clearly is a priority for Canada and I think can be a priority as it articulates its strategy in the region."

He acknowledged that, while it can be important to take part in such military exercises in the Pacific as the biennial Keen Sword, organized by Japan and the US, "the public diplomacy side is very important as well. So, as this strategy evolves, I think the nuts and bolts of what's inside, is crucial," he said.

"I have great respect for those who are spending a lot of time and a lot of hard nights, developing a strategy and working on it," he shared. But the strategy is only as good as it's pushed out. The sad truth is that the perceptions in the region of Canada, in a comprehensive sense, have not been good over the past few years.

"In order to change those perceptions," he concluded, "our strategy needs to address the questions: Why does Canada need the region? And why does the region need Canada?"

The second half of the webinar opened up to a question-and-answer session during which the panellists discussed a number of topics, including:

- Ways China can be included in FOIP strategies
- How Canada can play a role in developing infrastructure in the region
- Building and sustaining resilient supply chains in light of the ongoing pandemic

The webinar offered insightful glimpses into how Japan and Canada — partners in so many ways — can learn from one another as they address the complex issues that an ever-changing Indo-Pacific region faces. 🍁

To read the papers that each panellist prepared for the webinar, visit [www.cgai.ca/2021\\_indo\\_pacific\\_series](http://www.cgai.ca/2021_indo_pacific_series)

To watch it, go to [bit.ly/cgai-foip](https://bit.ly/cgai-foip)



**"The Japanese government considers its FOIP very important for Japan's economic policy."**

# SAKE SOURCE

New subscription service shares the appeal of Japan's national drink



PHOTO: K&O ODA

Sake's origins in Japan go back more than 1,000 years, and the beverage is intertwined with the country's culture. It has been used in religious ceremonies, and when you visit a shrine during the beginning of the year, you will often be greeted with a small saucer of *nihonshu*, as it is known in Japanese.

Despite its long standing in Japan, other drinks such as beer and spirits have supplanted sake, and in the last 20 years, the number of sake breweries has declined by 50 per cent. Ironically, at the same time, the quality of the beverage has improved drastically, thanks to increasing refinement in how it is produced.

But while it is losing steam in its native land, many countries are recognizing the unique qualities of sake. It used to be found strictly at Japanese restaurants, but Westerners have come to realize that the beverage can pair well with a variety of dishes. However, familiarizing yourself with the various types of sake, which feature initially intimidating terms such as *daiginjo* and *junmai-shu*, is a challenge even for Japanese people, and even more so for Westerners. Furthermore, many of the breweries that remain have fascinating histories that unfortunately go unrecognized.

## PLATFORM WITH A MISSION

This is where Sakeist comes into its own. Launched by Anna Akizuki, a former wine professional and the founder of the beverage technology company Khariis Co., Ltd., it is a platform designed to connect global consumers, beverage industry professionals and sake breweries. Akizuki explained that the inspiration behind the business

came from her own study of the drink: "Learning the long history of sake, as a Japanese person, I realized that it would be my next mission to make this industry competitive with the wine industry in the world. At the same time, I recognize Japanese consumers have undervalued sake because of its very low price, which stands in distinction to its highly sophisticated culture and history. In order to address these issues, I decided to found my company and Sakeist."

To help further this mission, starting in June, Sakeist will offer a subscription service that delivers two bottles of a carefully curated sake — some of which are exclusive to the service — to subscribers' homes each month. They also provide an online seminar during which subscribers learn about the finer points of that month's bottle from the renowned Xavier Thuizat, a French sommelier who serves wine, sake and other drinks.

## GUIDE TO THE BREW

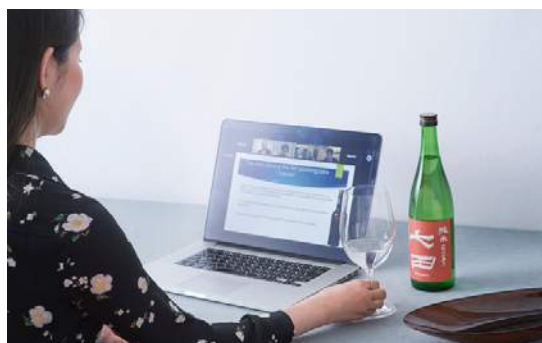
Thuizat is the ideal ambassador for Westerners who would like to know more about the world of sake. Initially trained as a wine sommelier in France, he first experienced sake in 2014 — a moment he describes as "love at first sight." His initial inspiration was followed by visits to Japan during which he travelled the country and met



sake producers, deepening his knowledge of the beverage.

Thuizat is the chef sommelier at the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris, where he has continued to refine his understanding of how sake pairs with a wide range of foods. And in 2017, he held the first Kura Master, a yearly French sake competition that brings together sommeliers, bartenders and culinary professionals from across France and Europe to evaluate the quality of a variety of sakes based not only on their technical aspects, but how well they pair with food.

Some of the seminars feature discussions with sake brewers, which are accompanied by English interpretation. Others include details about the sake, explorations of the histories behind the breweries and food pairing recommendations, serving as a perfect complement to the monthly deliveries. 🍷



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# CRUISE CONTROL

Lowell Sheppard prepares for a great adventure amidst smaller ones

By Alec Jordan



**When challenges and setbacks arise, you can either get frustrated and see the negative side of things, or recognize that the difficulties that life presents us with usually offer an opportunity to learn.**

This is the situation Lowell Sheppard found himself in while preparing for his solo voyage across the Pacific, from Tokyo to Vancouver. Those who have been following him on social media or his YouTube channel already know that Sheppard has decided to postpone the journey until next year.

## SENSE OF RELIEF

As he explained to *The Canadian*, the solo training trips he was making showed him that neither he nor the boat would be ready in 2021, and that he needed to spend the coming year preparing his vessel — and himself.

He considered two options: one was training here. The other was having a Canadian crew come to Japan and then accompany him across the Pacific to Canada, and train there. But bureaucratic hurdles involved with that option led him to decide to stay in Japan.

“There was a lot of emotion over the past two months,” Sheppard admitted. “I just had to

face reality. But I had to arrive at that decision myself. Others were saying I wasn’t ready, but I had to take a 30-hour solo trip to understand that. But finally I think my emotion was the same as that of my shore support team — it was one of relief.”

## EXPLORE AND EXPERIENCE

Once he made this decision, a new option presented itself, which was to cruise along coastal Japan and explore its waters and beaches. The idea entranced him, both because of his long-time work with HOPE International Development Agency and his love of the sea. He had explained his basic plan to his followers, but he hadn’t shared yet exactly what he would do until he spoke with us.

“Now, as I’ll be a cruiser, I want to enjoy what’s on land, as well as what’s on the water. So, every harbour they go into, cruisers explore local culture and everything else. Well, one of my favourite things in Japan is *onsen*, and the variety of waters that you find [there]. And it featured a little bit in my book, *Chasing the Cherry Blossom*,

that the waters are not just used for bathing in Japan. They’re used for nourishing, relaxing, rejuvenating and healing.

“So when I dock, I want to go look for a hot spring. And I will need to always find fresh water, because in the sea there is no fresh water. It’s important for my life for the next two years as I live on the sea to find sources of clean water — and this year, to celebrate the volcanic nature of Japan found in its many hot springs.”

## ON THE HUNT

The other part of Sheppard’s plan came about as a result of his research into the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a floating island of plastic waste. His studies led him to learn about nurdles — microplastic debris that is a by-product of the plastic manufacturing process. These tiny fragments make their way into the environment and constitute a significant component of marine pollution.

One non-governmental organization (NGO) that is working to combat this problem is The Great Nurdle Hunt. The Scotland-based group encourages people around the world to collect nurdles at beaches in their local areas and submit their findings to a database that can then be used as a basis for the NGO to engage in discussions with government and industry that can lead to finding a solution.

As Sheppard explained, by taking part in The Great Nurdle Hunt, his ambitions are modest. “It’s not like I’m launching a campaign to clean up Japanese beaches. I just want to do my part. As a celebrant of beaches, I want to leave the beaches a bit tidier than how I found them — and gather data. For that, I can invite others to join me, find nurdles and send me the data. And I will add that to the Japanese database for the Scottish NGO.”

In a time when we’re all confronting uncertainty, it’s inspirational to see someone take changing situations in stride and find a new way to have adventures, while preparing for an even greater one to come. 🍁

**“There was a lot of emotion over the past two months.”**



Stay up to date with Sheppard’s adventures: [www.pacificsolo.com](http://www.pacificsolo.com)

More about The Great Nurdle Hunt: [www.nurdlehunt.org.uk](http://www.nurdlehunt.org.uk)



# CAN-AM CONNECTION

Shane Busato is communications director at Tokyo American Club

By C Bryan Jones



For the past eight years, the communications team at Tokyo American Club has been guided by Toronto native Shane Busato, who arrived in Japan two decades ago with plans to stay for 12 months.

But, as is the case for so many visitors planning to just sample what it's like to live in Japan before leaving, the country soon became home.

"I first arrived in Japan right after graduating from university," Busato told *The Canadian*. "I had never travelled outside North America and decided to come to Japan for a year for an adventure. One year quickly turned into 20."

## KEEPING CANADIAN

Before joining Tokyo American Club in April 2013 as a senior designer in the communications department, Busato worked in English media in Tokyo as a graphic designer. He also started his own boutique creative studio with a partner — an entrepreneurial endeavour that continues today.

In July 2014, he stepped out of his design shoes and into the role of communications director. The position expanded his involvement with the community and offered a chance to work more closely with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) through its activities at the Club.

Although work keeps him very busy, Busato tries to maintain ties with home when he can. "I have a few Canadian friends, try to buy Canadian craft beer when I can find it and sometimes buy Canadian wine from Heavenly Vines," he explained. "I also get involved with some Canadian companies through events at Tokyo American Club and even joined the office hockey pool, which I managed to win this season."

One experience he is eager to repeat is taking part in CCCJ hackathons, which he did a couple of years back and thoroughly enjoyed.

## CHAMBER LINKS

CCCJ members who visit Tokyo American Club will find a certain Canadian-ness, no doubt stirred in by the 76 Canadian members and Busato himself.



Canadian Thanksgiving Celebration at the Club and, from left, Marc Bolduc, Katsura Sunshine and Wilf Wakely next to the modified Club's sign at a Maple Leaf Gala.



PHOTOS: NACASA AND PARTNERS

“Tokyo American Club has received special permission from the Board of Governors the past few years to invite CCCJ and Canadian Embassy staff to the Club’s Canadian Thanksgiving Celebration in the New York Ballroom,” he said. “This is probably the biggest — and best — Canadian Thanksgiving event in Tokyo. It features all the Canadian classics such as turkey, stuffing, pumpkin pie, poutine and plenty of dishes with maple syrup! The CCCJ works with the Club in organizing great Canadian sponsors, including Air Canada and HyLife Pork.”

The Club also often hosts Canadian wine tasting events and recently had a Canada vs. USA wine taste-off (Canada won) and has been host and sponsor of the CCCJ annual gala a number of times.

“Despite the name and our strong connection to US culture and values, the Club is a truly international environment,” Busato added. “I would highly suggest any curious CCCJ members contact us to visit and join the community.”

### NEW TO NIHONBASHI

Busato would love to get more involved with activities and aspects of Canadian culture in Tokyo — if only he had more time. The problem is that a little work project has been keeping him quite busy these days.

To kick off 2021, Busato’s communications team has been busy introducing the Club’s biggest project since the rebuilding of the Azabudai facility more than a decade ago.

Serving the business community has always been a key part of the Club’s mission, and for

the first time in its 93-year history it has spread its wings with a second location.

On March 31, Tokyo American Club Nihonbashi opened its doors near Mitsukoshimae Station, in the city’s historic and fast-developing business and entertainment district. The satellite hub, located on the sixth floor of Nihonbashi Muromachi Mitsui Tower, is tailored to the needs and tastes of an international community of busy professionals and is a stunning, adults-only venue that offers the opportunity to wine, dine or work out all in one setting on weekdays.

“The Nihonbashi Club blends Tokyo American Club’s hallmarks of exceptional service and world-class amenities,” Busato said of the new facility produced in partnership with Mitsui Fudosan. “It is an exclusive retreat that, for many of our members and prospective members, is just steps away from where they spend so much of their time Monday through Friday. It represents the sophistication and convenience that our members expect, right in the heart of the city.”

### IDEAL LOCATION

For its nearly 4,000 members, Tokyo American Club’s main clubhouse in Azabudai has become a second home providing not only comforts and amenities but also an ideal atmosphere for staying close to friends, family and business associates. But for those with offices in the bustling area around Tokyo Station and Nihonbashi, making use of the facilities in Azabudai for morning workouts, business lunches or after-work entertaining may require travel time that isn’t on the day’s calendar.

With the Nihonbashi Club, that has now changed. And while the addition of a second location might keep Busato even busier in his role as communications director, he’s delighted by the challenge and the expanded service the Club is bringing to its members and the community.

One thing Tokyo American Club is known for is its array of culinary delights that bring flavours from home to many members. That dining experience is on full display in Nihonbashi at the American Room in the morning with its continental breakfasts, at lunch with deliciously crafted sandwiches and salads, and in the evening with classic fish, steak and other dishes of stunningly crafted local ingredients.

“There’s also the Muromachi bar and lounge, which is a perfect place for checking the news with a coffee in the morning or talking through the day’s events at night over a cocktail or glass of wine with colleagues or friends,” Busato said.

“We also have a private dining room and an adjacent conference space, which is available by advance reservation, so that puts one of the key elements of the Club experience — entertaining associates and building business relationships — right at your fingertips.”

Keeping in shape may also become easier thanks to the state-of-the-art fitness center — exactly what members expect from Tokyo American Club. Free weights, machine weights, dedicated space for cardio, a dry sauna, showers and a whirlpool bath — available from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. — mean you have more chances to fit workouts into your busy schedule.

It’s all an exciting turn of events for Canadian businesspeople working in Tokyo, and for Busato the continuation of that adventure he set out on 20 years ago. Over the years, he has brought some Canadian flavour to the Club whose name so prominently features Canada’s southern neighbour. 🍁

**“Each year, the CCCJ worked with the Club in organizing great Canadian sponsors.”**



# VOICE OF A CITY

Mississauga media mogul draws closer to his Japanese roots

By Terukazu Ikeda

PHOTO: WIL YEUNG

**In July 2016, right before Khaled Iwamura set foot on the inaugural Japan Festival Canada stage in the country's sixth largest city — Mississauga, Ontario — the organizer panicked.**

"So Khaled, how many people should we expect today?" Terry Wakasa asked Iwamura anxiously. Rainfall immediately would have dampened a successful turnout. But Wakasa was worried whether enough attendees would show up. Yet, Iwamura, the event's MC, remained confident. His website, [insauga.com](http://insauga.com), had published an article promoting the festival — the first of its kind to be held in Mississauga — and the story had received more than 100,000 views.

Under a beaming July sun, more than 40,000 people showed up. And aside from 2020, when the event was held virtually, Japan Festival Canada's attendance has grown steadily, and expanded from a one-day to a two-day event in 2017, its second year.

In 2019, Princess Takamado from Japan's imperial family attended the festival as an esteemed guest, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sent a personal video message. More than 92,000 gathered to celebrate Japanese culture.

## CHANGING COMMUNITY

Mississauga has long been pigeonholed as a boring bedroom community sitting next to Toronto. It's famous for its former mayor — "Hurricane Hazel" McCallion, who retired at 93 — and being the site of Ontario's largest shopping mall, Square One.

However, it also has longstanding ties to Japan, and has been the official sister city of Kariya, Aichi Prefecture, since 1981. In 1992, Kariya Park was opened in Mississauga to mark the 11th anniversary of the twin-city ties, while

Mississauga Park — with a miniature City Hall — was opened in the same year in Kariya, Japan, to honour the ties. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the relationship.

Mississauga is quickly transforming and modernizing. Two of the city's best-known structures symbolize the change. The first, Absolute Towers — known colloquially as Marilyn's Curves, due to its hourglass shape — has come to dominate the city's skyline.

Japan Festival Canada takes place in the city's second famed structure, Celebration Square, a 9,000-square-metre public square equipped with JumboTrons overhead. Much like the two landmarks, [insauga.com](http://insauga.com) (a play on Mississauga's colloquial name, Sauga) reflects a modern Mississauga.

Iwamura, the founder of Mississauga's go-to news outlet and an iconic presence at Japan Festival Canada each year, is himself a representative of this changing city. Half Japanese, half Egyptian Canadian, he was born in Montréal and raised by his Japanese mother and grandmother.

## RECONNECTING

Involvement in Japan Festival Canada was a natural fit for Iwamura. When he learned

that a Japanese festival was to be held in the city he covered, he told Wakasa, "I want to be a part of it; anything to do with the Japanese community in my very own backyard."

By 2016, Iwamura had already spent more than four years building his website. "The first five years were a massive struggle. Like massive," Iwamura emphasized, reflecting on his early years.

"I literally had to sell my condo, my wife had to sell the condo she was renting out and we moved back to my in-law's house. It was tough," said Iwamura, continuing after a long pause. "We sacrificed everything, knowing that it would work," he concluded, laughing with relief.

Before 2016, he had gained on-stage experience hosting events for Mississauga, so being in front of live and digital audiences had become

---

**"I wanted to be a part of it; anything to do with the Japanese community in my very own backyard."**



Kariya Park



second nature. That experience had prepared him to MC in front of 40,000 people, and opened doors he had never expected.

In return for Iwamura graciously having offered his services free of charge, Wakasa reciprocated: he took Iwamura to Japan.

Iwamura had stayed close to his Japanese roots by playing *taiko*, but had never set foot there. “What was I doing for 40 years? How did I never make it to such a beautiful country until now? I missed out on so many things,” Wakasa recalled a surprised Iwamura saying. On his first trip, Iwamura met his family in Shizuoka and fell in love with a country he has visited nine more times so far.

On that lucky day, later to be so significant for Iwamura, his charisma impressed a Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau Toronto representative attending. Tokyo wanted to promote itself to the world, and Iwamura, who had become a one-man top five content machine for his hometown by that time, suggested doing the same for the world’s largest city.

The representative loved the idea and an initial conversation led Iwamura to produce top five videos for seven different areas of Tokyo. “If it wasn’t for Terry allowing me to go to Japan and the connections I made through Japan Festival, there is no way I would be as close to my family in Japan as I am now,” said Iwamura.

Not only did Iwamura get closer to his Japanese roots in 2016, but insauga.com achieved success that year.

## NEW HEIGHTS

Less than two weeks before he made his presence felt on the Celebration Square stage, Iwamura fortuitously hit a breakthrough. On June 28, 2016, a house explosion in Mississauga received national attention.

“I got there with my seven-foot selfie stick with a smartphone attached to the end of it,” said Iwamura at his TEDx Talk. “And I was there with all the A-list anchors from CTV, CBC and Global. They had all their fancy equipment, they had their over-the-shoulder cameras, they had their satellite trucks all lined up on Rathburn Road. All the techs know each other, so when one of them came out, they started talking and I heard one of them say, ‘Hey, look at that kid with the fishing rod.’”

Little did Canadian mainstream media know a “fishing rod” would beat out every single news media organization — the site was closed off, but the selfie stick allowed Iwamura to get unobstructed footage.

“Before the house explosion, [insauga.com was] fun, food, events and history of the city. That’s all we did. We didn’t do any news,” he recalled.



PHOTO: WILL YEUNG

However, being the first to get video footage, seeing traffic to his website skyrocket and realizing he was being trusted for hard news, Iwamura hired professional journalists.

“That’s when we saw our real growth,” said Iwamura. “Ever since then, we’ve seen exponential growth every year, non-stop.”

Iwamura created a team around him, and he has replicated his website’s success in other suburbs of the Greater Toronto Area: Brampton (inbrampton.com), the Halton Region (inhalton.com) and Hamilton (inthehammer.com). All websites are under the insauga.com umbrella.

“Insauga itself is doing about 10 million page views a month and we’re not even covering a major metropolis. [That] puts us among the top-four digital-only media companies in Canada,” said Iwamura. But his business is still in its early stages.

“We’re at the starting point now because I actually know what I’m doing,” he laughed. “I know it sounds weird after 10 years. In about three years, we probably will be” — he stopped to correct himself — “we will be a top-three news media company in Canada. The goal is national.”

## FUTURE IN FOCUS

When Covid-19 hit, hyperlocal news became more important than ever. To date, Iwamura has interviewed politicians and medical experts on

## “We sacrificed everything, knowing that it would work.”

Instagram Live, in his trademark casual style. This has made hard, hyperlocal news easily accessible and digestible, and his sessions have received more than five million views.

“I think insauga and the media brands I run have been growing because [people] see how real it is,” said Iwamura, who still drives around Mississauga to see what’s open and closed. It’s a necessary part of his job to remain an authority on all things Sauga, so he takes time to “feel” and experience his backyard.

Iwamura will continue to be the face of Japan Festival Canada, while Wakasa continues to organize it. With more time spent online and people forced to self-isolate, a stronger need for hyperlocal information and being a part of communities outside one’s family has arisen.

Japan Festival Canada is already the biggest Japanese festival in North America, and its MC’s digital-only news media company will continue expanding to both of Canada’s coastlines. The future remains bright for both Iwamura and Wakasa, who may be 10,000 kilometres from Japan, but have established deep roots here.

Ganbare, Mississauga. 🍁







# ROBERT WALTERS JAPAN

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# CCCJ GOLF SCRAMBLE

On a fine spring day, about 70 golfers hit the links at Tsutsujigaoka Country Club for the 20th annual Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) golf tournament. The event was particularly popular this year, and spirits were high.

In keeping with time-honoured practice, the tournament was played in a team scramble format, which inspired team play and good-natured fun in equal amounts.

The winning foursome this year were Paul Braganza, Kieron Cashell, Jonathan Allen and Tom Kriegshauser, who were recognized along with other participants at a convivial awards dinner.

Special thanks went to David Anderson, Warren Arbuckle and Kieron Cashell for organizing the event. 🍁



From left: Maya Ito, Greg McDonald and Brock Worbets



The winning foursome, from left: Kieron Cashell, Paul Braganza, Jonathan Allen and Tom Kriegshauser



# CANADA AND JAPAN BY THE NUMBERS



Canada was the **first country** to authorize use of the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine for **children aged 12–15**

SOURCE: BBC NEWS



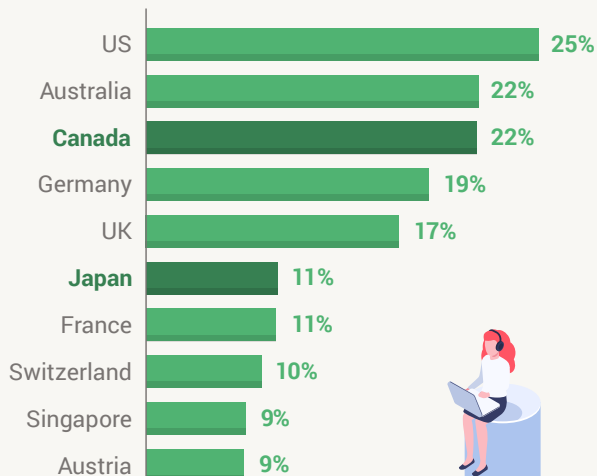
As of May, **only 4%** of Japan's population has received **one dose** of a Covid-19 vaccine

SOURCE: KYODO

## ONSITE AND VIRTUAL DESIRED WORK DESTINATIONS

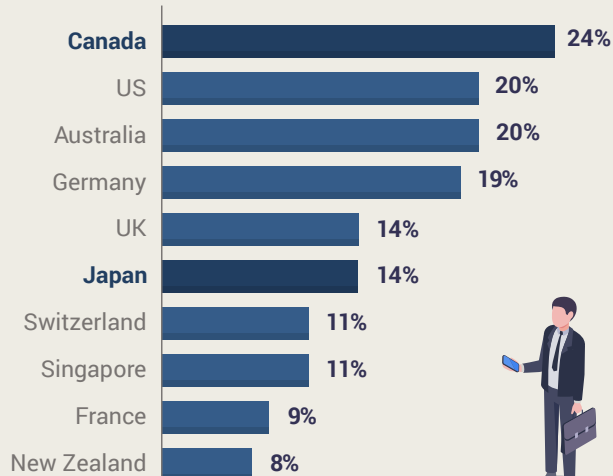
Percentage of respondents  
who say the country appeals to them

### As a location for international remote employment

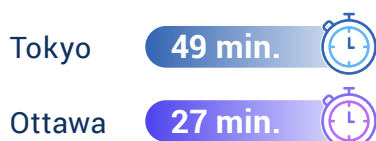


SOURCE: 2020 BCG/THE NETWORK

### As a place to move to for work



## AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME



SOURCES: XYMAX REAL ESTATE INSTITUTE AND STATISTICS CANADA





## THOSE WHO SETTLE OVERSEAS

About **28,000**  
Japanese residents  
live in **Vancouver**

About **14,200**  
Japanese residents  
live in **Toronto**

(Does not include descendants of Japanese emigrants who do not hold Japanese citizenship)

About **12,000**  
Canadians live in **Japan**

SOURCES: STATISTA AND JETRO



## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM RANKINGS 2021

1	Norway	44	United States
2	Finland	67	<b>Japan</b>
3	Sweden	140	Myanmar
15	<b>Canada</b>	177	China
42	South Korea	179	North Korea

SOURCE: REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

## ANNUAL CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS

**1.11**  
billion tonnes  
emitted by  
Japan

**576.65**  
million tonnes  
emitted by  
Canada

SOURCE: 2019, OUR WORLD IN DATA

# EVER FORWARD

Aoba-Japan International School nurtures future leaders

As we begin to shift into a post-virus world, perspectives are rapidly changing. Many institutions are absorbing lessons from the past as they look to the future, and Aoba-Japan International School (Aoba) is among them.

Aoba acknowledges that the future generation of leaders have spent the past year of their education in a worldwide pandemic. Supporting these students to ensure their education is of utmost importance, requiring a rich and diverse program of instruction.

## CORE VALUES

Aoba's Core Values are central to everything at the school, from lesson planning to professional development. These values reflect Aoba's aim to help students develop and grow to become global leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators, effective communicators, wise risk takers and effective problem solvers.

Director of Admissions, Marketing and Communications Ae Kimura explained to *The Canadian* how the school achieves these goals, starting with entrepreneurship as an example. "Entrepreneurship is a disposition in which any individual or team sees opportunity where others see obstacles. As with any skill, some are more naturally able than others, but we can develop this ability to a certain extent. At Aoba, we do so through our coaching, mentoring and facilitating model that all teachers employ with their students. Instead of asking 'why,' we encourage students to ask, 'why not?'"

Wise risk taking is another skill that Aoba encourages its students to acquire. While many view risks from a negative perspective, Kimura said this need not be the case. "Risk taking is fundamental to human nature. The

International Baccalaureate philosophy and, more importantly, our core values encourage wise risk taking. This involves an assessment of probable consequences or outcomes, and evaluating cost and benefit ratios."

Aoba strives to provide opportunities to develop these skills in a safe environment, encouraging students to develop the ability to think through likely consequences of their actions. Embracing failure as a learning opportunity encourages reflection and growth within students of all ages, and sharpens their analytical skills.

## REAL-WORLD LINKS

Another outstanding component of the Aoba experience is the Global Leadership Diploma program (GLD), which inspires students to learn in a different way. Along with the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP), the GLD is offered to senior students. The international qualification high school diploma is certified by the Council of International Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The curriculum is focused on creating lessons that connect to real-world situations and give students the opportunity to reach conclusions collaboratively and communicate them effectively.

Kimura said that this approach is important today. "The world is constantly facing a range of challenges. Currently it's Covid-19, and other challenges include political instability, distrust of leadership around the world, climate change and so on. Business leaders are always faced

with decisions based on profitability and responsibility to their community.

"We therefore believe that leaders must embrace the concept of leading positive change in the world. This sometimes involves unpopular decisions like losing profitability. Having the confidence of moral standing to make those decisions is something we stress at Aoba," she said.

The GLD program has led to outstanding success stories. "In the past, we have had students who are particularly strong in certain areas, and decided to pursue the GLD instead of the IBDP. One student was highly knowledgeable in physics, mathematics and computer science — so much so that we connected him with a university professor for his physics class. He also had an internship with a Japanese company in the field of artificial intelligence and autonomous cars, which all counted as credits towards graduation. He currently attends Southern University of Science and Technology [in China] with a full-ride scholarship."

## STUDENT AGENCY

In all age groups, Aoba encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Kimura explained that this begins with preparation. "Students are brought into the planning process through the use of big questions. After being presented with these questions, the student teams are encouraged and enabled to establish their own lines of inquiry.

"There is emphasis on open-ended assessments, rather than right or wrong test questions. It's important that [students] demonstrate their learning not only with answers, but with evidence and logic behind those answers," she said. Further, Aoba students are required to present their answers in a variety of forms, to demonstrate the freedom of expression that will serve them as they prepare for university education and successful careers. 🍁



[www.aobajapan.jp](http://www.aobajapan.jp)



## SUSTAINING MEMBERS

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## CORPORATE MEMBERS

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Brookfield Asset Management

British Columbia Trade and Investment  
Office - Japan

Canada Wood

Canadian National

Canadian Pacific

Canadian Olympic Committee

Canadian Paralympic Committee

CIBC World Markets (Japan) Inc.

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McCain Foods (Japan) Limited

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The Tokyo EDITION, Toranomon

Torys LLP

Toyota Motor Corporation

Vanten K.K.

White & Case LLP

Yokohama Grits

# The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan welcomes our newest members

## CORPORATE



### Chris Malcolm

Greetings! Originally from Burnaby, British Columbia, I have lived and worked in Japan since 2008. My current role as senior commercial officer for the British Columbia Trade and Investment Office - Japan has allowed me to get back to my roots and help B.C. residents explore the wealth of opportunities available in Japan. I look forward to meeting other members of the CCCJ, and welcome the chance to speak with anyone interested in furthering the Japan connection.

## NON-KANTO SMALL BUSINESS



### Douglas Montgomery

I have more than 30 years of experience working in and with Japan, most recently as chairman of the Japan America Society of Southern California, a 112-year-old NPO located in Los Angeles, California. During my time as chairman, I founded and produced a Japanese film festival, Japan Connects Hollywood. For assisting in the promotion of Japanese content around the world, I was given the Cool Japan Award by this nation's Cool Japan Association. I worked for Warner Bros. for more than 15 years. I am currently the founder and CEO of Global Connects Media a global consulting firm dedicated to bringing the world closer together through story.



### Maud Vincent

I am so thrilled to be a member of the CCCJ, and am looking forward to being a part of this community. Originally from Québec, I lived in British Columbia for several years before settling in Japan more than 15 years ago. Over the course of my time here, I have started a furniture and interior design company, as well as a café and wine bar (with a showroom). I look forward to sharing resources and connecting with other Canadians!

## INDIVIDUAL



### Florence Kintzel

My family has lived in Japan since 1969 and I am French and German. In 2009 I completed an MBA at McGill University (in Tokyo and Montréal). I have 27 years of entrepreneurial experience and I have been a director of Guki Cellars Japan K.K. since 2012. In 2020, I joined the Alpha Group, which offers monthly peer-to-peer advisory boards for small and medium-sized enterprise owners. I have become a CCCJ member since I greatly enjoyed the time I spent in Canada.

## YOUNG PROFESSIONAL



### Mari Isogai

I am a student and research assistant at the University of Toronto, studying public policy, sociology and international development. I am keenly interested in the areas of diversity and social development in Japan, and how the Canadian approach to multiculturalism might be adapted in a Japanese context. I am absolutely thrilled to be working in the field this summer with enjoi Diversity & Innovation Consulting's CEO Dr. Jackie F. Steele! I look forward to connecting with members who share my profound interest in the Japan-Canada relationship.

## ASSOCIATION



### Robert Rjker

I began my career as principal tuba of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Indiana, in 1955. After graduating from Indiana University, I performed with the Montréal Symphony, taught at McGill University and gave it all up in 1973 for doctoral studies and a new career as a conductor. I arrived in Japan in 1981. Over the years, I have filled posts as music director, music advisor or principal guest conductor for some 20 orchestras and opera companies. I have founded orchestras in Canada, India and Japan, and appeared with more than 50 orchestras in 20 nations. I have conducted more than 200 performances with the Tokyo Sinfonia.



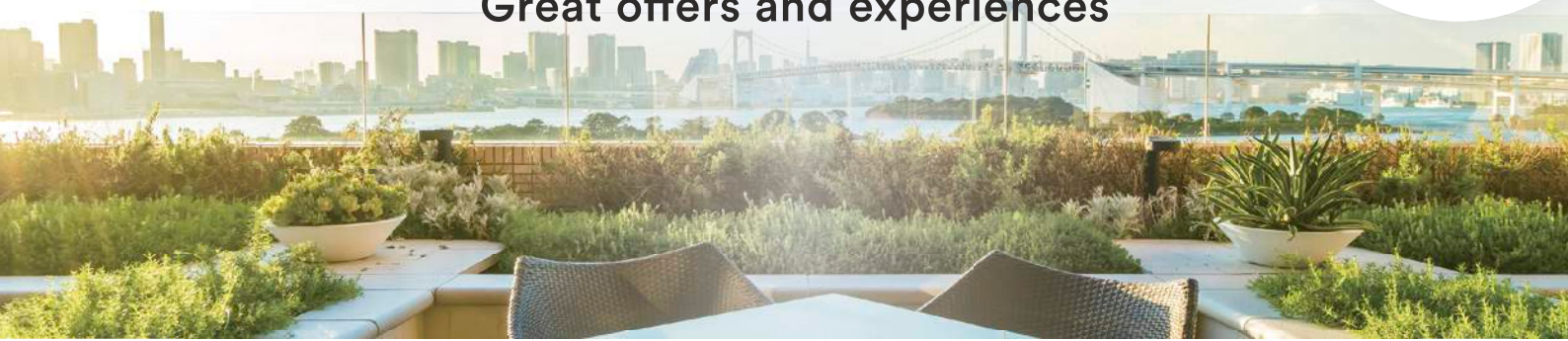


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