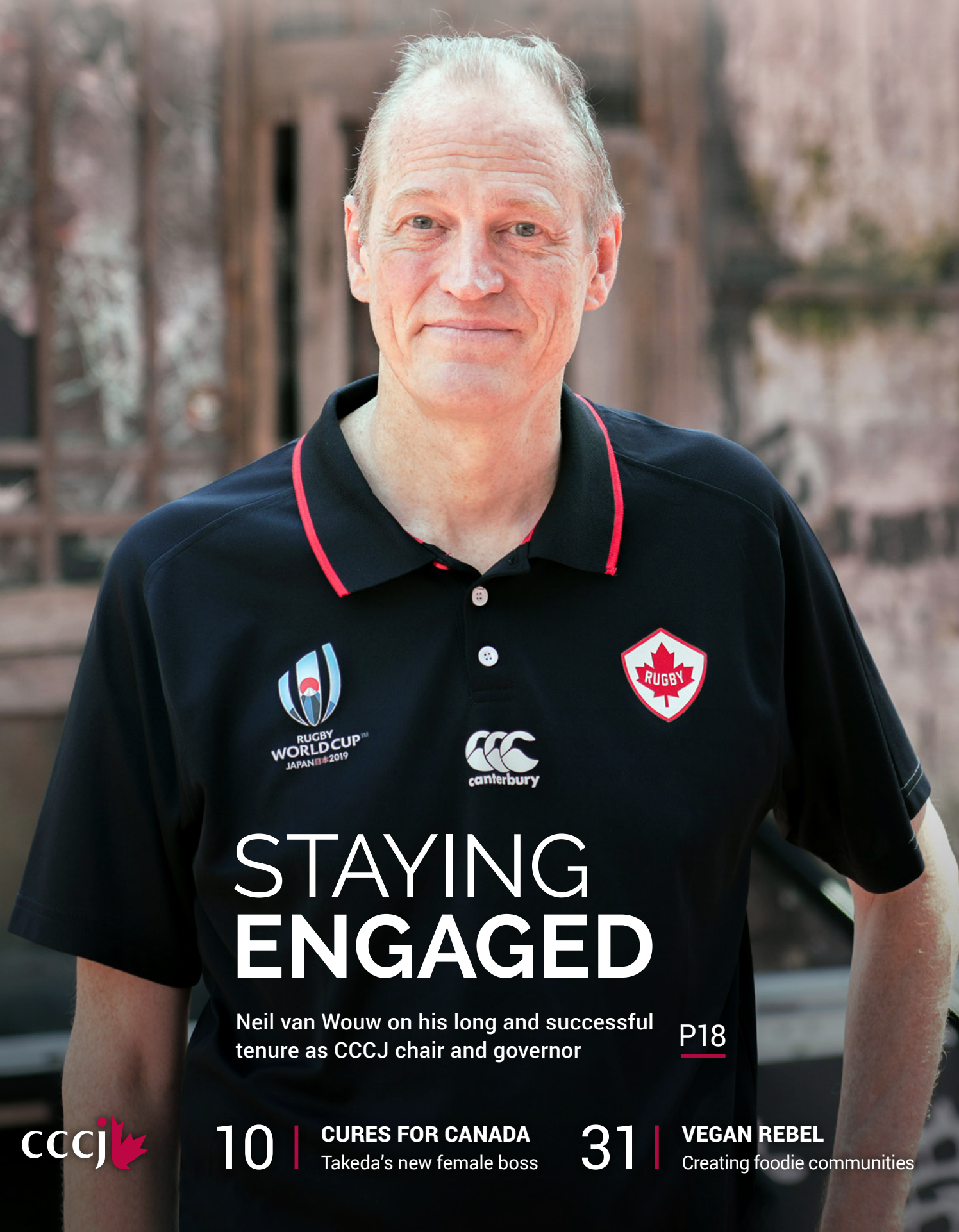


THE CANADIAN

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN



STAYING ENGAGED

Neil van Wouw on his long and successful tenure as CCCJ chair and governor

P18



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www.cccj.or.jp

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

La Chambre de commerce du Canada au Japon

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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HELPING HANDS

By Alec Jordan
Editor-in-Chief
The Canadian



We hope the past few months have been safe ones for you and your loved ones. This issue features more stories that put a spotlight on the many connections between Canada and Japan.

For our cover feature, we spoke with Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) Chair Emeritus Neil van Wouw (page 18) to learn more about his time as a leader within the chamber over several eventful years, and the exciting plans that he has for the future. As someone who has kept an eye on the latest trends in technology throughout their career, his perspectives on the chamber and the direction that technology is taking are well worth reading.

HEALTHY DIVERSITY

It's only natural during these times to be thinking carefully about our health. One company

that has been helping people do so as its central focus is Takeda. The Japanese pharmaceutical company has a strong presence in Canada, one of the company's key markets. To learn more about Takeda Canada's innovative collaborations and its plans for the future, we interviewed Takeda Canada General Manager Rute Fernandes (page 10). She also spoke about the importance of supporting diversity in corporate management.

We had the chance to learn more about RBC Race for the Kids (page 29), a charity event organized by the Royal Bank of Canada since 2009. Last year, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, they switched to a virtual format, which has allowed even more people to join in the effort to raise funds for charities that support young people. In October, they'll be holding their second Race this year in Tokyo, so you'll definitely want to find out how you can get involved.

BRING IT TOGETHER

Food has the power to bring people together and create a spirit of community. Canadian-Japanese celebrity vegan chef Caroline Ishii, has been able to bring her Japanese roots to bear on her cooking, while also being a pioneer within the world of plant-based cuisine in Canada. Find out more about her life and work in our coverage of her recent webinar (page 31) and a review of her memoir (page 30).

Another way in which people and nations can be joined is through a shared appreciation of craftwork. This is true of the *tenugui* created by a historic producer of cloth goods for the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo (page 16). It is an example of how a material item can be charged with symbolism — and mutual appreciation.

Thanks as always for your readership, and we look forward to seeing you next issue. 🍁

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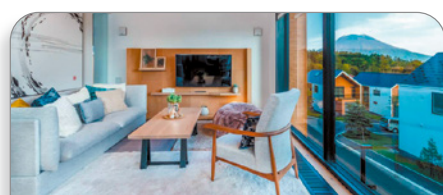
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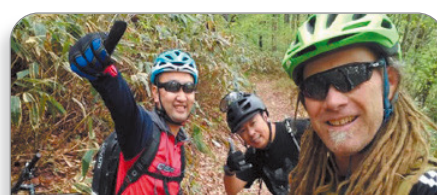
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STRONGER TOGETHER

By David Anderson

Chair

Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

It is a great honour to have taken over as chair of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) by acclamation at our AGM on July 1.

Great respect and appreciation to my predecessor and mentor Neil van Wouw, who led the chamber for the past four years with tremendous effort and action. It is a stronger place thanks to his endeavours. Well done, Neil — I will do my best to keep the lights on.

GREAT POTENTIAL

I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the CCCJ, to welcome our new Canadian Ambassador to Japan, His Excellency Ian McKay. Mr. Ambassador, welcome back to Japan; it's great to have you here. We look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the team at the Embassy of Canada to Japan and stand ready to support you where we can.

I am excited to be taking up this important role, supporting the strengthening of Canada–Japan commercial relations. Bilateral ties are strong, but there could be much more. Canada is a major food and resource supplier to Japan, and we are gradually getting there in the energy field. The Japanese recognize Canada as a leader in artificial intelligence and other emerging tech areas, while FDI from Japan is among the most favoured global sources of investment, according to a 2016 national survey by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

As Canada perennially talks about the need to diversify our export destinations, Japan does so regarding its need to diversify its supply sources. That said, bilateral trade numbers, though strong, have remained relatively flat over the past 25 years. With Canada and Japan trusted and reliable partners, focusing more of our attention on Japan will not only strengthen

this important relationship, but also provide Canada with increased access to emerging Asian economies via well-established Japanese value chains.

SHARED VALUES

Being Canadian, politeness is a point of pride. I always thought we were world leaders in this regard — then I came to Japan. We share similarities with the Japanese, in that, for example, manners are important to both of us. Long-term, trustworthy relationships are things we both value. Before going into our homes, we both take off our shoes. When Japanese find out about these similarities with Canadians they are surprised and want to engage more.

What we need to do is figure out how to increase awareness of our shared traits. We need to become more familiar with one another to drive business forward.

The past 15 years of my professional life have been focused on the Canada–Japan connection, working for both countries' governments and closely with a broad section of the bilateral business community. I am an ardent believer in our ability to have stronger ties and I think an important step in realizing this is understanding each other better and creating more visibility of existing opportunities. We need to have a more recognizable presence to get the attention of our Japanese hosts and I believe that the chamber has a large role to play in this.

The CCCJ is Canada's longest-serving chamber in Asia, having been established in 1975. Our mandate is to promote the development of commerce between Canada and Japan. We are a member-funded, member-driven organization



The CCCJ is Canada's longest-serving chamber in Asia, having been established in 1975.

with a membership representing those engaged in the bilateral business community. We have an important role here but are only as strong as our membership and voice.

GET INVOLVED

As I commence my term, my request to our CCCJ members and to broader stakeholders in the Canada–Japan sphere is to share any new ideas about more things we can do. How do we develop more recognition of the similarities between our two peoples — the economic complementarities, and the opportunities that exist therein? How do we get Japan to recognize and understand that Canada is more than just beautiful nature and delicious maple syrup? How do we get Canadians to understand that Japan is more than just robots, sushi and stunning sunrise views from the top of Mount Fuji?

Canada and Japan can do better together, and industry has an important role in achieving this. Increased mutual understanding is a very important step towards realizing this. The CCCJ is an organization where you can help out by furthering this cause. I very much encourage you to get involved. 🍁

CANADA AND JAPAN BY THE NUMBERS

Despite the impact of the **Covid-19 pandemic** on international trade



Canada's **exports to Japan** in 2020 remained largely steady at **C\$12.4 billion**

There were notable increases in:



Agricultural goods
up **C\$233.9 million**



Pharmaceuticals
up **C\$345.3 million**



IT products
up **C\$17.5 million**

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

TOTAL BEER SALES



2.11
million
kilolitres
in Canada
(2020)

2.23
million
kilolitres
in Japan
(2019)

Although **Canada's population** is about a **third of Japan's**, Canada nearly matches Japan in total **beer sales**.



SOURCE: STATISTA

FIXED BROADBAND SPEED RANKINGS



JULY 2021

(download speeds in Mbps)

1	Monaco	256.70	16	Spain	187.88
2	Singapore	256.03	17	China	184.78
3	Hong Kong	248.59	18	Japan	179.43
4	Thailand	216.16	19	Canada	174.53
6	Switzerland	214.82	20	Luxembourg	168.89
7	South Korea	212.83	22	Israel	168.23
8	Chile	209.45	24	New Zealand	164.06
14	United States	195.55	25	Sweden	163.31

SOURCE: SPEEDTEST.NET

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



3%
Japan
(2020)

9.5%
Canada
(2020)





Itochu plans to make ammonia in Alberta

Nikkei Asia reported on August 3 that Itochu Corporation is planning the 2026 start of commercial ammonia production in Alberta. The company will conduct a joint feasibility study with the Canadian subsidiary of Petronas, Malaysia's state energy company. The plant is expected to cost C\$1.6 billion. Located in a Petronas-owned field, it is set to be one of the world's largest manufacturing facilities for the clean-burning fuel. Itochu plans to ship it to Japan, in a bid to meet emissions-cutting goals.

Beef imports and prices rise

A July 30 article in *Canadian Cattlemen* reveals that Japan's imports of Canadian beef have been steadily rising, despite the country's overall decrease of beef imports.

In March, Japan's beef imports reportedly declined four per cent year on year, to 54,200 tonnes. Yet for the same period, imports from Canada jumped 59 per cent year over year, to reach 5,600 tonnes in March. Wholesale prices of North American short plate, a leading Canadian beef export to Japan, doubled compared with the same period last year.



Nova Scotia tidal energy project gets first investment from Japan

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha (K Line) and Chubu Electric Power Co. are investing in a Canadian project focused on tidal energy. *The Maritime Executive* reported on August 4 that the project, to be based in Nova Scotia, represents the first time a Japanese company will have invested in a tidal energy project abroad.

Called Uisce Tapa (Gaelic for fast water), the project is being developed by the Irish renewable energy company DP Energy. The first turbine is scheduled to be installed in 2023.

Plan for bilateral space project



Japan Space Imaging Corporation (JSI) and Montréal-based NorthStar Earth & Space Inc. have partnered to promote information and intelligence services to the Japanese government, as well as commercial customers, to navigate the space environment. NorthStar CEO Stewart Bain said: "NorthStar is proud to partner with Japan Space Imaging Corporation to tailor our services to Japanese customers. As an established partner of the global space community, JSI is the ideal partner for NorthStar to promote the safety, security and sustainability of the space environment for a host of Japanese stakeholders."

Koji Ueda, CEO and president of JSI, commented that: "We are enthusiastic about contributing to our customers in Japan and their indispensable missions with NorthStar's unique space-based [Space Situational Awareness] capabilities, powered by their cutting-edge processing algorithms."

Award-winning Thornhill woman creates miso-sesame vegan products

Jess Mantell from Thornhill, Ontario, has released plant-based food products inspired by her time living in Japan. According to an August 15 article posted on Toronto's *The Star*, the company, Abokichi Inc., has expanded from one table at a farmers market to food co-ops, small shops and now larger grocery stores. The company is certified as a non-GMO company.

They sell three different miso-based sesame oil condiments — Okazu Chili Miso, Okazu Curry Miso and Okazu Spicy Chili, as well as an instant miso soup. At the 2020 sofi Awards the products won a Gold Award from among 1,800 marinades, dressings and condiments. The company plans to release an instant ramen in the fall.



CURES FOR CANADA

Takeda's new GM in Ontario on fighting diseases with innovation, diversity and digital skills

By Alec Jordan



PHOTO: FRIENDS OF EUROPE

Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited is the largest pharmaceutical company in Japan and one of the global leaders of the industry. Canada is an important market for the company.

In February, Takeda Canada made news when it announced the appointment of Rute Fernandes as its new general manager. The seasoned leader has played key roles not only in the Takeda Group in other countries, but also in top companies of other industries. She has a master's degree in economics from the Nova School of Business & Economics and an MBA from HEC Lausanne.

The Canadian interviewed Fernandes about the experience she brings to the position, the ways that Takeda Canada is collaborating on technical innovation and her views on increasing diversity in leadership positions.

Please tell us about your background.

Prior to joining Takeda Canada, I was the Takeda Group vice-president and the head of the Rare Disease Franchise for Europe and Canada, responsible for a portfolio of more than 15 brands across three disease areas — rare metabolic disorders, rare hematology and rare hereditary angioedema and transplants — in 38 countries. In this role, I also represented Takeda at the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations Board-Sponsored Committee on Patient Access, and in this role championed the association's engagement in the field of orphan drugs [pharmaceuticals developed to treat medical conditions that, because they are so rare, would not be profitable to produce without government assistance].

With a career spanning more than 20 years, I have held a number of executive leadership roles in business development, strategy, commercial operations and country general management. I began my career in consulting with Deloitte, before working in a variety of industries, and with companies that include Procter & Gamble, Vodafone, Novartis and Shire plc.



Takeda Canada's headquarters are at the Bay Adelaide Centre in downtown Toronto.

"As leaders look to the future of their organizations, we must create the circumstances that allow women to advance."



What lessons have you learned from your previous roles?

Working both globally and regionally, and as country leader, what I have valued most about this experience is defining a purpose and vision for the team and empowering people, both internally and externally, to drive the journey towards that goal.

It's important to set an ambition that raises the bar for the team in a positive way — one that fosters curiosity to learn, courage and a growth mindset. In my opinion, key elements that drive team success are the passion, commitment and collaboration that enable a team to come together and move forward. These are the elements I always seek to foster in the teams I lead.

What do you see as your greatest opportunities and challenges?

I think the current pandemic we find ourselves in has created an inflection point and has required all industries and leaders to think differently about existing business models and how best to evolve for the future. Over the past year and a half, we have all been challenged to find innovative ways to connect with each other, and with our customers to ensure our medicines get to those who need them most.

As the general manager for Takeda Canada, inspiring our people to embrace an agile, growth-oriented and curious mindset will be instrumental for our future success. We all need to rethink and unlearn. Supporting our people to ensure they have the tools and infrastructure to adapt to being more digitally enabled, more innovative and willing to try new ideas are key priorities and opportunities for me to better evolve to meet the future.

A large focus of our business growth in Canada is in rare diseases. Unfortunately, Canada is behind many jurisdictions when it comes to having a policy or framework in place for these diseases. I look forward to working with government and

“The current pandemic we find ourselves in has created an inflection point and has required all industries and leaders to think differently.”

policy makers on supporting a strong rare disease framework in Canada that enables Canadian patients suffering from these diseases to have treatments available here.

As an industry, we need to continue to ensure that Canada is a country that values an innovative life sciences sector and has policies that support innovative intellectual property and value-based pricing, so we can continue to bring our innovative products to Canada in a sustainable way.

Can you speak about the importance of the Canadian market for Takeda?

Canada is a very important market for Takeda. We are one of the top five markets for the company globally. And two of our products — ENTYVIO [for the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease] and REVESTIVE [for the treatment of short bowel syndrome] — have Canadian roots in their discovery and development.

Our aspiration is to lead in the areas in which we operate, and I'm proud to say that we lead in our key disease areas in Canada. We are leaders in neuroscience, gastroenterology, rare diseases, rare metabolic disorders and immunology.

How is Takeda Canada collaborating with Canadian organizations?

We are proud members of both BIOTECANADA and Innovative Medicines Canada, while many of our people are members of various committees of these organizations. We also have numerous partnerships

with research institutions and other stakeholders. These include:

- **Princess Margaret Cancer Centre**
We are collaborating with Princess Margaret Cancer Centre on the CANadian Cancers with Rare Molecular Alterations (CARMA) — Basket Real-world Observational Study (BROS). CARMA-BROS is a five-year study to observe real-world evidence in lung cancer patients.
- **Alberta Government, University Health Foundation, Takeda Partnership**
In 2018, Shire [acquired by Takeda in 2019], the Government of Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Innovation, as well as the University Health Foundation formed a C\$1.7 million strategic partnership. With the launch of Alberta's Collaboration of Excellence for Nutrition in Digestive Diseases, it is focused on improving the long-term health outcomes, quality of life and economic prosperity of Albertans suffering gastrointestinal disorders.



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- **Institute of Health Economics (IHE), Health Technology Innovation Platform (HTIP)**

Takeda recently joined the HTIP, a multi-year, public-private research collaboration that was signed by the IHE in Alberta and three other industry partners (Roche, GSK and Boehringer Ingelheim) with a mandate to explore new approaches for the assessment and adoption of innovative pharmaceuticals.

The Steering Committee advisors include senior representatives from British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, as well as the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health and Health Canada. The HTIP is focused on developing policy options and tools intended to address the challenging issues of how to manage the real-world use of innovative medicines, including how to assess their value and pay for them.

What are some of Takeda Canada's recent milestones?

Last year, we completed the legal entity integration of Shire and Takeda in Canada. This included the relocation of many of our employees and the integration of our systems and processes. The team was able to accomplish this milestone on time and in the middle of a pandemic, no less! We were able to complete the integration while driving tremendous growth for our business.

As we expand our business in the treatment of rare diseases, I am delighted that we have recently launched TAKHZYRO (lanadelumab) — a human monoclonal antibody — in Canada. The product is used to prevent hereditary angioedema (HAE) attacks.

HAE is a chronic disease that results in acute attacks of swelling of various body parts, and can be life threatening. We are so pleased to bring this important therapy to Canadians living with HAE. It will allow for a new standard of care and improve the quality of life for these patients.

What does Takeda Canada hope to achieve?

Our ambition is to create better health and a brighter future for Canadians. We are anchored in our purpose to always challenge ourselves: What more can we do for patients? To benefit patients, we strive to truly transform innovation



PHOTO: FRIENDS OF EUROPE

in new disease areas requiring tailored partnership. For instance, we know that the future patient experience is all about personalization, so as a company we are investing in technology and digital capabilities that will enable us to collect, connect and exchange real-world data from all corners of the healthcare ecosystem.

We aspire to lead by being number one or two in the core therapeutic areas of our business. We want to do this by:

- Bringing solutions that are co-developed in partnership with patient groups, with a patient-centric mindset that spans from R&D and product and packaging design to market access solutions and delivery how and when required by patients
- Engaging with providers and customers from a place with deep understanding of their needs to become the partner of choice
- Becoming the employer of choice for our people and new joiners, through a differentiated employee experience built on tangible commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion, to learning and growth, to agility and resilience and to care and wellbeing

Is Takeda involved in Canada's bid to combat Covid-19?

Although we are not involved in the development of vaccines for the prevention of Covid-19 in Canada, we were involved in clinical trials evaluating two of our products. Namely, we tested TAKHZYRO (lanadelumab) and FIRAZYR (icatibant) [which is also used to treat HAE]

in clinical trials for the treatment of patients hospitalized due to Covid-19. And much of Takeda's efforts in Canada are to support and provide online medical education programs to all healthcare providers across Canada about Covid-19 and its impact on the management of diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, cancer, hemophilia, lysosomal storage disorders, HAE and immunodeficiency diseases.

How can Takeda's success in Canada help strengthen bilateral ties?

Our worldwide presence and scale — with leading positions in Japan and the U.S., and a local country-centric organizational structure — create unique opportunities for future growth and collaboration. As we continue to build our presence in Canada, we leverage the rich history of Takeda in Japan while pursuing business and scientific partnerships where possible.

Do you have any advice for women seeking leadership roles?

Future innovation depends on having more diverse voices represented and included. As leaders look to the future of their organizations, we must create the circumstances that allow women to advance. I've been fortunate in my career to have had support from men and other women along the way, at work and at home. I've had opportunities to work internationally and gain experience, while still having the flexibility I needed to raise and spend time with my family.

My advice for those who wish to be leaders is to define your passion and ambition and develop your own plan towards that.

At Takeda Canada we believe in diversity and live up to it in many ways. We're proud of our focus on talent development and of the high representation of women at all levels of our organization. 🍁

"It's important to set an ambition that raises the bar for the team in a positive way — one that fosters curiosity to learn, courage and a growth mindset."

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CCCJ WEBINAR SERIES ON INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Who are Indigenous Entrepreneurs? What is Effective Engagement?

By Paul Pryce



Lana Eagle



Glen Pratt



Kelly J. Lendsay



Mark Podlasly



Patrick Watson



Riyo Whitney



Jackie Steele

On June 8 and 9, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) hosted an informative series of webinars on Indigenous entrepreneurship.

Japanese investors, Canadian expatriates, CCCJ members and non-members, were able to attend free of charge to learn more about the exciting innovations and dynamism generated by Indigenous peoples.

The first day focused on the theme, Who Are Indigenous Entrepreneurs? Attendees heard from Lana Eagle, a member of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan; Patrick Watson from the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and Dr. Ken Coates from the University of Saskatchewan's Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.

GROW FAST

As Coates noted, Indigenous peoples are among Canada's fastest growing demographic. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of Canadians identifying as Indigenous grew 19.5 per cent, almost five times the rate of the non-Indigenous population. Therefore, he added, the success of Indigenous entrepreneurs is integral to the future of the Canadian economy.

In addition, those attending the webinar were familiarized with the distinction between First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples. Future events will allow for an even deeper discussion of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Eagle highlighted the importance of relationships in cultivating business ties. Responding to a question about how to cultivate strong ties with an Indigenous-led organization when visiting Canada on a tight timetable, she replied that there is no specific resource to leverage, or connection to make; it is best to consult with or engage individuals in the organization or community of choice, and to build a relationship organically, founded on trust and mutual respect.

ENSURE OPPORTUNITIES

The second day explored the question, What is Effective Engagement? The panel comprised Mark Podlasly from the First Nations Major Projects Coalition; Kelly J. Lendsay from Indigenous Works; and Glen Pratt, CEO of George Gordon Developments, which facilitates economic development for the George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Elaborating on some of the ideas about building relationships, the panel delved into ways to ensure that relations are mutually beneficial. Podlasly explained the value of equity stakes for both project proponents and Indigenous communities. Lendsay expanded on workforce development, underlining the importance of ensuring employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples in major projects.

Pratt shared how the George Gordon First Nation has articulated its own vision for future economic development that drives projects, while also highlighting its collaboration with

K+S, a German company that operates the nearby Bethune potash mine.

Riyo Whitney and Dr. Jackie Steele from the CCCJ Board of Governors expertly moderated the discussion, ensuring that the Q&A sessions following the valuable presentations leveraged the expertise and perspectives of the speakers. Questions explored the importance of Indigenous representation on Canadian corporate boards, as well as the timely topic of the election for National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

As Eagle pointed out, at the time of the event, no woman had yet served as national chief. However, in a historic first just four weeks later, the AFN elected RoseAnne Archibald of the Taykwa Tagamou Nation as national chief.

Indigenous women are taking on important leadership roles elsewhere in Canadian society, too. On July 26, Mary Simon — who was born in Nunavik, Québec, and is of Inuit descent — became the 30th governor general of Canada.

COMPLEX TOPICS

The conversations that began through the CCCJ in June are important. We recognize that residential schools continue to be a shameful mark on Canada's history, with harmful intergenerational impacts on Indigenous people and communities throughout the country, and we must be committed to advancing reconciliation among First Nation and Métis people and communities, and all other Canadian citizens.

As we also seek ways to prosper together in the future, and writing as a CCCJ member, I am excited about the role the chamber is seeking to play. The webinars in June made complex topics understandable to attendees without oversimplification. I understand that future events may be held that relate to international indigeneity, such as the similarities and differences between the Ainu and the Indigenous peoples who reside in what is now Canada. I wish for the success of those events, and encourage all CCCJ members to take the time to attend. 🍁

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau introduces Governor General-elect Mary Simon on July 6, in Ottawa.

FABRIC OF FRIENDSHIP

Practical and artistic, limited-edition *tenugui* celebrate bilateral ties

By Malcolm Foster



When the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo wanted to create a memento to celebrate trade and cultural connections with Japan, it turned to Todaya Shoten, the oldest traditional wholesale maker of *tenugui*, the long, rectangular hand towels that have many practical purposes — and can be displayed as artwork as well.

Founded in 1872, the wholesaler has been crafting its hand-dyed *tenugui* for nearly 150 years. Usually decorated with traditional designs and kanji writing on a lightweight, breathable cotton fabric, the towels have served a host of functions for generations.

Kabuki actors and *rakugo* storytellers have used them as calling cards of sorts. Similarly, shops have long had them printed with their names and have given them as New Year's gifts to long-time clients and business partners, as an expression of thanks, as well as for anniversaries and special occasions.

Kendo athletes wrap them around their heads under their helmets, and hikers often wear them around their necks to absorb sweat. They are taken to hot spring baths to be used as washcloths or for drying off, and can be used to wipe down tables or even floors.

In olden times, *tenugui* — which literally means “hand-wipe” — found other uses. They could be easily torn into strips for bandages in a pinch, given that they are hemmed lengthwise but not along the narrow ends, or braided into thongs for *zori* sandals.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Many are plain, but some are quite beautiful, depicting anything from fireworks on a summer night to fish in a pond, and can be framed and displayed as art.



Takuto Iwaki
Manager of
Todaya Shoten



Lisa Mallin
First Secretary
(Trade Policy - CPTPP)
at Embassy of Canada
to Japan in Tokyo



Junji Tsuchiya
Fashion designer

“They’re useful for travelling, too,” said Takuto Iwaki, a manager at Todaya Shoten who spent time in Canada as a young man. “*Tenugui* are thin, so they dry faster than regular towels. If you wash it at night in your hotel, it will be dry by morning.”

Drawn to the traditional, commercial, practical and artistic aspects of the humble *tenugui*, the

embassy saw a perfect item to celebrate trade relationships between the two nations, which have remained strong even through the Covid-19 pandemic, said First Secretary Lisa Mallin, who oversaw the project.

“We wanted to honour Japanese traditional artisanship through this collaborative project.”

Fashion designer Junji Tsuchiya was asked by Todaya Shoten to create a design, with input from the embassy about motifs and other ideas.

SAKURA AND MAPLE LEAVES

The finished product, measuring 98 by 37 cm, depicts *sakura* — cherry blossoms — and maple leaves fluttering in the wind, with some superimposed on the *sakura*, a design used by the embassy to promote Canada–Japan trade relations.

The design also incorporates the kanji “*kizuna*,” which means “bond” or “relationship.”

And with faint letters in blue, representing the Pacific Ocean, the design includes the initials CPTPP, for the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, and PTPGP, the French acronym for the pact which, at the end of this year, will have been in force for three years.

The trade agreement has eliminated or reduced tariffs on a wide range of products and has created new opportunities for both Japanese and Canadian companies, including small and medium-sized businesses, Mallin explained. All told, the pact includes 11 countries across the Pacific: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, and it is built to expand.

And despite the impact of the pandemic on international trade, Canada’s merchandise exports to Japan last year remained largely steady at C\$12.4 billion, having dipped only 1.9 per cent from a year earlier, according to Mallin. She noted that thanks to the CPTPP, Japanese consumers can enjoy a wider choice of high-quality Canadian products such as beef, pork, cherries and honey,

The design also incorporates the kanji “*kizuna*,” which means “bond” or “relationship.”



“I hope that this *tenugui* can be a catalyst for a closer relationship between the countries.”

and Canadians have benefitted from greater access to Japanese goods and services.

MONTREAL IN THE SUMMER

Besides celebrating the bilateral trade relationship, this particular *tenugui* has a personal story behind it — and might not have become a reality without the friendships involved.

In his mid-twenties, Iwaki spent a memorable six-month working holiday in Montréal, employed at a Japanese restaurant. It was the first time he had lived overseas, and Iwaki fell in love with the ambiance and climate of the city. He has felt a bond with Canada ever since.

“It was summer when I got there, and it wasn’t too hot. It had a European feel,” Iwaki recalled. “It was very different than Japan. If you went outside the suburbs, you would find yourself surrounded by nature. It really made an impression on me.”

Upon returning to Japan, Iwaki started working for Todaya Shoten and made friends with Canadians who visited Japan — and who were later posted as diplomats to the embassy in Tokyo. Knowing about his business, they suggested the embassy consider creating a *tenugui* with a Japan–Canada theme, but it took several years for the idea to bear fruit.

Last year, amid the coronavirus outbreak, workers at Todaya Shoten saw news reports about a shortage of smaller masks for children, and so made hundreds of them out of *tenugui* fabric and gave them to elementary schools in Tokyo. The move was covered by national broadcaster NHK, leading to demand for adult-sized masks.

Mallin took note, and this led to a conversation with Iwaki earlier this year about making a limited-edition set of about 100 *tenugui* for the embassy. They were produced in the spring. So far, they have been used as gifts to thank Kariya City in Aichi Prefecture for hosting the pre-Olympic training camp for the Canadian women’s basketball team and given to members of the Canada-Japan Diet Friendship League.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUE

Todaya Shoten does not print designs on the *tenugui*, instead using a traditional hand-dyeing method called *chusen*, Iwaki said. The process involves placing a stencil on the fabric and applying a paste over it by hand and covering it with dye. The uncoated sections of the fabric absorb the dye.

To create specific objects of a different colour in the pattern, after the initial pattern is applied, spots of the fabric are sealed off by squeezing paste onto them from a handheld bag, similar to a piping bag used for decorating cakes. A different stencil is then used along with dye that is then dropped onto those spots.

Further, Iwaki said, the application of dye by hand allows colours to blend, which isn’t possible when using printing methods employed in mass production. The fabric is high-quality, tightly woven cotton, making for crisp lines of colour.

The time-consuming process makes it difficult to mass produce the *tenugui*, so the company

requires a minimum order of 100, but it can handle orders for 1,000 to 2,000.

Todaya Shoten also makes *yukata*, a traditional lightweight robe that, while similar to a kimono, is worn in the summer. Both the *yukata* and *tenugui* are produced under the company’s Rienzome brand name.

These particular towels have an environmentally friendly appeal. They are made of cotton, not man-made materials, and wrapped in traditional *washi* paper, rather than placed in a plastic bag. “Plastic would become trash, but we wanted it to be natural,” Iwaki said. “This *tenugui* can return to the earth.”

Iwaki believes the towel will appeal to Japanese recipients because it shows an appreciation for their culture and tradition.

“That Canada is aware of this tradition, and that the embassy made a special effort to create this *tenugui* will make Japanese happy,” he said. “I hope that this *tenugui* can be a catalyst for a closer relationship between the countries.” 🍁



STAYING ENGAGED

Neil van Wouw on his long and successful tenure as CCCJ chair and governor

By Alec Jordan

Neil van Wouw is a man who has been following trends in technology for his entire professional life. Initially based at a computer graphics company in Hiroshima when he first came to Japan in the mid-1980s, he recognized the rising popularity of the internet in the early 90s, and in 1995 parlayed it into a job at one of Japan's few internet companies at the time. Three years later, he founded his own company, Vanten, which now operates in the digital signage space.

But there's also a creative and spiritual side to van Wouw. He's been practicing Zen meditation since before coming to Japan, and has been the singer, and sometimes leader, of the band, AKA Toe Jam, which has been performing for decades. He also founded Ganbatte 365, an NPO launched to share information about the rebuilding process that was taking place in Tohoku in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11, 2011.

While chair of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ), from 2017 to 2021, he brought all these sides of his personality to bear on his work, helping to lead the chamber as it developed and grew. *The Canadian* caught up with van Wouw a few weeks ago.

How did you get involved in the chamber?

I had been in Japan a long time already. And most of my customers, and a lot of my friends were Japanese. And my non-Japanese friends weren't necessarily Canadian. So I wasn't really tightly tied to Canadian groups. And I guess I was thinking about ways my company could sell more. And when I reached out to the executive director at the time about contacting Canadian companies through the chamber, he told me that I needed to become a member. I think a lot of people come to the chamber not really knowing how it works. At first, I wasn't terribly engaged. I was like that for a year or two, and I wasn't even sure if I wanted to continue being a member. That would have been around 2010. And in 2011, of course, we had the disasters.

It was around this time that Wilf Wakely became the chair, and he was focused on reaching out and getting people more engaged. At the time of the triple disasters, I started an NPO

that was doing videos about the revitalization of Tohoku. We made about 400 videos, and we got them on big screens in Japan and Hong Kong and Vancouver and, eventually, even Times Square. I think I spent 90 per cent of my time on the NPO in 2011. Later that year, I saw that the chamber was going to do their Gala, and the theme was going to be recovery. So, I got in contact and said, "If you're going to feature some NPOs you should feature my NPO. I'm a member and I'm Canadian." I didn't get a lot of replies, and I followed up with a sharply worded email to Wilf, who told me to come to his office and talk to him.

I thought: "Good. Finally, I'm getting some response here." But he recognized that I was someone he could get more involved with the chamber. And that was the process right there. I did get the NPO tied in with the chamber. And I became involved with starting the CSR Committee around that time. Then I started to meet everybody and become more engaged. And that made all the difference. Later, Wilf suggested that I run for governor. And even though I thought I wouldn't get elected, through the NPO



Wilf Wakely and Neil van Wouw at Maple Leaf Gala

and CSR activity I had already raised my profile quite a bit. And I did get elected and it went from there.

How did your predecessors influence you?

My predecessor was Ron Haigh. I certainly went to him for advice because it was so different from just being a governor — suddenly, you're kind of responsible for everything. More specifically, I think I was closer to Wilf in terms of chamber activity, and he was a strong mentor for me. But when I was a governor, I watched both Ron and Wilf, and saw two different styles. And I saw things that worked well, and things that didn't work well. But I was also thinking about ways to get the membership and the governors more engaged, and just really get the chamber humming and feeling like a place that's inclusive, and easy to step into. Of course, like any organization, when you join, you have to be willing to make the effort



At the Tohoku Youth Project dinner in March 2019



“When you join, you have to be willing to make the effort to get involved, but it’s also good for the chamber to reach out.”

PHOTO: LEE14





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PHOTO: LIFE14

to get involved, but it's also good for the chamber to reach out.

How did you tackle the biggest challenge?

At the time that I came in, the chamber was at a bit of a low engagement level. So that was when I came up with the idea of the hackathons. It has been a way to bring new members into a closer understanding of what the committees do. It has been an ongoing experiment, which has unfortunately been put in hiatus by the pandemic. Certainly, it was very inviting. Someone who'd never been to a chamber event, or who wasn't even a member can show up at a hackathon, and get involved in what a committee does right away. And I think it was a chance for us to showcase that inclusiveness and openness, but also the flatness of the organization.

You don't need to work your way up through subcommittees into committees for years and, later, become a governor. And as far as I know, there's no other chamber that offers that kind of experience. It's insanely valuable if you take advantage of it because you can step right in suddenly, and next thing you know, you're meeting missions, senior politicians and business executives through these activities.

How has the chamber changed during your time as chair?

I think one thing that really struck me when I first became a governor in 2012 was, "Where are the women?" Canada is in many ways at the forefront of gender equality and everybody on the board was supportive of the idea of having more women on the board. Right.

But I think if you look at our membership, and the people that showed up at events, it was a relatively small percentage. And I think a lot of

"Keep on going because things are looking good."

chambers were struggling with this. But rather than thinking about how to get more women members, what I thought about was getting more women governors. Because if you have more women governors, you're going to have more women members. And so I made a concerted effort to get more nominees. And clearly the membership wanted that, because when we did have a choice of more women, they were elected. And I think it just changed everything. When a new governor comes in and they're raring to go and get engaged, that means everyone has to step up their game. It gave us more variety of discourse.

What story are you most likely to remember from your time as chair?

I think what happened with the Rugby World Cup was extremely special. And I think it's a

story about diversity because I wasn't a rugby fan. I'd never been to a rugby game. But we had some members who had been involved with rugby all their lives, and the other chambers started the Rugby Alliance, which we joined. We had people like Christian Howes, Paddy Watson and Tad Furuta, who knew a lot about rugby, and Paddy was friends with a lot of the Canadian players. And Christian, who is also chair of the CSR Committee, said that Canada will be one of the few teams that will be playing in Kamaishi, in Iwate Prefecture, and we needed to let the players know the meaning of that.

This was six months before the tournament, and I wouldn't have thought of that. But there was this CSR perspective and rugby perspective — people in the chamber were thinking about it and doing it. And because of those connections, our rugby and CSR committees communicated that idea to the players and setting up a situation that would support Canada, Japan and Kamaishi. [The Canada–Namibia match that was scheduled in Kamaishi was cancelled when



Members of Canada's rugby team and CCCJ members in Kamaishi

PHOTO: CCCJ

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Typhoon Hagibis blew through the area. But the Canada rugby team and members of the CCCJ who had come for the match helped in the cleanup efforts in Kamaishi after the storm had passed.] And how that all played out, ultimately, is that Canada received so much acknowledgment. In some ways, it was one of the biggest things to happen to Canada–Japan relations in decades, and we were part of making that happen.

And through the whole experience, I grew to like rugby and understand it more. The rugby community is an amazing one that's so supportive of each other — when rugby players meet, they automatically have a bond. It's not something I would have expected being involved in when I joined the CCCJ. And it gave me a deeper understanding of why companies sponsor sports: you're supporting that spirit. Seeing it in action at that level, and being involved in it myself really made me a believer. It was incredible.

How will you spend your time as chair emeritus?

After 10 consecutive years of serious engagement, I'll tone things down a little. I don't plan to be unengaged, but I want to step back and let the new board be what it is. I'm very close to [new chair] David Anderson, and we talk frequently. He was hugely supportive as vice chair. And we've been friends for a long, long time. I will still be involved with a couple of committees, including what is likely to be rebranded as the Technology Innovation Committee. That will be one thing, but I'm also extremely interested in our new Sustainability Committee that Justin Conley started up. I'm very excited about that one and, of course, I'll continue with the CSR Committee.

“Seeing it in action at that level, and being involved in it myself really made me a believer.”

What does the future hold for Vanten?

We've been doing digital signage since 2003, and were the first company in Japan to create a software as a service cloud platform for signage back before the concept of the cloud was popular. And so we tend to always be on the kind of leading edge of new things coming along. I like getting involved in very new technology, but we also have to sell to customers. I've been watching blockchain for several years and considered getting into it as early as 2014, but each time I looked, it didn't seem quite ready for mass adoption yet. I think that things changed recently — last year and through the spring, there was a boom in the US around NFTs — non fungible tokens [unique digital files stored on a blockchain]. So it's really now at a point where regular people and companies are getting involved with it. I saw that crossover among people who knew nothing about blockchain technology. People who aren't geeks or programmers are saying: “I want some of this.” And this is similar to what I experienced back in the 90s when the commercial internet started.

So we decided, this is the time. And I have an entire pathway for tying this into my product. To start with, we launched our NFT marketplace, Scramble, on July 7. And on August 4, we're launching an auction with one of the world's top makeup artists, Amazing Jiro. He's put together a haunted house in a truck which was at Tokyo Tower, and is now touring Japan. Anybody can

go there, pay ¥1,000 yen and get the bejesus scared out of them. It's really, really well done. We're selling that truck on the blockchain as an NFT. We will ship it anywhere in the world and run an event for a week for anyone who wants an amazing haunted house delivered to their doorstep. That's what we're doing at the moment, but it's part of a whole roadmap. The next step is to launch our signage player as an NFT viewer. This will be the beginning of a decentralized community media ecosystem that we hope will influence how our offline and online worlds converge in the future. I wrote a white paper about this plan at www.deooh.org.

Do you have a message you'd like to share with David Anderson and the chamber?

We were joking after the annual general meeting, and I said, David, just don't mess it up [laughs]. But no, David's uniquely qualified to be the chair because he's the only person with his combination of experience. He has worked for JETRO, so he's familiar with the Japanese side of the Canada–Japan relationship. Then he was the executive director of the chamber after which he worked for the Alberta Japan Office, so he saw that side, before becoming a governor and vice chair. He's incredibly qualified and a great person. I think the chamber is poised to do great things and the new board is awesome. So what I'd say is to keep on going, because things are looking good. 🍁



Vanten's NFT marketplace, Scramble, launched in July.

JMEC 27

Backed by the CCCJ, this annual business plan writing course adapts to beat the lockdown

By Megan Casson

Every year the Japan Market Expansion Competition (JMEC) helps participants develop their business savvy. And this year, despite pandemic-related challenges, the competitors did not fail to show their mettle.

The business training program, designed to strengthen the skills of up-and-coming executives, was founded in 1993 by the Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan. The initiative provides teams of participants with lectures and training, followed by hands-on experience putting together comprehensive business plans for an assigned project client. The teams then present their business plans to the judges, who are successful business leaders.

This year, there were 47 participants from 13 countries. On June 9, JMEC held its 27th online awards ceremony, at which the winning teams were announced.

Over the years, JMEC has garnered the support of a growing number of foreign chambers of commerce in Japan. The backers now number 18 chambers, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ). Ron Huber, the CCCJ member on the JMEC Executive Committee, spoke about JMEC and how the chamber continues to support the successful business program.

“The CCCJ has supported the JMEC program for more than 20 years now and it is the most distinctive and cost-effective business training program in Japan. Many of our CCCJ members have benefited greatly from JMEC and, similarly, a large proportion of our executive directors and office managers over the years have also been graduates of the initiative. Known affectionately as a ‘mini-MBA,’ JMEC is the perfect program for motivated bilingual professionals wanting to take their careers to the next level.”

VIRTUAL CHALLENGE

This year, the majority of the program was carried out virtually, with lectures, training and team meetings conducted online.

Tom Whitson, JMEC executive committee chairman, opened the awards ceremony by commenting on Japan’s national state of emergency and the effect it had on the program. “Teams



Ron Huber
CCCJ member on
the JMEC Executive
Committee

had to change the way they researched and interacted to develop their business plans.

“The plans showed perceptive analysis and creative ideas to help our project clients. You have all truly earned your certificates as graduates of our JMEC business-training program. On behalf of the JMEC team, I want to thank the companies that sponsored projects, as well as the lecturers, judges, team mentors and consultants who gave up days of their time to make this program a success.”

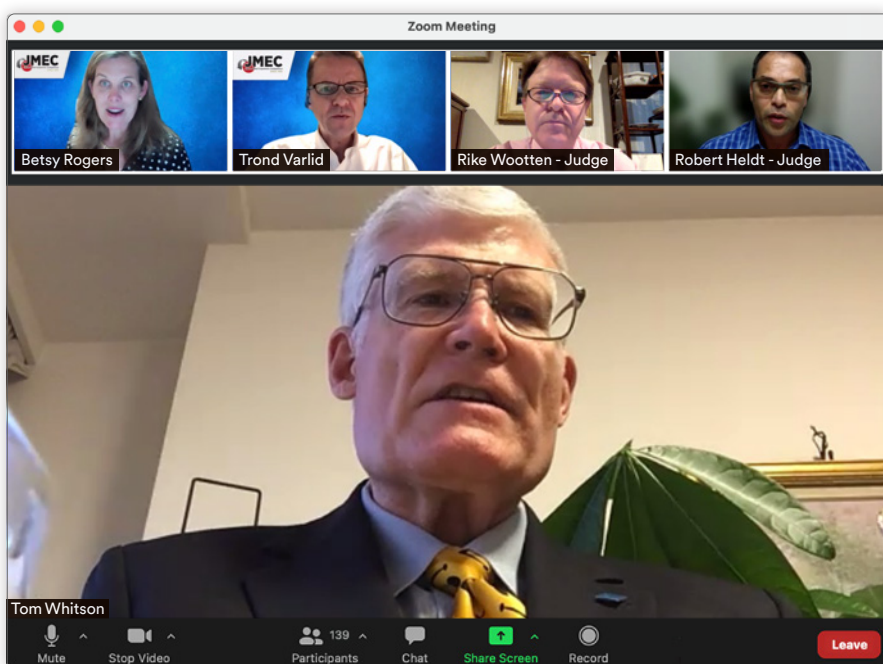
Michael Pfeffer, who works as a graphic designer at *The Canadian’s* publisher, Custom Media, was

a member of Team 2, which took home first prize — tickets to Europe on Finnair — after having impressed the judges with their business plan. The project client was Regemat 3D, a Spanish biotech company that focuses on the use of 3D printing in regenerative medicine.

“Having worked for months together with the other members of my team and having shared common goals, it’s easy to forget that some of us have never actually met in person,” Pfeffer said. “We set up regular meetings [online] and reported our progress to our client right up to when we submitted the final business plan.”

Team 2 leader Eric Lam said: “It was a challenging but valuable experience in team building, leadership and, of course, business plan creation. Talking to real people in the industry can give insightful clues on how to further build a case for your ideas.”

Lam also mentioned some of the challenges faced during the program — particularly linguistic ones. “The medical and scientific nature of our client also presented a language barrier due to the terms used. Fortunately, we were blessed with native Japanese team members to help carry out interviews and research in Japanese.”





Michael Pfeffer
Design Director
Custom Media K.K.
Team 2



Eric Lam
GLOBIS University
MBA student
Team 2

However, Lam emphasized some of the key things he learned during his time on the JMEC program, highlighting the unrivalled learning experience the program provides participants: “Talking to real people in the industry can give insightful clues, and help you understand how to further build a case for your idea. We stumbled upon some absolute gems. Had we not done these interviews, we might have been stumbling around, lost in the dark, for a very long time.”

WELCOME WIN

The second-prize winners took home Hewlett-Packard laptop PCs, and third-prize winners received stylish satchels from the German brand BREE.

Lam recalled how it felt when it was announced his team had won first prize. “My initial reaction was just ... speechless. I am a tad embarrassed to admit that I had exhausted myself concentrating on the delivery of a great business plan, and totally forgot to prepare what to say in the event our team actually won.

“Although stumbling for words, it was a proud moment, and I feel the utmost gratitude for the

great team members, our client and the various advisors that helped us along the way.”

Pfeffer echoed his teammate’s sentiments, saying: “I was very proud of the team, our mentor and our advisor, and I felt grateful to all the people who supported us. However, the real honour was being a part of this year’s JMEC. I met so many incredible professionals and gained a wealth of experience.”

Pfeffer also provided some advice for those taking part in the next JMEC program. “Get as much as you can out of the initial lectures. If you’re joining by Zoom, turning on your camera will keep you fully engaged in the topic.

“When you receive your team assignment and project client, get started immediately — meet the members, understand the scope of work, research the client and the industry, and schedule a meeting with the client as soon as possible. The sooner you get a jump on the assignment, the more likely you will be positioned for success.”

JMEC 28 began in August, and program lectures start on November 13. 🍁

“I feel the utmost gratitude for the great team members, our client and the various advisors that helped us along the way.”



THE WINNERS

First Place | Team 2

Louis Cui, Eric Lam, Mayuko Nara,
Michael Pfeffer, Rie Takahashi, Takayuki Tsunoda

Team Mentor: Mitsuhiro Honda

Team Consultant: Fabrizio Mura

Project Client:

Regemat 3D

Second Place | Team 19

Svetlana Aleekseva, Edmund Lim,
Kosuke Nakano, Tai Phung, Coco Takemura,
Akira Watanabe

Team Mentor: Risa Dimacali

Team Consultant: William Pieschel

Project Client:

Ipsos Healthcare Japan

Third Place | Team 4

Kaoru Akima, Kelsey Britton, Dave Mateo,
Anna Takasaki, Shunsuke Takechi

Team Mentor: Jay Johannesen

Team Consultant: Patricia Bader-Johnston

Project Client:

Origio/CooperSurgical

SPECIAL MENTION AWARDS

Best Presentation | Team 3

Ai Furuhashi, Eriko Hirakado,
Prajan Sanku, Shushi Tsuchiya

Team Mentor: Ralf Mayer

Team Consultant: Paul Thurston

Project Client:

Coca-Cola Bottlers Japan, Inc.

Best Market Research | Team 5

Tomoki Fukasawa, Daisaku Miyauchi,
Pinky Pal-lingayan, Honoka Shimizu

Team Mentor: Mitch Murata

Team Consultant: Akira Havermans

Project Client:

SignTime

Best “Deep Dive” | Team 8

Hidekazu Komatsu, Koffi Eli Kouassiss,
Takako Morikami, Noriko Otsuki, Kanji Oka,
Asami Wykamp

Team Mentor: Justin Dart

Team Consultant: Ron Lenore

Project Client:

Coloplast

jmec.gr.jp

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

Lower costs offset revenue decline as new members join and events hosted—including Covid jobs

By Alec Jordan

On July 1, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) held its 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM) at HyLife Pork Table in Daikanyama. In addition to the group gathered at the restaurant and in keeping with the hybrid format, many attendees gathered online for the proceedings.

This year's AGM marked a new chapter for the chamber, as it was convened by David Anderson, who had been appointed chamber chair in July. The first item on the agenda was announcing the new members of the Board of Governors. Nine of the 12 candidates were elected to fill all vacant seats. Voter turnout was more impressive this year than last, with 64 per cent of members having cast ballots.

The new vice-chair of the CCCJ is Annamarie Sasagawa, while the elected governors are Aaron Reist, Akira Yamaguchi, Riyo Whitney, Jackie F. Steele, Stephen R. Nagy, Karl Pires and Nicolas Chow Chin Sung (see page 27). All will serve two-year terms.

WEATHERING A STORM

After introducing the new Board, the next item of business was the presentation of the audited financial statements for the 2020–21 fiscal year. They were delivered by Treasurer and Chair of the Financial Administration Committee Gordon Hatton.

As he explained, the past year has been a challenging one for members as well as the chamber. Membership revenue was down 10.7 per cent. And, since it has not been possible during the year to hold the usual revenue-generating occasions — the Gala, the summer networking event, the *bonenkai*, and in-person speaker events — revenue from these sources was down ¥4.41 million on the year.

However, the chamber has been able to reduce its rent by 10.7 per cent and, due to pandemic-related restrictions, there have been cuts in travel costs, entertainment expenses and outlays for office supplies.

As he had presided over the chamber during the previous fiscal year, Chair Emeritus Neil van Wouw delivered the annual report. He explained that, while the past year had been difficult, the chamber has adapted to the challenges and learned how to succeed. It has been bringing in new members every month, and many of the new members are quickly becoming active in committees.

Van Wouw noted the recent formation of a new committee: the Sustainability Committee. It will be engaged in a number of endeavours in the near future.

Van Wouw added that, even without the ability to host in-person occasions, the chamber had been able to hold close to 30 events over the past year. The vast majority had been online, taken a number of formats — webinars, panels and drop-in discussions — and been able to draw participants from both sides of the Pacific. He predicted that, even when activities return to normal, the chamber will be able to build on what it has learned from arranging these events.

He also touched on how the chamber has been able to provide services for its members, most recently by securing free Covid-19 vaccinations for CCCJ members, 50 of whom had received shots the day before the AGM.

PASSING THE TORCH

In closing, van Wouw presented Anderson with a ceremonial gift that each chair has passed on to their successor over the years. While the specific name of the object has been lost to history, van Wouw said, he has dubbed it the “two-by-four of leadership.”

Following van Wouw's remarks, Anderson expressed his appreciation for the outgoing chair's efforts and support. “I've served on the board with Neil for the past four years, the first year as governor and, most recently, serving as vice-chair. During this time, Neil has been a great mentor, leader, listener and friend. Thanks to you, the chamber is definitely in a strong position.”

As the meeting drew to an end, another chamber transition was marked. Anderson welcomed Noriko Ishida as the new executive director of the CCCJ, and bid a warm farewell to Marie Ohashi, who had served as events manager prior to her time as executive director. 🍁



David Anderson and Neil van Wouw hold the “two by four of leadership,” flanked by fellow CCCJ Board members (left) Riyo Whitney and Marc Bolduc and (right) Ai Nakagawa, Karl Pires and Stephen R. Nagy.

MEET THE NEW CCCJ LEADERS

At the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) 2021 annual general meeting (page 26), four first-time appointees to the Board of Governors were announced. We invited them to introduce themselves and explain how they plan to support the CCCJ and its members.



STEPHEN R. NAGY

It's a great privilege to join the CCCJ Board of Governors. It provides me the opportunity to contribute to the CCCJ by working with a great team of stakeholders in Japan and the Indo-Pacific region.

Originally from Calgary, I have studied, lived and worked in Japan and Hong Kong as a professor of international relations and a political risk consultant. As a CCCJ governor, I have three initiatives that I would like to spearhead:

- Help lead a political risk series to help Canadian firms negotiate Japan and the Indo-Pacific.
- Support the creation of a joint Indo-Pacific Chamber of Commerce. Connecting chambers in the Indo-Pacific region would help Canadian businesses familiarize themselves with trends, opportunities and challenges in the region.
- Create a Pitch Club, to support Canadian businesses in refining their business engagement and increasing profits in Japan and the Indo-Pacific region.

I look forward to working for the CCCJ by bridging scholarship, policy and public intellectualism.



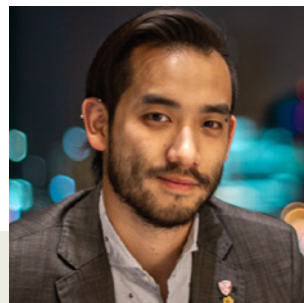
SEIJI OMOTE

I am honoured to be joining the CCCJ Board of Governors. For 44 years, I have been connected with the Canadian forestry industry, selling its products to Japanese construction companies.

I joined the CCCJ about 30 years ago as a corporate member, but not an active member. In March 2013, I joined the Honorary Board of Advisors (HBA) with the support of Wilf Wakely. This opened my eyes, and I started associating with other CCCJ members and going to events.

Japan and Canada have maintained an excellent relationship and I believe the CCCJ can make it even better by providing networking opportunities for corporates as well as individuals. The chamber also has good networks with other countries' chambers of commerce, which should open up opportunities globally.

In order to make this organization more active and progressive, the CCCJ should raise its visibility through events and expand its membership. I would like to pursue those objectives through closer communication with my fellow governors and HBA members.



**NICOLAS CHOW
CHIN SUNG**

Dear CCCJ members, I am honoured to have been elected to the Board of Governors! I grew up in Montréal, where I earned my degree in mechatronics engineering, and later joined the McGill PMBA program. In 2018, I moved to Tokyo, where I became the first McGill MBA student to make the transition from the Montréal to the Tokyo campus. I graduated from the program in 2019, and this is what brought me to the CCCJ.

I helped found the CCCJ Emerging Technologies Committee, to explore how technology can help transform businesses. In my role as head of engineering at Telexistence, I live on the cutting edge of technology.

I hope to be able to share developments with our community, create engaging opportunities for collaboration and transform innovative ideas into a variety of real-life applications.

My other main focus will be to increase member engagement and bring more young professionals to the chamber. With my connections to networks across Canada and Japan, I aim to bring a breath of new life to the chamber.



AKIRA YAMAGUCHI

My parents are Japanese, but I was born and raised in France. I lived in Montréal for 11 years before coming to Japan in October 2020.

I joined Investissement Québec International this April as the next representative in Japan dedicated to attracting Japanese investment to the province of Québec. I am based at the Québec Government Office in Tokyo, which is led by my fellow governor David Brulotte.

I have over 15 years of experience in international business development in France, Québec and Japan and close to a decade of experience as an independent consultant. It's been less than a year since my new life in Japan began, and it is an honour to have been elected as one of your new governors. Though my roots are 100 per cent Japanese, and since I was little I have made several trips within Japan, this is the first time I have resided in Tokyo. This marks a full circle in my life journey, and every event is a discovery.

As a new governor, I look forward to continuing to support CCCJ members and the Japan-Canada business community, and learn and grow by connecting with you all.



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—Yuko Sudoh, member since 2011



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HITTING ITS STRIDE

RBC Race for the Kids charity event returns to Tokyo

By Alec Jordan



One of the things many of us are looking for during the pandemic is an opportunity to get out and connect. And being able to do that while supporting a great cause is even better. That's what Royal Bank of Canada's (RBC) Race for the Kids event offers.

The first RBC Race for the Kids was held in 2009 in New York City. Since then, the event has grown to 17 in-person races held around the world, and has fielded more than 290,000 participants. The races have raised in excess of C\$65 million to help over 30 charities that extend support to young people.

VIRTUAL PIVOT

However, last year the global event faced — and rose to — a challenge, according to RBC Tokyo Branch Head of Business Management & Administration Alan Sorba. “In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the series of in-person races couldn't happen. So we pivoted to a global,

“Last year, over 33,000 participants from more than 120 countries raised upwards of C\$8.8 million.”

virtual RBC Race for the Kids, to unite participants all around the world to continue to raise much-needed funds for our charity partners and the youth they support. Last year, over 33,000 participants from more than 120 countries raised upwards of C\$8.8 million.”

In fact, Sorba explained, shifting to the new format allowed the event to expand its network of charitable partners and the pool of people who could participate. The results were extremely positive. “Last year we received a lot of feedback from participants, [who said] that they really enjoyed feeling they were part of a shared event,” he said. “By holding all of the events on the same weekend we really created a global RBC Race for the Kids community.”

RACING TO TOKYO

Building on the success of this new model, they've added more locations for the 2021 RBC Race for the Kids event, supporting 35 charities in 19 countries. Participants in the Tokyo RBC Race for the Kids will be raising funds for Bridge for Smile, a charity that supports foster children in developing the skills and knowledge they will need by the time they reach the age of 18.

One of the things that makes the new format so engaging is its flexibility. Registration is open to everyone and is free, and participants can choose the length of their race — anywhere from one kilometre to 15 kilometres — as well as their route. They can run, walk or roll their way along the route, making it easy to do even for families with small children. The only requirement is that participants do their race over the weekend of October 16 and 17. Many previous participants have commented on how even their young children have signed up to run a five-kilometre route, and have wanted to continue raising funds even after the event is over.

Sorba added that the event is also adding a digital way for participants to stay engaged. “We are really keen to continue the momentum and to build that race community, so we have created an innovative app for RBC Race for the Kids this year. This makes teaming up and engaging with friends, family and other participants fun and easy.”

COMMUNITY EFFORT

RBC Capital Markets Associate Director Fumino Suzuki is looking forward to joining the 2021 race. “RBC Race for the Kids is for everyone; it is such a fun way to support a great cause. I am impressed and inspired by the energy and the level of commitment that all of us at RBC create with the event. Working together, we are making a positive difference in the lives of many individuals and I believe this can help our country to become an even better place to live and work for years to come,” she said. “By supporting charities such as Bridge for Smile in Japan and raising awareness for their programs, we can help young people access the right care at the right time and get back on track to a brighter future. That is why I am pleased to lend my support to this meaningful cause.” 🍁



To find out how you can take part in the 2021 RBC Race for the Kids, visit www.rbcraceforthekids.com

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Memoir explores a life lived around food

By @joeytokyo

If you love the cultural connection between Japan and Canada, and if you love stories of how persistence, creativity and a willingness to challenge the status quo can lead to success, Caroline Ishii's *The Accidental Chef: Lessons Learned in and out of the Kitchen* is the book to read.

Ishii is an award-winning, celebrity vegan chef based in Ottawa. *The Accidental Chef* is multiple books in one, offering recipes like a cookbook, the personal details of a memoir and inside knowledge about the restaurant industry. Food recollections are a common theme, and each chapter includes a tasty, yet easy-to-make recipe — often for a vegan dish.

Written in such a heartfelt and inspiring way, the book also is a reflection of Ishii's sense of humour. I remember laughing as I read it.

PERSONAL TALES

Ishii was born in Toronto to Japanese parents. She learned early to love humble Japanese food such as *daikon* pickles and flavourful mushrooms. When she decided years later to become a chef, it was her early food memories that encouraged her to specialize in vegan food.

In the early parts of the book, Ishii takes us back to stories of her grandparents, who moved to Canada in the early 1900s, and fell in love with the country. However, they were later put



Caroline Ishii
Celebrity vegan chef

into an internment camp during the Second World War. As a result, her young parents temporarily moved back to Japan.

Ishii shares with the reader deep, personal stories about herself growing up as a rebellious Japanese-Canadian schoolgirl. She is a role model for diversity, constantly having challenged the status quo years ago, when gender and racial equality was still a work in progress in Canada.

KITCHEN PIONEER

Indeed, her drive to create something new took her to the peak of her career. In 2009, she took the bold step of opening one of the first vegan restaurants in Canada, at a time when people were so unfamiliar with the concept that they were calling it “vay-gan.” Despite the concept having been new, Ishii's restaurant won the Best New Restaurant of the Year Award from the Ottawa Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association, and was voted one of the best restaurants in Ontario by *Lonely Planet's Best of Canada*.

All of this was achieved while Ishii and her then-partner were starring in a documentary-reality TV show that focused on a couple opening a new restaurant. For a year, Ishii was like



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an actress — and, yes, the book tells all. The inside look at Ishii's career as a chef was also an enlightening one. An office worker in her previous career, she had to learn everything from scratch — how to “chop fast and accurately, create flavours quickly, think strategically, be on [her] feet all day, and work in a tight space where being mentally vacant is dangerous.” And she was doing this while most of those around her were men!

The circumstances she faced were challenging, but Ishii met with tremendous success. She was the first woman in Ottawa and the first vegan chef in Canada to be invited to compete in the prestigious Gold Medal Plates competition, in which she won the silver medal two years in a row.

I was deeply inspired by Ishii's story, and can't recommend it highly enough. It's a perfect reminder that, if you put your heart into something, what you can achieve can be truly amazing.

And for more great recipes, don't miss Ishii's vegan recipe book, *Canadian Vegan Recipes*, a Japanese-language book that does a fantastic job promoting the culture and history of Canada to Japanese readers! 🍀



Written in such a heartfelt and inspiring way, the book also is a reflection of Ishii's sense of humour.

THE VEGAN REBEL

This free spirit's healthy, plant-based recipes create foodie communities

By Alec Jordan

At a webinar held on July 3, members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) community were able to meet with the Japanese-Canadian celebrity vegan chef, Caroline Ishii.

The webinar was co-organized by the McGill Alumni Association of Japan, and moderated by Joey Wu, chair of the CCCJ Wellness Committee and an alumna of the McGill MBA program. During the event, Ishii spoke about her cultural background, her path to becoming a chef, being the subject of a reality TV show and how she pivoted her business in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In keeping with Ishii's freewheeling spirit, the webinar was a lively affair, punctuated by ready laughter and fascinating anecdotes. It's the same style that you can find in her memoir, *The Accidental Chef* (see page 30).

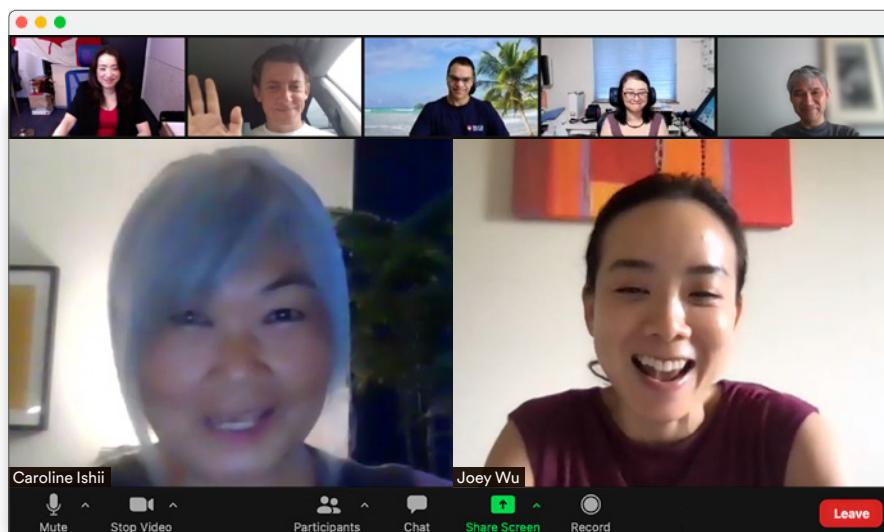
CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

As Ishii discussed her background, she raised an interesting point that relates not only to food, but to the cultural experiences of the children of immigrants around the world. Many people whose parents or grandparents come from other countries will often hold even more strongly to certain cultural traditions than their forebears, even though the traditions may have changed back in their countries of origin.

Ishii raised this point with the example of *osechi ryori* — the dishes that are eaten on the first few days of January in the Japanese home. While many families in Japan will now order much of their *osechi* from stores, Ishii mentioned that her mother would prepare each of the dishes from scratch, even though it took a long time.

CHANGING MARKET

She also noted how the landscape for plant-based foods in Canada has completely changed since she first began as a chef. Within a relatively short time, the concept of vegan food has gone from something that people didn't even know how to pronounce, to being on the menus at



“When you put in the time and dedication, your innate gifts can shine through.”

fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's and Tim Hortons.

She pointed out that, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, people are paying more attention to their health-related choices, which is making vegan options more popular. The trend is unlikely to slow down, Ishii said, and Japanese consumers are beginning to be interested in vegan options, too. That said, progress remains to be made here in that regard.

Wu brought up the topic of being able to pivot in the wake of the pandemic, and asked Ishii to discuss how she did this, as in-person dining has been limited since 2020. Her response has been to organize large-scale virtual dinners. Using Canadian ingredients, she prepares five-course Japanese meals, which participants can either have delivered to their homes or can pick up. People then join the dinner virtually, Ishii explains the dishes, and people are able to enjoy a communal dining experience, even at a distance.

The first of her virtual dinners was held in 2020 on World Food Day, October 16. The event was a great success, drawing 100 guests, including Norihiro Okuda, the Japanese ambassador to Canada. She has held other dinners since then, which have attracted up to 150 participants. The popularity of the meals is not just due to people's love of fine dining and healthy food, Ishii believes, but to a longing for community.

MAKING THE JOURNEY

Ishii spoke eloquently about the path that took her from a career in marketing to a life lived around food. Key to this, she pointed out, was being willing to make mistakes through the learning process. “When you start something — anything — you're not going to be that good at it. But that's okay. As children, we know that intuitively. If we start something, we might suck at it. We might make mistakes.

“As adults, however, we are hell-bent that we must do it perfectly. Especially in Japan, we must do it right the first time. We tell our children that it's okay to make mistakes, but we don't tell ourselves that. So I believe it's really important to explore this and see where it goes. I think at some point, when you put in the time and dedication, your innate gifts can shine through.” 🍁



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The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan welcomes our newest members

INDIVIDUALS



Jon Heese

I grew up in Wymark, Saskatchewan. A University of Regina grad, I began teaching English here in Japan starting in 1991. I've owned a bar, done some TV acting and I started a research services company, but eventually found my stride as a Tsukuba city councillor. This is my fourth term. My wife and I are entertained by our daughter (22) and two sons (21 and 17). I joined the CCCJ after meeting some interesting members. My primary goal is to socialize with smart people.



David Jones

I am originally from central Newfoundland and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. I am coming up on 18 years in Japan, and oversee all HR operations for a specialty IT staffing firm, Skillhouse Staffing Solutions K.K., in Tokyo. I am excited about joining the CCCJ, so that I can be more involved in, and support, the Canada-Japan business community.



Mark Jones

Originally from Victoria (and a University of Victoria alumnus), I have called Japan home for nearly a quarter century. I am the Japan chief financial officer for CBRE, the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm. I'm happy to be rejoining the CCCJ after an absence of 20 years, and look forward to rekindling and broadening my connections to the Canadian community in Japan. An avid golfer, I'm especially looking forward to participating in the next CCCJ Golf Scramble!



Marc Letourneau

Recently relocated to Japan, I lead all Club Med activities for Japan and South Korea. I am originally from Bromont, Québec, so skiing is one of my passions. Therefore, I'm very glad to be here, where I can experience the best snow in the world more often. I have had the chance to live in many places, such as Australia — where I was for 10 years — and, more recently, Singapore and Taiwan. I joined the CCCJ to expand my network and have a chance to reach out to other Canadian and Japanese members.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



Kevin M. Collier

Hi everyone! I'm excited to be joining this vibrant community. I am an online MBA student with the University of Arizona; an employee of start-up Tokyo Global Gateway, where I wear many hats; and, most of all, I'm an eager learner. I joined the CCCJ with hopes of learning how I can be of greater service to the world around me. One day I'd also love to work in Canada. I look forward to connecting with you!



Leo Lin

I am originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, and spent substantial time living on Vancouver Island as a teen. I relocated to Washington, DC, for my undergraduate studies in Japanese politics, before coming to Tokyo to earn my graduate degree at Waseda University. I currently work in a compliance role at an e-commerce firm, and I'm looking forward to developing professionally through the CCCJ.

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