

# THE CANADIAN

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

## CAPITAL INTEREST P10

Catching up with Ian G. McKay,  
CEO of Invest in Canada





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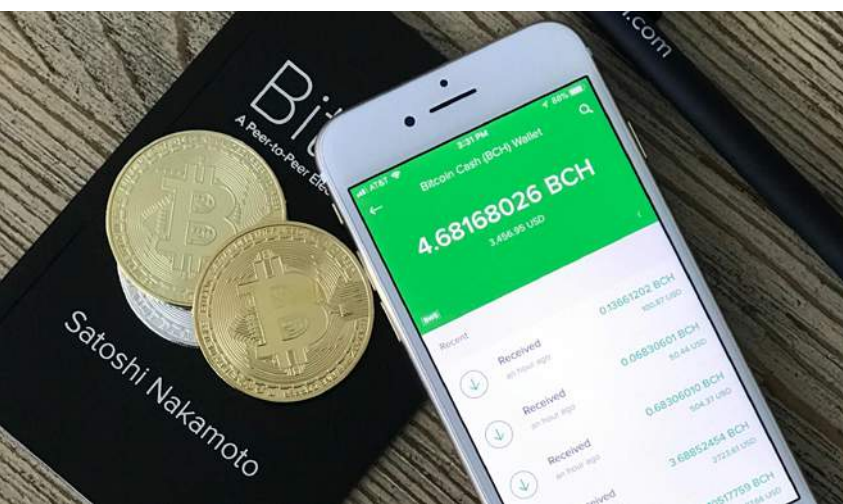


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Representing some 35 business industries, the CCCJ is a member-driven, member-focused organization and is the longest-serving Canadian chamber of commerce in Asia. With more than 400 members, the CCCJ represents a broad cross-section of businesspeople, 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.

## The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

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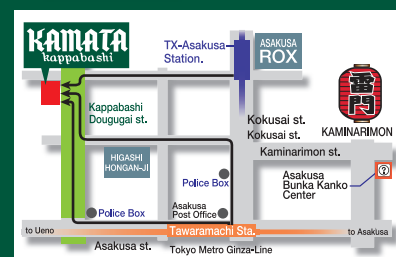
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# Well Rounded

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



The days are growing shorter, the temperatures are dropping and the trees have changed their greens for reds, browns and golds. Autumn is well with us, and it won't be long until we're all in a holiday state of mind. This is also the perfect time of year to catch up with your reading, so we've put together a diverse selection of articles that we hope you'll find both informative and interesting.

As Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) members are well aware, Canada and Japan have very strong economic ties. Helping make those connections even stronger is part of the work of Invest in Canada, a new federal investment promotion agency that seeks to streamline foreign investment. Heading the organization as its inaugural CEO is Ian G. McKay, whose career in finance and the federal government is long and distinguished. We had the chance to catch up with him while he was in Tokyo (page 10), and we spoke about his ties to Japan, his work with the Canadian federal government and how Invest in Canada is aiming for success. We found his comments to be quite insightful; we believe you will too.

## NEW FRONTIERS

Canada has not had an astronaut in space in five years, but that dry spell will soon be broken: David Saint-Jacques is scheduled to go into orbit in December for a six-month mission aboard the International Space Station. While he was in Japan earlier for training, he took the time to visit with CCCJ members (page 25) and talk about what he has learned since joining the astronaut program.

In September, six chambers of commerce in Japan — including the CCCJ — approved a joint Viewpoint on Marriage Equality, in a strong show of support for this country's LGBT community. One figure who was instrumental in making this possible is

lawyer Alexander Dmitrenko (page 20), co-founder and co-chair of the Lawyers for LGBT & Allies Network.

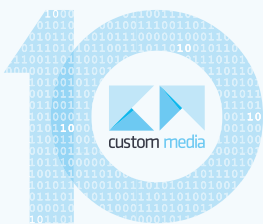
## CRAFT AND TECH

Japanese craftwork, with its exacting standards and legendary attention to detail, has won fans around the world, and Kevin Kent (page 26) is one of them. His fascination with Japanese knives inspired him to go from selling them out of a backpack to opening five knife stores across Canada.

Cryptocurrencies may have cooled down since the heady days of late 2017, but they're a strong part of fintech's future, and Japan has its sights set on being a leader in this rapidly developing space. That's the reason DLTa21, a Vancouver-based global blockchain investment bank, is looking to launch a cryptocurrency exchange here (page 16), in collaboration with Coinsquare, a Canadian trading platform.

We thank you for your readership, and we'll see you in 2019. 🍁

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# CHAMBER VIEW

By Jim Zhang  
Executive Director  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Happy autumn to our members! I hope you have been able to take some time out of your busy schedules to enjoy the autumn leaves. This season tends to be a busy time at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ), and we have many great events planned including, of course, the flagship Maple Leaf Gala, which was held on November 2.

## INVEST AND INCLUDE

In this issue of *The Canadian*, we want to highlight the visit of Ian McKay, CEO of Invest in Canada, and his delegation to Japan.

With the ratification of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership looming, Canada is even more of an attractive location for Japanese investment. Canada's unique relationship with United States and European markets, its resources, highly skilled labour market and its mature and stable economy make our country an ideal partner for Japan.

We also want to highlight a point of advocacy for the CCCJ in this issue. For the first time ever, in collaboration with the LLAN (Lawyers for LGBT and Allies Network) and the American, Australian and New Zealand, British, Irish and Danish chambers of commerce in Japan, the CCCJ jointly published the advocacy viewpoint on supporting equal marriage rights in Japan.

The six foreign chambers believe that equal marriage rights are good for business, and will make Japan a more competitive environment to attract human resources. In the lead up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which has as its official slogan "The Most Inclusive Games Ever," we believe in a Vision 2020 to support Japan in its struggle for marriage equality.

## VISION 2020

Speaking of Vision 2020, this also happens to have been the official theme of this year's Maple Leaf Gala.

Vision 2020 represents the Chamber's vision leading up to the 2020 Games. However, Vision 2020 is more than just the Games themselves. It is a vision of the future, people coming together, friendly sport, celebration, assistance and the creation of memories.

The Canada-Japan business community believes in a bright vision for our future: involving our two great nations, across all fields of collaboration. We want to show that, not only is Canada a good business partner for Japan, but an ideal one. We want to show that 2020 will be only the beginning of increased commercial partnerships between organizations of our two countries. We want to show it is a better time than ever before to encourage the next generation to study and



work in each other's countries, to learn from each other and to build more bridges.

Whether you are in finance, or banking, an engineer or a teacher, a small business owner or a "salaryman" — a strong Canada-Japan relationship will benefit all, and a strong Canada-Japan Vision 2020 will help make our vision for the future a reality.

To celebrate our friendship, our collaborations, our partnership and our future together, the CCCJ Gala Committee once again put together a brilliant evening of hospitality, surprise, music and wonderful Canadian food and beverages. We were glad that you could join us, and thank you for your continued support of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan! 🍁

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**"Vision 2020 is more than just the Games themselves. It is a vision of the future, people coming together, friendly sport, celebration, assistance and the creation of memories."**






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# CANADA-JAPAN NEWS



## Japanese-Canadian wins bronze medal at judo world championships

Christa Deguchi made history by becoming the first Canadian judo athlete to win a medal at the World Judo Championships, the *National Post* reported on September 22. Competing in Baku, Azerbaijan, Deguchi defeated Theresa Stoll of Germany to win a bronze in the 57-kilogram category. The Japanese-Canadian was born in Japan, where she won junior world championships with the Japanese team in 2013 and 2014. She later decided to compete for her father's native country of Canada. Deguchi says that she aims to win the Osaka Grand Slam in November, and hopes to win a medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

## C\$40 billion LNG project moves forward

*Business in Vancouver* reported on October 2 that the five partners of LNG Canada — Royal Dutch Shell, Petronas, PetroChina, Mitsubishi Corporation and KOGAS South Korea — approved a final investment decision on the project.

The total investment on the project is estimated at C\$40 billion, making it the largest industrial investment ever made in Canada. Construction on a two-train liquefied natural gas plant and marine terminal in Kitimat, British Columbia, and on a 670-kilometre natural gas pipeline, will begin later this year. LNG Canada says that the project will employ 4,500 to 7,000 workers during peak construction times.

## Leading solar energy company makes major investment in Japan

As reported by *PV-Tech* on September 7, Grasshopper Solar, Canada's largest vertically integrated solar energy company, agreed to a US\$80 million investment in Setouchi Koken's Iizuka solar plant in Fukuoka. The plant, powered by 65,455 solar panels, will generate 26,136 megawatt hours of clean energy and offset 19,451 tonnes of carbon emissions per year.

Setouchi and its Japanese partners will develop the installation. Construction of the plant will begin in the fourth quarter of 2018, and the plant is expected to be in commercial operation by the third quarter of 2020.



## Toronto restaurant awarded prized stall at Yokohama ramen museum

Ryus Noodle Bar, a beloved Toronto ramen restaurant, was invited to set up a food stall at the Shin-Yokohama Ramen Museum, according to a *CBC News* story published on September 12. The museum only has slots available for two non-Japanese restaurants, making the honour a significant achievement for the restaurant's chef and owner, Ryuichiro Takahashi.

A fire in 2017 at the restaurant's original location forced Takahashi to move to a new location. However, judges from the museum had visited both locations, and were convinced they should invite Ryus Noodle Bar to the museum on the strength of the restaurant's chicken *shio* (salt) ramen.



## Bilateral startup develops self-driving cars

Ascent Robotics, a Tokyo-based artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics startup company, hopes to have an autonomous car ready for demonstration in the next two years, as reported by *Automotive News Canada* on September 11. Ascent Robotics was co-founded by Fred Almeida, a Canadian machine-learning expert. The company has set its sights on showcasing a Level 4 autonomous vehicle — one that is capable of fully automated driving within metropolitan areas — at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Ascent Robotics says it has developed an AI design that takes advantage of human neuroscience to better mimic casual reasoning, potentially making cars that think like humans instead of just following human commands.

# CAPITAL INTEREST

Catching up with Ian G. McKay,  
CEO of Invest in Canada

By Alec Jordan

**Canada and Japan share equally strong diplomatic and financial ties. Japan is Canada's fourth-largest trading partner, and its largest Asian source of foreign direct investment. As of 2016, there were about 450 Japanese subsidiaries and affiliate companies operating in Canada involved in everything from cars and supercomputers to mining and life sciences.**

Someone who understands the multifaceted connections between Canada and Japan far better than most is Ian G. McKay. The native of Penticton, British Columbia, has worked as an executive in international finance markets, advised federal cabinet ministers, served as the CEO for the Vancouver Economic Commission and recently served as a special envoy on behalf of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to assist in the negotiations for the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). In March, he was appointed CEO of Invest in Canada, a federal investment promotion agency that seeks to facilitate global business investment in Canada.

McKay is also no stranger to Japan. He has a degree in Asian Studies from the University of British Columbia, is fluent in Japanese, and worked as managing director for 12 years with an international brokerage firm in Tokyo. During his October visit to Tokyo, in part for the Canada IN<sup>3</sup> Seminar (see page 15) held at the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo, we were able to speak to him about what he learned during his time in Japan, the role he played in the CPTPP negotiations and the potential for Japanese investment in Canada.





**I know you have a very strong connection to Japan. What are some of your favourite places in the country?**

First of all I love Tokyo. I think it's an unbelievable city. I've seen it grow since I was first here in 1980. I have a strong affinity for so many different parts of the city — the food, the architecture, the people. But outside of Tokyo my favourite place is Shimoda [in Shizuoka Prefecture], where I spent many summers at our beach house.

**During your time with Euro Brokers Inc. in Japan, what did you learn about doing business here?**

Be prepared, work hard, build relationships and be reliable. If you follow those four things in Japan, you're going to do okay.

**Are there any lessons you learned working in Japan that you carry with you to this day?**

That's a great question. That was really my first professional experience. I came right out of school to go to New York and then come to Tokyo. I just think that the value of hard work is something that should be part of our lifelong learning, and something that we should carry with us all the time.

**Of what achievements are you most proud from your time as a senior policy advisor to the Canadian federal government?**

I worked for the minister of industry, which is really the business ministry in the Canadian government, and I think we made a lot of progress on some of the automotive files. We recruited some investment from both Toyota and Honda to Canada at that time. This is now about 15 years ago; we were starting to brand Canada in some new markets such as Japan and parts of Europe where we hadn't done a lot of work. I was really happy to be a part of that exploratory time before Invest in Canada was created.

**Can you talk at all about your role as special envoy during the negotiations for what became the CPTPP?**

It was a political role, so I can't get into the details of the negotiations, but clearly Canada was in a position where we stumbled a little bit in our relationship with Japan. My role was to reengage at the political level and regain the conversation, so we could get to a spot where we

were discussing on a daily basis how we were going to get to a deal. It was really rebuilding a relationship at the political level and setting the stage so our teams could finally cross the t's and dot the i's. It was a formidable experience; it was a life experience for sure.

**Although you have only been CEO of Invest in Canada for a short time, has it already reached some milestones?**

One of the first things we did, even before I was able to hire a lot of staff members, was bring in the company WeWork from New York City. WeWork had met with the prime minister earlier this year and they had committed to doing something more in Canada.

We did at that time what I think our organization will be doing a lot of, which is bringing in a major company and putting them together in a room with all the major stakeholders they needed to see at the same time. We invited municipal partners and introduced them to a number of federal cabinet ministers and their staff with whom they need to engage.

It was a one-stop shopping facilitation for a major New York-based firm who had committed to expanding in Canada, and I think that was a really good start for the business model that we should be developing.

**What are the key components of the foreign direct investment strategy that Invest in Canada is implementing?**

We start with research. Research will be an engine of all the activities that we pursue, so that we are not taking a spray and pray approach. We are going to be very focused and targeted in the sources of capital that we are pursuing and the sectors to which we are directing the capital to be flowed, so research is the starting point.

From there we are building a very robust marketing and communications branding team. Canada really needs to get its story out in a more aggressive fashion, so that is the second business unit.

And of course, the investor services division is the one we are fleshing out now and that is where we have a team of people that work hand-in-hand with companies and investors, from their earliest concept to the completion, and then the aftercare of the investment. Those are the three stages by which we are going to be building out the organization.

**I imagine that the main targets for foreign investment in Canada are going to be the major cities, but is there any push to drive investment into rural areas as well?**

We have a recent example of how important rural Canada is to our investment landscape. On October 1, LNG Canada announced the largest-ever private-sector investment into Canada, a C\$40 billion project [Mitsubishi Corporation is a 15 per cent partner in the project].



The province of Ontario is home to the Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster.

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**“Be prepared, work hard, build relationships and be reliable. If you follow those four things in Japan, you’re going to do okay.”**





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#### **Why do you think Canada and Japan have such strong ties?**

You know, it's really a beautiful relationship. We are 90 years into the bilateral diplomatic relationship. We are both Pacific nations. I think Canada was maybe a little bit late in recognizing that we are a Pacific nation, but we are very strongly tied to the Asia-Pacific region. And I think we have a mutual understanding.

We are both peace-loving nations. We both have a high regard for bustling, robust cities and beautiful open nature. So I think we have far more in common than we have that sets us apart. I think the 90 years of very solid diplomatic relationships, and the embassy here — which is easily the most prominent embassy in all of Tokyo — is a really strong signal for that relationship.

#### **What would you say are the strongest reasons that Japanese business should continue to invest in Canada?**

Diversification is one thing that we are trying to offer major investor groups like those in Japan. Like much of the world, Japan is going through a decade-and-a-half cycle of very, very low interest rates and

I think it is incumbent upon some of the capital in Japan to look beyond its borders, to look beyond Asia to see some of the opportunities that exist in Canada.

Japan is already in Canada in the resource sector, in the manufacturing sector and in the life sciences sector, and we would like to invite them to explore other prominent sectors where they have expertise, where they have needs, and where they have investment interest.

#### **Which Canadian business sectors have the greatest potential for investment from Japan?**

I think it will continue in advanced manufacturing, and it will continue in the resource sector. I think there are extraordinary opportunities within the supercluster framework that is emerging in Canada: in the digital economy, in artificial intelligence, in quantum computing, in farming and agriculture, agricultural technology, bioproteins and in ocean sciences.

I think there is a wide array of emerging investment projects in Canada that will be of interest to Japanese investors. I know they are of interest because the Japanese side has told me, in a major way. We just have to put the two together and let the magic happen.

#### **How might the CPTPP boost Japanese investment in Canada?**

We certainly look forward to the ratification in Canada later this fall. I think there will be an immediate impact in the agriculture industry, the dairy industry and in the mining industries. I think Japan will see that any time a tariff goes down, it enhances the investment proposition for them, so I think it is going to be a really wonderful outcome.

#### **Do you have any message for the readers of *The Canadian* and members of the CCCJ?**

A couple of things. One is keep up the good work. I think the future of trade and investment between Canada and Japan, and trade investment and friendship will be extraordinary. I think it is important that people recognize the work that folks are doing here at the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo is really a foundation of what Invest in Canada is aiming to do.

We're in an office in Ottawa, and without the resources on the ground in key markets such as Tokyo, we wouldn't have much to talk about. So, I think members in the chamber here in Japan should continue to work hard to build their commerce, build their businesses and use the resources at the embassy because they are an extraordinary group of people. 🍁



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# CANADA IN<sup>3</sup> SEMINAR

Strengthening Canada–Japan business connections

By Alec Jordan

PHOTO: JULIE POIRIER

Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Hirofumi Takinami speaks at the seminar.

**Held on October 10 at the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo, the Canada IN<sup>3</sup> Seminar drew a broad range of attendees who wanted to learn about the opportunities for investment in Canada.**

Canadian Ambassador to Japan Ian Burney opened the seminar, explaining that the event was meant to put a spotlight on the three critical pillars of Canada's economic growth strategy: investment, innovation and infrastructure — the three INs of IN<sup>3</sup> that gave the seminar its name. Burney highlighted these pillars' importance in the "rich and multifaceted relationship that Canada enjoys with Japan."

An address by Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Hirofumi Takinami followed Burney's remarks. Takinami spoke about the long-standing business and diplomatic ties between Canada and Japan, and the great opportunities available to Japanese businesses in Canada.

Next to speak was Dominic Burton, global managing partner emeritus of Mackenzie & Company, who is also the key economic advisor to the Canadian government and chair of the Canadian Minister of Finance's Advisory Council on Economic Growth. Explaining that the world is going through a period of considerable social and economic change, Burton argued that Canada and Japan have the potential to provide a positive example that other nations can follow.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Three presentations followed the opening statements. Ian McKay, the CEO of Invest in Canada (see page 10), gave the first presentation. He explained that Japanese investment in Canada has traditionally been focused on the automotive, forestry, oil and gas, mining, aerospace and other industries. But he pointed out that Canada's Innovation Superclusters Initiative could change how Japan invests in Canada. This initiative focuses on five areas of technology:

- **Digital Technology Supercluster**, which will harness the power of big data and other digital technologies
- **Protein Industries Supercluster**, which will concentrate on developing new plant proteins
- **Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster**, which will apply new technologies to manufacturing
- **SCALE.AI Supercluster**, which will seek to build intelligent supply chains using AI and robotics
- **Ocean Supercluster**, which will focus on ocean-based industries, such as fisheries and clean energy

As McKay explained, these superclusters offer Japanese companies the opportunity to add their technical expertise to a variety of cutting-edge projects.

Iain Stewart, president of the National Research Council of Canada, spoke about one of the drivers of the Canadian innovation system: its national chain of research universities. As Stewart explained, "This system

of course not only undertakes research, it produces ideas and it produces talent. It has a constant outflow to the Canadian innovation system."

He pointed out that Japan was a great match for Canada, because Japan excels in both basic research and the commercialization of scientific breakthroughs.

Pierre Lavallée, president and CEO of the Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB), talked about the growing interest, on the part of private and institutional investors, in Canadian infrastructure projects, which have the potential to offer a healthy return on investment.

The CIB, created to bridge the gap between government-funded infrastructure projects and privately funded projects, is seeking overseas investors.

## AI INVESTMENT

Concluding the seminar was Naoko Yoshizawa, executive vice president and vice head of Digital Services Business at Fujitsu. She spoke about the reason Fujitsu decided to set up its global headquarters for AI in Vancouver.

As she explained, the pipeline of innovation that the university system supports, the proximity to innovation hubs such as Toronto and Silicon Valley, and Vancouver's reasonable business costs all combined to make the choice a clear one.

As a clear example of how a Japanese business can play a driving role in Canada's innovation economy, it was an excellent way to close the seminar. Attendees then adjourned to a convivial networking reception in the embassy. 🍁

# CRYPTO CONNECTION

Canadian investment bank plans to launch cryptocurrency exchange in Japan

By Julian Ryall



**Japan has a tech-savvy consumer base who are keen to try out new technologies and a large number of high-net-worth individuals. Meanwhile, the Japanese government is interested in becoming a market leader in emerging financial sectors. These factors, B. Matthew Hornor believes, make this country the ideal place for DLTa21 to launch its cryptocurrency exchange.**

Founder and executive chairman of the Vancouver-based global blockchain investment bank behind the initiative, Hornor is confident that the early teething problems that the industry has encountered are being solved and that the venture, in collaboration with Coinsquare, the hugely popular Canadian trading platform, can become a market leader in Japan.

“With a strong foothold in the market, a solid customer base and a product that is differentiated from everyone else in Canada, we think we have an attractive combination, which will enable us to form bridges with Japan,” Hornor told *The Canadian*.

Hornor studied East Asian languages and cultures, as well as economics at USC and first came to Japan in 1990 on an exchange program with Tokyo International University. Afterwards, he went to Tohoku University in Sendai on a fellowship from the Japanese Ministry of Education. After receiving his Juris Doctor from University of Virginia Law School he received a second fellowship from the same ministry, this time to study at

the law department of the University of Tokyo. Recognizing that Japan has twice supported him in higher education, he has sought to pay back this support by finding mutually beneficial areas for business cooperation between Japan, other nations and multinational institutions.

## FUNDAMENTALS

In 2005, Hornor joined the Ivanhoe Group, a natural resources-focused international conglomerate, after working for an international law firm based in Tokyo. It didn't take him long to see the opportunities that were emerging in the nascent cryptocurrency sector.

“I was representing a number of clients in the dot-com space as a licensing lawyer and I saw a lot of the early movers in that sector lose people a great deal of money,” he explained. “Too many of them just didn't have a plan, a model or even the experience, and they ended up being costly mistakes for investors. Law firms and banks went out of business because of bad dot-com investments, simply because the fundamentals were not being met.

“The cryptocurrency space has emerged dramatically — more quickly than the dot-com market did in the 1990s — but the Canadian market really only came alive last year,” he said. “Inevitably there have been ups and downs in the market, but that is partly because the fundamentals were not fully in place.”

The key to long-term success, Hornor believes, is a cryptocurrency backed by something of value.

DLTa21 invests in the most promising global distributed ledger technology (DLT) participants and crypto infrastructure. Working with innovators in the blockchain space, the company says it is committed to the intelligent allocation of capital in ways that support DLT as an emerging asset class. The company supports startups in building the most sustainable business models through globally networked incubator and accelerator programs which, in turn, enable DLTa21 to identify DLT startups with the potential to offer the best returns to investors.

In Japan, DLTa21 is focusing its efforts on one of the world's largest cryptocurrency markets while supporting Japanese and



B. Matthew Hornor,  
founder, executive chairman  
DLTa21

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**“Japan now has the chance to step in and lead the world in this new technology.”**





Leah Carr,  
vice president of licensing  
Coinsquare

international blockchain innovators that are going global. Japanese companies are now “fully embracing the potential of distributed ledger technologies,” the company said, either by adopting DLT themselves or investing in DLT startups.

### STRONG POTENTIAL

Leah Carr, vice president of licensing for Toronto-based Coinsquare, agrees that Japan has significant potential for cryptocurrencies.

“While these are still the early days, cryptocurrency tokens could be the next evolution — and we now see the market evolving from a general interest to a real interest in applications that drive real economic activity.

“The sector continues to grow, but not with the same vigour as we experienced at the end of 2017,” she admitted. “The runup was a little too fast and this pullback is needed for the required advancements to take place.

“Some of the brightest minds around the world are working on the challenges surrounding cryptocurrencies, which is not only encouraging but also extremely exciting,” she added. “We may not yet be at the place where everyone ‘can do things on the blockchain,’ the way we hear in marketing messages from some companies, but we are solidly in the investment stage of this technology, with major companies around the globe investing, and leading consulting firms researching its potential impact.”

### TIME WILL TELL

Carr played down negative coverage in the media, including stories about cyber-thefts of cryptocurrencies and allegations of North Korean meddling.

“The reality is that a tiny fraction of bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies are

tied to crime,” she said. “We’re seeing a young industry with a lot of opportunity and with that will come some people who want to exploit it. That being said, as governments around the world put forth regulatory frameworks — Canada included — we will see a better understanding of cryptocurrency come to the market.”

Coinsquare has announced plans to launch in Europe towards the end of the fourth quarter of 2018, but is investing a lot of time and effort into cracking Japan.

Hornor is confident that the market will gain further ground as consumers become accustomed to the technology, in the same way that people have grown to embrace Uber or Airbnb.

“In Canada, the market in recent months has been subdued but we are seeing investors beginning to scale back onto the market and I expect that to continue as everyone becomes more confident in this form of investing,” he said. “And while a lot of tokens are not backed by good ideas and will fail, there are some really cool ideas out there. We can get behind those and succeed in the long term.

“Although there have been teething problems and many people still don’t understand cryptocurrencies, it is only a matter of when — rather than if — they become accepted.”

### JAPAN’S GOLDEN CHANCE

Japan is a particularly appealing market, Hornor added, because its government wants to become a world leader in the sector. This is possibly because there is a sentiment that

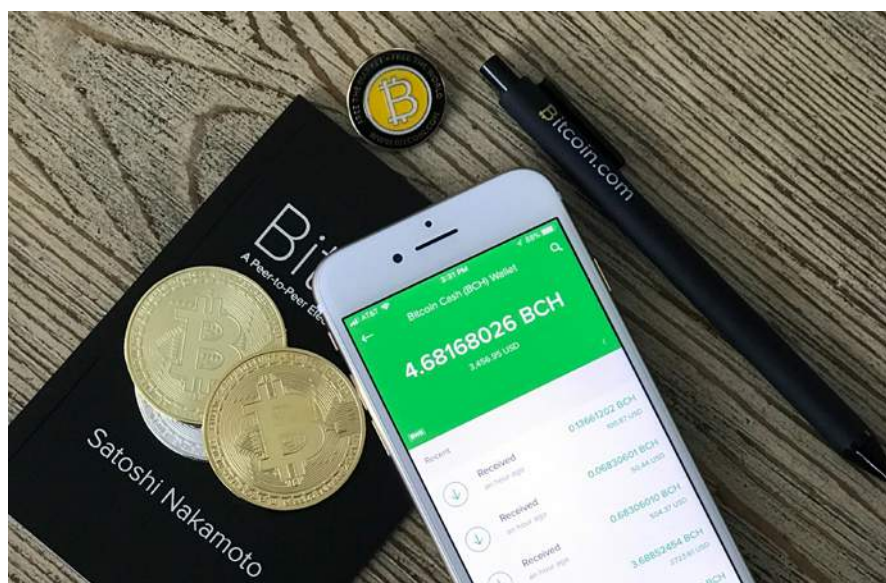
Tokyo has lost out to cities such as London, New York and Hong Kong in other financial sectors, and this is its opportunity. The fact that the Chinese government has banned the use of cryptocurrencies eliminates one of Japan’s largest potential rivals in the sector.

Bitcoin trading in Japanese yen accounts for more than 60 per cent of the cryptocurrency’s daily volume, Hornor points out, and regulations on the sector here are well developed and stringent. However, it is inevitable that these regulations will also evolve over time as the technology grows and expands. Hornor welcomes that oversight of the industry, as it will protect the legitimate businesses and weed out those with weak or defective products.

As well as the cryptocurrency exchange, DLTa21 plans to introduce one of the most secure crypto-wallets in the world, which will use biometric scanners and layers of protocols to protect it from hackers. The platform will be launched under the DLTa21X brand name once it has got all the regulatory approvals required in Japan.

But it is Japan’s consumers who will ultimately drive the business, Hornor said, and his personal and business experience here are telling him that DLTa21 is going to lead the drive towards greater acceptance for a new generation of money.

“Cryptocurrencies resonate with the younger crowd and the government here wants to be the market leader, meaning this is an opportunity for Japan to become a new global financial center,” he said. “Japan now has the chance to step in and lead the world in this new technology.” 🍁



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# PRODUCTS WITH HEART

The Earth Group feeds millions around the globe

By Julian Ryall

PHOTO: HIROFUMI KUDO/H



**After sealing a deal that will put Earth Water at all Famima!! convenience stores in Tokyo and Osaka — which will help to feed tens of thousands of children in developing countries — Kori Chilibeck could be forgiven for putting his feet up for a while.**

Instead, the founder of The Earth Group, with whom we caught up at the Alberta Japan Office, has set his sights on convincing FamilyMart Co. Ltd. to stock the distinctive blue bottles with the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) logo on the label in every one of its stores across the country.

The funds that could be raised from the company's 5,000 stores in Tokyo alone, he points out, could feed a remarkable two million children for an entire year.

## THE SOURCE

Originally from Edmonton, Chilibeck admits that he grew up in a “wealthy bubble” and was only challenged when he took time off to travel. Trekking to one of the two Mount Everest Base Camps, he met a Sherpa carrying a roughly woven basket on his back, but wearing no shoes, gloves or hat to keep the frequently sub-zero temperatures at 6,400 metres at bay. For 21 cents a day, the Sherpa was carrying cans of a well-known fizzy drink to wealthy mountaineers.

At that moment, the penny dropped, Chilibeck said. Big companies were literally making money off the backs of the poorest people in the world. Back in Canada, he set about creating a company that would pay a fair wage and give back to the people who need it the most.

The Earth Group started by selling bottled glacier water from the Canadian Rocky

Mountains to supermarkets in Canada. Today, the company provides all the water for Ikea Canada and has thousands of customers in 12 countries around the world.

It also has branched out into fair trade coffee, sourced from countries such as Indonesia, Honduras, Nicaragua and Brazil, before being roasted and packaged in Canada.

Not bad for a company that started out of a dorm room at the University of Alberta with a single laptop computer and cash borrowed from family members.

But Chilibeck agrees that badgering the UNWFP into permitting the company to have its logo on its bottles was a significant breakthrough.

## UN CONNECTION

“I phoned every number on their website and got nowhere,” he recalled. “Then I sent folders, detailing what we do, to the UN. And I kept sending them. In the end, I got a phone call from Geneva saying they would give me a meeting if — I would only stop sending them stuff.”

After a meeting with the UN in Ottawa, The Earth Group was first affiliated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

and then, after everything had gone smoothly for four years, with the umbrella organization that is the WFP. To this day, The Earth Group has the only product in the world with the WFP logo on it.

“We focus on school feeding projects and providing education to the poorest regions around the world,” Chilibeck explained. In 2017, funds raised by the group provided one million meals in Sri Lanka. It is active in Sri Lanka again this year, as well as in Madagascar and Tajikistan, and is expected to exceed its earlier target of providing 1.2 million meals to children.

To fund their efforts, the company markets close to three million bottles of high-quality water sold in biodegradable bottles that have already been recycled. And working with The Plastic Bank, the company pays for 1.5 bottles to be recovered from the world's oceans for every bottle that it produces.

“We know that people want more than a product when they buy something now,” Chilibeck said. “People want to do something to change the world and we're not asking them to donate or volunteer — by buying our water or fair trade coffee, they are helping society.” 🍁



PHOTO: THE EARTH GROUP

The Earth Group co-founders Kori Chilibeck (second from right) and Matt Moreau with Sri Lankan students

# ONE LOVE

An organization — and an individual — dedicated to LGBT equality

By Alec Jordan

**In September, six foreign chambers of commerce in Japan made a very bold move, issuing an official joint “Viewpoint on Marriage Equality” to request that the Japanese government legalize same-sex marriage.**

In the document, the American, British, Canadian, Danish, Irish and Australian and New Zealand chambers of commerce in Japan argued that marriage equality in this country would improve the global competitiveness of Japanese businesses, putting them in a strong position to compete for talented candidates who come from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

The public announcement of the Viewpoint was a long time in coming — it was the product of many meetings, held over several months — and the organization that took the leading role in making it happen was the Lawyers for LGBT and Allies Network (LLAN).

Founded in 2016, LLAN is made up of LGBT lawyers and their allies, and includes members from some of Tokyo’s most prestigious law firms and in-house legal departments. LLAN’s goal is to provide legal

assistance in promoting the understanding of LGBT and other sexual minorities, eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and contributing to the realization of a society where “all people may realize their full potential in safety.”

One of the people who was absolutely instrumental in bringing LLAN to life is Alexander Dmitrenko, who co-founded and co-chairs the organization. A Ukrainian-Canadian, he has studied law at New York University, the University of Toronto and Central European University. Dmitrenko’s first legal experience was working on groundbreaking same-sex marriage and LGBT rights cases in Canada. Prior to joining Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, he worked for Sojitz Corporation in Tokyo and Debevoise & Plimpton in New York.

At his office, we spoke with Dmitrenko about how LLAN got started, the importance of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan’s (CCCJ’s) support for the Viewpoint, and some of the challenges involved in helping Japan achieve a greater acceptance of its LGBT community.

## STRONG ALLIES

As Dmitrenko explained, LLAN’s first major project and group solidifier was the creation



Alexander Dmitrenko

**“I think dialogue is the most important thing, and I believe strongly if you open a heart, it will not close.”**

of a “Foreign Language Report on Equal Marriage” (which covered 11 jurisdictions with marriage equality and was drafted by 50 lawyers from 10 different law firms). The report was prepared to support a group of domestic lawyers that has been petitioning for same-sex marriage in Japan. Through the help of LLAN’s other co-founder and co-chair, Naosuke Fujita, general counsel for Goldman Sachs Co., Ltd., the organization was able to bring in some key domestic firms to support the effort and participate on LLAN’s board, including the four major Japanese law firms — Anderson Mori Tomotsune, Mori Hamada Matsumoto, Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu and Nishimura & Asahi — as well as Nomura Holdings, with which LLAN has co-hosted multiple events in Tokyo and Oita Prefecture.

Dmitrenko admits that he was pleasantly surprised by the support that came from the legal community: “I think that law, generally, is a conservative field. LGBT equality is not an issue every person, every lawyer, will want to address. It takes guts, it takes leadership, it takes belief to really find time and push



Delegates gathered for the announcement of the Viewpoint on Marriage Equality

PHOTO: ASTON BRIDGMAN, AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN





Members of the LLAN team

for these issues. We are lucky to have a board of people who do feel passionate about this and who want to be part of this project to bring equality to Japan.”

There are now 40 to 50 active members of LLAN, and as Dmitrenko points out, 90 per cent of the organization — and 80 per cent of its board — comprise allies, rather than LGBT lawyers. “Again, that is the beauty of it,” he says. “Many allies are even more active than some LGBT members, to be entirely honest. Many people come to law because they believe in justice and equality, and even though our daily billable work doesn’t always allow us to work towards such principles at the same level, this work does.”

LLAN now works on a variety of projects, from a yearly Equality Gala and lectures at the Keio University and Chuo University law schools to regional awareness events that have been held in locations from Okinawa to Ibaraki.

Another recent effort involves a pair of videos called *Love Is Love*. They present a lesbian and a gay couple, profiled along with their parents and their friends. The videos poignantly show that LGBT couples are no different from straight couples.



LLAN chairs Alexander Dmitrenko and Naosuke Fujita

## A SHARED VIEWPOINT

And, without a doubt, one of LLAN’s biggest recent projects was the Viewpoint on Marriage Equality.

Just as Dmitrenko takes pride in the fact that Canada was the first country outside Europe to legalize same-sex marriage, he is almost equally proud of the fact that the CCCJ was first of the chambers to approve LLAN’s Viewpoint.

“I am very proud of being Canadian and I’m very proud of being a CCCJ member, particularly because the leadership put their money where their mouth is. Very quickly, I’m going to say within a month, Neil [van Wouw, CCCJ president] put the Viewpoint before the CCCJ board. I understand there was no opposition whatsoever, with many people saying, ‘why didn’t we do this before?’”

Currently, some cities around Japan, and a few Tokyo wards, offer same-sex certificates, but these have practically no legal standing. Dmitrenko sees the Viewpoint as a necessary first step towards addressing the issue, but there’s still a long way to go.

“I think the Viewpoint here is really for educational purposes,” he explained, adding, “I think it brings the discussion to the table. It makes it more formally qualified ... if Japan wants to compete for talent, do something about it. The next step would be to have a press conference and media sessions. It’s likely that there will be further discussions on behalf of the CCCJ and the ACCJ with their government contacts and the LLAN team can make itself available to talk about the law. The ultimate goal, obviously, is legal change.”

## LOOKING AHEAD

The upcoming Olympics is a great opportunity for Tokyo to put all of its diversity on display, which is why Dmitrenko is also working with the Tokyo 2020 diversity and

inclusion team, and he believes that the group has learned a great deal about how other nations have successfully highlighted what makes them special.

In Dmitrenko’s opinion: “They are an amazing team because they really have taken their time to understand and learn what has been done in other places ... The big question is, obviously, what can be done during the Games to make the Olympics, Tokyo and Japan be seen in a better light. I think you will probably see a lot more inclusion than many might anticipate.”

When it comes to more daily acceptance in Japanese society, Dmitrenko argues that some of the biggest obstacles to a greater understanding of the LGBT community is a lack of visibility, the need for greater education and people who can advocate for the community: “You don’t have [an LGBT] presence on TV, you don’t have education in schools. A lot of the community is still in the closet, so you don’t have that personal knowledge. Finally, it is crucial to have ambassadors in the right places.”

But he’s optimistic that the country can learn from how marriage equality has been achieved in other countries, and bypass some of the preliminary steps: “If you think about the evolution of LGBT rights, usually you go through a few stages: first, you get general anti-discrimination protections, then some protections of law for couples, and then comes marriage. In Japan that should not be the case because the country is not in a vacuum; it can see what has been done in other countries. There is plenty of evidence that marriage equality shouldn’t be a staged approach. There should simply be equality.”

And Dmitrenko is even more optimistic about the power of communication to open minds: “I think dialogue is the most important thing, and I believe strongly if you open a heart, it will not close.” 🍁





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# IN TUNE

Teacher George Nicholson reflects on how music can open new worlds

By Saya Hatton

**Over the past nine years, music and orchestra have been among the most sought-after programs at the International School of the Sacred Heart, in Hiroo, Tokyo, thanks to Canadian George Nicholson.**



Nicholson leads the orchestra at the International School of the Sacred Heart.

As the music teacher and orchestra conductor at the girls' school, he has created an unparalleled music environment based on skills gained as a student at the Toronto School of the Arts and the University of Toronto and his subsequent experience teaching at the United Nations International School in New York, the American Community School in Beirut, and in Costa Rica.

## What brought you to Tokyo?

It was an affair of the heart — I met the woman who is now my wife at a teaching conference in London. I came over to teach at Sacred Heart [where she taught] for a year, ended up really enjoying it and decided to resign from my teaching position at the United Nations school in New York to also become a teacher at Sacred Heart.

## What is your music background?

I've been playing French horn, piano and guitar ever since I was a little kid.

## Who is your favourite composer?

I love Leonard Bernstein [1918–90]. He was a composer and a conductor who never felt

like he was good enough for the world of a serious musician. In some way, I feel a little bit the same way — I am always working to dig a little deeper and expand my horizons. I think the level of ability of a lot of the kids at Sacred Heart makes me want to do well for them, choose the best music and give them the best experience that I can.

## How has the music program changed since you arrived?

The orchestra gradually grew from 35 or 40 to almost 80, but my involvement with it and enjoyment of it grew to become my favourite part of being a musician. Just recently, I've made the decision to reduce the number of people [in the orchestra] and try to increase the level. I don't like the idea of having to cut anybody out, but I want it to be something that people feel proud of being a part of.

## Do students continue their involvement with music after graduating?

Yes. One student, for example, got into the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in the United States. Another is concertmaster

of a Rachmaninoff concert performed by a conglomeration of the top six university orchestras in Tokyo.

## Have you noticed any differences between Canada and Japan when it comes to learning music?

Music is respected and valued in Canada, but not really more so than sports or doing well in school. A lot of kids grow up being generalists. In Japan, what I found working at Sacred Heart is that there is a considerably higher level of respect for music making. There is a great emphasis on having one skill and really honing it, fine-tuning it, and teachers do like that.

## What do you hope students get out of studying music with you?

I hope that they develop aesthetic sensitivity and respond to music in a deeper way, and in doing so deepen their experience of life. When you listen to music from another culture, you gain a deeper understanding of the life of those people. Folk music has this wonderful quality of reflecting the character and values of the people who created it, so it's a modern window into what is important to these people.

I want them to be able to feel that with an instrument, they can take it into a community orchestra, university orchestra or choir and have it really be a part of the rest of their life. To me, the value is that it's something you can leave school with and continue doing. 🍁

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**The level of ability of a lot of the kids at Sacred Heart makes me want to do well for them, choose the best music and give them the best experience that I can.**

# FEMALE LEADERS

Roundtable event looks at women in the workplace

By Megan Casson



PHOTO: BCCJ

Equiom Solutions' Helen Woods speaks at the roundtable.

**On September 14, the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) invited its members and those of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan to attend a roundtable event titled “Women in Leadership.”**

Lead speaker at the event was Helen Woods, managing director of Equiom Solutions' Isle of Man branch in the UK, who was in Tokyo during a greater Asia tour. Woods discussed how female representation stands at Equiom, and the event was opened up to a discussion about women in the workplace and why leadership roles seem to be taken mostly by men.

## WOMEN AT EQUIOM

Equiom is an international professional services provider offering business partnering solutions. Woods started by comparing the number of women and men in leadership roles at the Isle of Man branch. “Unfortunately we are a little bit low at the senior end with female senior staff,” she explained, when talking specifically about her branch.

However, at a global level, the male–female balance at the senior manager, manager and assistant manager positions at Equiom actually leans in the favour of women. As Woods explained, a lot of this comes from the top: “The CEO of Equiom is a female, Shelia Dean, and she is incredibly supportive of female directors . . . [Dean] has got a family so she knows the stresses and pressures of trying to balance a work life.”

Having a CEO who demonstrates that balancing work and family is possible — and who encourages and helps female employees to do the same — will no doubt have an effect on employee satisfaction. This, in turn, will encourage diversity and inclusivity at Equiom, which sets an example for other global organizations.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

After Woods had spoken, the event was opened up for discussion with members of the audience.

“During my time at different companies I’ve noticed that the language used by staff to describe their male boss and their female boss can be quite different,” one female attendee pointed out. “Male managers tend to be described as a leader or a strong person, someone who is confident and authoritative. On the other hand, I’ve heard woman managers being described ... as aggressive, driven or pushy.”

The women present explored the theme, with many reflecting that the idea had been instilled in people from an early age. Some argued that this difference in perception seems to have crept in at childhood and moved all the way up the corporate structure.

“Maybe they are not aware of what they are saying, or maybe they are and they just don’t value a female manager,” concluded the woman who had launched the topic.

The discussion also explored power in corporate structures, and how the promotion of women is affected by their lack in leadership roles. Lori Henderson, executive director of the BCCJ, asked the following question: “How does the power balance and everything around it influence the decision that is made about your career?”

The conversation that ensued examined whether women were not being promoted because they are not considered to be good enough, or because women are not seen in the workplace as clearly as men are.

As one attendee commented, “I think women are more reluctant to shout out about their success. Men tend to keep a mental note of the things that they have done over the past year, which they might then be able to share with others to make sure they do get that pay raise, promotion, or recognition.”

The roundtable event provided the opportunity for an insightful discussion about the position that women have in the workplace, and their ability to excel to the same degree as their male colleagues. 🍁

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**“Having a CEO who demonstrates that balancing work and family is possible — and who encourages and helps female employees to do the same — will no doubt have an effect on employee satisfaction.”**



# STAR MAN

With astronaut David Saint-Jacques scheduled to launch in the weeks to come, we look back at his CCCJ visit

By Stephane Beaulieu

**Nine years: that's the time it will have taken David Saint-Jacques to go into space after joining Canada's team of two astronauts. Now aged 48 and set to be the 12th Canadian to go into space, Saint-Jacques will be leaving on a six-month mission to the International Space Station (ISS) in the weeks to come.**

Saying that it took him only nine years may be a bit misleading, however, considering that he was accepted in the astronaut program at 37 after building an impressive resume that was key to getting him the job. Saint-Jacques earned an engineering degree from Polytechnique Montréal, worked in Paris as a programmer, completed a PhD in astrophysics at the University of Cambridge, operated a super telescope in Hawaii for the University of Tokyo, earned his MD at Laval University in Québec City, and served as a doctor both at a refugee camp in

Lebanon and among Inuit communities in northern Québec.

According to an October 26 article on *Space.com*, Saint-Jacques said he finished his final training at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on October 24 and would be flying to Russia after that to complete his final training.

Saint-Jacques was in Japan in June 2016, when he spent two weeks at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency in Tsukuba. There he learned how to operate the ISS's largest experiment unit, the self-contained Japanese module Kibo and the H-II transfer vehicle. He took a few hours between training and climbing Mount Fuji to give Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan members and their families a presentation on his adventures and upcoming mission to the ISS.

Saint-Jacques was clear about mankind's long-term plans in space: "Our next goal is Mars." And while for adults it does not seem plausible now, many of our kids could very well walk on the Red Planet in the not-so-distant future.

The key to achieving the level of autonomy which would allow us to make a return trip to Mars possible and permit us to truly begin space exploration is being able to recreate an Earth-like ecosystem aboard a space ship. That means being able to recycle air and water, and grow food. "This is the main thing I have realized since joining the astronaut program," Saint-Jacques said, while showing the audience a beautiful image of Earth floating in space taken from the space station.

"Earth itself is a spaceship travelling across space," he added, explaining that, like the ISS, water and air cannot be added to it. What is there is what we have, and we have to keep the natural system that recycles our air and water in good condition.

One of the many children in the audience asked what astronauts do in the station when they are not working or working out on one of the devices developed to train muscles in zero-gravity environments. "They look at the Earth," Saint-Jacques replied.

From the ISS, the view of the planet is indeed breathtaking. Seen from space, northern lights, southern lights and thunder storms, rushing by at 8km a second — the speed required for the ISS to stay in orbit — present an amazing sight. So do the millions of lights visible at night, which trigger memories of friends and experiences while one passes over a familiar coastline, places visited or even one's home town.

Today, and since November 2000, whenever you go knocking at one of the ISS's four doors, there is always someone to welcome you. With Russian, English, French, Italian, German, English and Japanese spoken on board, the ISS is truly a multicultural environment. When in space, what an astronaut experiences first hand is the awareness that, while there are great differences among all of us, we are all from the same place.

Saint-Jacques admits that there are still a lot of politics and cultural differences in play when it comes to moving the space projects of multiple countries forward. Nevertheless, there is also a realization that "this" is bigger than any single individual or nation's interest: it is an endeavour that defines the evolution of mankind.

The ISS is a very powerful symbol of what we can accomplish when we work together, and space exploration is, and will remain, one major driver of international collaboration for many years to come. 🍁



David Saint-Jacques fascinates CCCJ members and their families with his presentation.

# CUTTING EDGE

Burnt-out chef brings Japanese blades to Canada

By Vivian Morelli



PHOTO: MASON HASTIE

What started out with a mountain bike and a backpack filled with Japanese knives to sell to chefs in bars, kitchens and alleys has turned into quite the empire in just a few years. Kevin Kent, CEO of Knifewear Group, is a self-described burnt-out chef with a passion for sharp tools and whose inspiration has led him to open five shops across Canada that sell knives made in Japan, as well as three shaving and grooming shops called Kent of Inglewood.

Kent worked in the kitchen for more than 20 years — and not just any kitchen. He did a stint in London as the sous-chef at St. John Restaurant with the eccentric genius Fergus Henderson. There, he said, he learned what excellence really means.

“After many years in England, I moved back to Calgary in 2006, planning to open a restaurant. But then, in spring 2007, I had saved C\$8,000. With that money, I imported a few knives from Japanese makers and made some food-, chef- and knife-inspired shirts designed by Canadian chef and illustrator Pierre Lamielle. That is where the name Knifewear came from,” Kent explained.

He first became acquainted with Japanese knives nearly two decades ago. “In 1999, I met my first Japanese knife. I thought I knew what a sharp knife was. If you had asked me, I would have told you that I always kept my knives razor sharp. I thought I had good knives, and I was confident in my ability to keep them sharp. And I was ignorant enough to not realize just how dull my knives actually were,” he admitted.

For Kent, the early days of Knifewear were simply a way to pass the time and have some fun. “I wanted to sell a few knives so that I could add some really great ones to my personal collection and I wanted to sell some cool shirts. Eventually, I had planned to open a restaurant, or a few of them,” he said.

## BEYOND THE BACKPACK

But in 2007, after a busy summer visiting chefs on his mountain bike and carrying a knife-filled backpack, things got a little hectic — in the best way possible.

Kent was getting up to 15 calls a day from people who were wondering where his shop was, and if they could buy knives right away. He eventually set up a table at the Calgary Farmers’ Market on the weekends, met customers there for knife sales and collected knives for sharpening before returning them. “It was not ideal,” Kent recalled, “but I did what I had to do.”

His world completely changed over the next few years. He opened a small kiosk in another retail shop, then got his own space



Kevin Kent

at the current Ninth Avenue location in Calgary. “For the next four years, my team and I focused on turning that shop into a knife lover’s destination and a hangout for chefs and food lovers.”

Now, people can find Knifewear shops in Calgary (two locations), Vancouver, Ottawa and Edmonton. Along with his team, he also created the Kent of Inglewood grooming brand, opening stores in Calgary, Ottawa and Edmonton.

Knifewear caters to chefs and ordinary people as well. Not every Canadian is



**“This is an industry we need to protect and nurture. And I think it needs to be more famous in Japan.”**

familiar with the quality of Japanese knives, but the Knifewear stores let customers get up close and personal with the tools. “People come to [our shops] every day, all day. We always have tomatoes, potatoes and carrots for customers to cut with our sample knives. After they try our knives they know they are the best in the world,” Kent said with pride.

Customers can also order directly online on a website that summarizes the qualities of each type of knife and provides detailed information about its composition, manufacturer and city of origin. Even knife rookies need not feel intimidated by the world of Japanese knives, thanks to the site’s clear descriptions and witty captions.

### KNIFE TIES

To stock up on knives and create ties with local craftsmen, Kent comes to Japan two or three times a year, bringing with him a new staff member or two.

Sakai, the Osaka city perhaps best known for knives, is one of the places he visits, but there are others: Yatsushiro in Kumamoto Prefecture, Sanjo and Tsubame in Niigata Prefecture, Niimi in Okayama Prefecture, Fukuyama in Hiroshima Prefecture and



PHOTO: MASON HASTIE

At Knifewear’s Calgary location, an employee sharpens a knife.

Tokyo. But one location stands out. “Echizen in Fukui Prefecture is my most important stop,” he added. “We get more knives from there than any other area.”

Kent is the first to admit that his work keeps him busy but has its benefits. “I’m in the enviable position that I get to visit Japan two or three times a year,” he said. “On these trips I eat loads of Japanese food, drink *nihonshu*, and sing the occasional karaoke song.”

At the beginning, Kent was introduced to one supplier in Japan, from whom he got his first knives. He then had the chance to meet other suppliers through introductions, as well as at various trade shows all around the world. Now, every year Knifewear takes one or more Japanese blacksmiths to Canada to meet the staff and to give knife-making demos.

Kent celebrates the talent of those craftsmen in his recently published book,

*The Knifenerd Guide to Japanese Knives*.

“I realized that there are a few kitchen knife books out there, but none that really spoke to me. The main thrust of the book is to shine a light on the blacksmiths and craftsmen who make the knives we love. At home, they are seen as workers in an almost unknown industry, but they are rock stars to our customers. I think they should be famous for their work so I wrote this book to help them gain more attention for their skills,” he explained.

As if the quest for sharp tools and a book about them weren’t enough, Kent has also produced a film, *Springhammer*, along with film maker Kevin Kossowan. While focusing on the past, present and future of blacksmithing in Japan, the movie reveals facets of Japanese culture. It set an attendance record at the Edmonton International Film Festival, where it also won the People’s Choice Award. (The film can be viewed free on the Knifewear website.)

As for future plans, Kent has outgrown those days of the mountain bike and knife-filled backpack. His next step is to expand Knifewear to Toronto, but he’s also got global ambitions: “We would love to open a rock and roll knife shop in Kyoto. I think it would be great fun and a good business. Beyond that, I would love to partner with someone or a group in Japan to help start a blacksmithing school. I see the demand for these knives as only growing, and I want there to be new people taking up the trade every year. This is an industry we need to protect and nurture. And I think it needs to be more famous in Japan.” 🍁

A customer at Knifewear’s Calgary location examines the merchandise.



PHOTO: JAFED SYCH



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# AN ARTIST ABROAD

Printmaker Hidemi Momma reflects on her time in Halifax

By Alec Jordan



**As a student at Musashino Art University, printmaker Hidemi Momma used to spend four hours commuting between Urayasu in Chiba Prefecture and Kokubunji in western Tokyo. The trips gave her time to reflect on her many school projects, and proved instrumental in establishing the direction that her work would take.**

"I was constantly looking out at the landscapes from the train window, so I realized that focusing on landscapes as my subject material made perfect sense. And from the train, my line of sight was higher than it would have been if I were walking. From that perspective, the sky would seem even more spacious, and I could look down at buildings," she explained, while speaking at a Yokohama gallery, where she was exhibiting.

In fact, even though she now depicts landscapes from around the country, many of the prints she creates are square, a visual reference to those train windows from which she once spent so much time looking.

Momma was drawn to woodblock printing after seeing the work of the well-known printmaker Hasui Kawase (1883–1957),

but it was through her coursework that she began learning about silk screening. It was the medium's colours and texture, that reminded her a bit of oil painting, which appealed to her from the start.

Her work is characterized by a use of colour that can be both bold and subtle, and a careful attention to light, and to water's many forms. She has shown at many galleries and in many shows around the country, but one of her greatest supporters is the College Women's Association of Japan (CWAJ), which is known for its annual print show that features the work of both established and up-and-coming artists.

In 2009, Momma applied to exhibit at the CWAJ Print Show. She was accepted — and honoured with the CWAJ's 5th Young Printmaker Award.

In the years that followed, Momma exhibited at many CWAJ Print Shows, and she later was named to the 2nd CWAJ Artist-in-Residence Program, which gave her the opportunity to travel to Canada and experience entirely new landscapes. From July to October of 2013, she studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in Halifax.

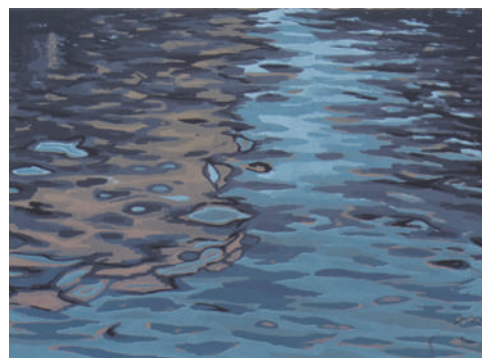
While Momma was at the university, she was struck by a number of things. The first was her physical surroundings: "I thought that the light was very different ... In Tokyo, buildings and architecture play such an important role in

the landscape. But in Nova Scotia, there were huge hills and forests. It was a place that was very close to nature, and that was really part of its charm when compared with Tokyo."

Something else she noticed was a greater sense of stretching out: "Our teachers would tell us, when you go to different places, you should use a different, flexible approach that works well with that specific environment. Then, rather than being very particular about sticking to one approach, it is important to adapt your technique to different locations ... My way of thinking and creating art changed a lot because of that."

Finally, she recalls the closeness that she felt with her fellow students and the warmth of her host country: "Some of my most memorable experiences were presenting my own exhibition, giving a workshop and sharing an artist's talk. Having that kind of communication with my classmates, even though I wasn't very good at English, was wonderful ... Any time I was having trouble with anything my fellow students helped me out. I really got a feeling of how friendly Canadians could be and that made a big impression on me."

Momma still maintains some of the connections that she made at NSCAD, and she keeps the lessons she learned in Nova Scotia — and some of the landscapes — alive in her work. 🍁



Silkscreens by Hidemi Momma (left to right): Still Water, 2013; The Lake in Early Summer, 2018; Water Surface, 2013



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# FASHION FORWARD

Jamal Abdourahman talks style, global and local

By Alec Jordan

PHOTO: FRANKIE SHIU PHOTOGRAPHY



**Jamal Abdourahman, founder of Vancouver Fashion Week, immigrated to Canada from Djibouti in 1990. Landing first in Toronto, he moved to Vancouver in 1993. From then, he went from running fashion shows at nightclubs and warehouses to owning his own clothing store to jet-setting his way around the world's fashion capitals to launching the first Vancouver Fashion Week in 2001.**

Since its launch, this rapidly growing fashion event has become an opportunity for local and international designers to reach global markets, the fashion media and industry buyers. Throughout the year, Abdourahman travels the world, helping to draw attention to Vancouver Fashion Week and the designers who show there.

He recently launched a new endeavour, the Global Fashion Collective, in Tokyo and New York. We recently spoke with him about the hallmarks of fashion in the cosmopolitan city of Vancouver and what the future holds for Vancouver Fashion Week.

**What are some of the influences that shape the Vancouver fashion scene?**

Vancouver is on the west coast, so athleisure and outerwear are big: people put comfort

**“The future has only just started, as Vancouver is becoming a global city.”**

over high fashion. But there is a big street style fashion scene, and a big underground art scene — just like in every other city. There are always small underground cultures from music to film, and also we have a lot of Asia-Pacific communities that reside here. There's a big Chinese community, and large Korean and Japanese communities. The Chinese community used to be from Hong Kong and Taiwan; now in the last 15 years it's more people from mainland China moving here.

**If you were to describe Vancouver fashion in a few words what would you say?**

It's a more understated, individual style. It's not really uniform. You see some places are so uniform — people follow the same trends and

everybody wears the same thing. Dominant colours here are grey, green and black, as a reflection of the weather. We're surrounded by nature, so leisure and athletic wear play a strong role here. That is why we have big companies coming out of Vancouver, such as Arc'teryx and Lululemon.

**Can you tell me a little bit more about the Global Fashion Collective?**

The Global Fashion Collective is the extension of Vancouver Fashion Week. Our clients enjoyed coming to Vancouver from London, Tokyo, Berlin, Copenhagen and Peru, and they also wanted to have the same platform in the Big Four cities [New York, Tokyo, Paris and London]. Tokyo is now my favourite fashion week, so we started with Tokyo and through the Global Fashion Collective, we're serving our clients and supporting young Canadian designers with our global platform. Japanese designers are also showing with us in Tokyo as a part of the Global Fashion Collective. So far we have done New York and Tokyo.

**What are some of the achievements you are most proud of?**

I think just having that platform where we now have about 25 young designers who are building their brands online and selling. They have just started focusing on their own brands and we are looking at having those brands become independent and sell globally in the next four or five years.

**What does the future hold for the show?**

The future has only just started, as Vancouver is becoming a global city. We will continue to grow Vancouver Fashion Week and also continue to grow the Global Fashion Collective in the Big Four cities. Two are done, and there are two more to go — Paris and London are on the way next year. 🍁

PHOTO: TERRING, STNDRD PHOTO



A Vancouver Fashion Week attendee poses in front of the show's logo.

# CCCJ EVENTS

## Autumn Chambering

Meet up with members of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan and the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan at this networking event to be held at Tanto Tanto The Gardens, an Italian restaurant known for its authentic cuisine. Make sure to bring plenty of business cards, and get ready for an evening of free-flowing drinks, delicious food and lively conversation with friends new and old.

**Date:** November 13

**Venue:** Tanto Tanto The Gardens, Mitsui Garden Hotel, Gotanda

**Time:** 19:00–21:00

## Canadian Tax Seminar

Learn everything you want to know about tax and pension issues in Canada and Japan, from filing requirements in both countries to pension planning and issues related to owning, selling, or renting property in Canada and Japan.

The seminar will have two separate sessions: one for professionals (16:00–17:30) and one for individuals (18:00–20:00). Both sessions will feature informative presentations by experts in the Japanese and Canadian tax systems.

**Date:** November 15

**Venue:** Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo

**Time:** 16:00–20:00

## Tokyo Sake Night

Experience the joys of sake and meet the people who make it at this entertaining and informative tasting and networking event. The sake store chain Kurand, which is putting on the event, will bring about 10 breweries from across Japan to serve their sake. In addition, there will be food and sake pairings, sake cocktails and seasonal sakes for tasting. To help guests learn more about this famous Japanese beverage, there will be a lecture by Christopher Hughes, an international sake sommelier and certified sake educator. Tokyo Sake Night is jointly supported by the American, Austrian, Australian and New Zealand, Canadian and Swiss chambers of commerce in Japan.

**Date:** November 23

**Venue:** The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

**Time:** 18:00–20:00

## Hackathon at White & Case

Meet Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) members, get oriented (if you're a new member), find out more about the work CCCJ committees do and help come up with solutions to the organization's challenges at this problem-solving event. Drop by and get involved!

**Date:** November 27

**Time:** 18:00–20:00

## Joint Chamber Bonenkai

Fourteen chambers of commerce are participating at this end-of-year networking party, which in the past has drawn a diverse crowd of some 300 businesspeople from around the globe. The event will be held at the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo, and will feature a sumptuous buffet, free flowing drinks, prizes and entertainment. It's a great opportunity to network, mingle and, perhaps, even develop some business leads! Buy your tickets quickly, as this popular event always sells out fast.

**Date:** December 11

**Venue:** Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo

**Time:** 18:00–20:30



Guests enjoy the CCCJ University Alumni Mixer on September 21.

**For more details or to book events: [cccj.or.jp](http://cccj.or.jp)**



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

## INDIVIDUAL



### **Mark Wang**

Shopify

Previously based in Hong Kong, I came to Japan as the country manager for Shopify — the world's leading e-commerce platform, which is proud to be headquartered in Ottawa, Canada. I have a background that includes financial services (Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase), development finance and early-stage investments across Southeast and East Asia. I'm eager to maintain close connections with Canada and be a part of the tight community that comes with our national identity and our various alumni networks, which is why I joined the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

## NON-RESIDENT INDIVIDUAL



### **Milo Ioughlissen**

Bank of Montreal

A favourite part of my current role as commercial manager with the Bank of Montreal involves working with Japanese corporations in Canada. I hold an M.Sc. in financial risk analysis and come from a multidisciplinary background. That includes a successful exit from a startup in the OEM hardware space in Canada. I continue to be partnered in the beverage manufacturing market operating out of Algeria. I have worked extensively in Canada, France, Algeria and China. I would be truly happy to meet other members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan, since I travel to Japan two or three times a year.

## CORPORATE



### **Benjamin Drinkwalter**

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## NON-RESIDENT SMALL BUSINESS



### **Dave Enright**

Evergreen Outdoor Center

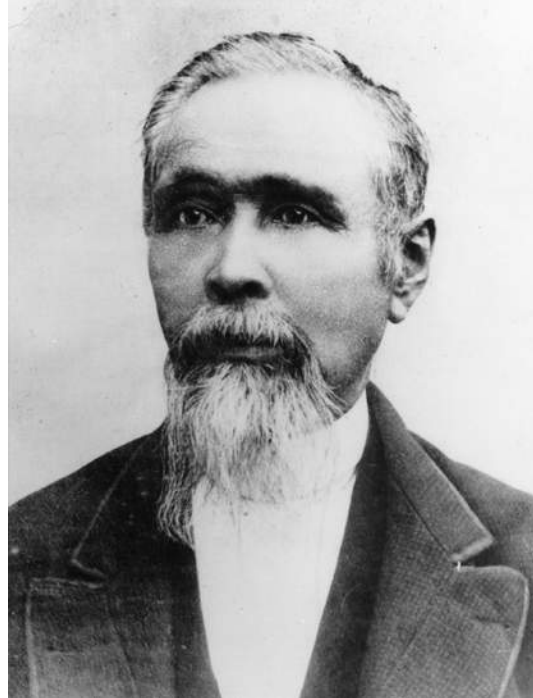
Hailing from West Vancouver, British Columbia, I grew up in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor region of British Columbia, where I gained my love for the mountains and sea. I combined my love of the outdoors and sports with a degree in outdoor recreation management. I also did two student exchanges in Japan, during which I acquired a firm grasp of the Japanese language and culture. Currently, I live with my wife Mariko and two children in the Japanese Northern Alps village of Hakuba, where I have been running the Evergreen Outdoor Center for close to 20 years.

# THE CAPTIVE TEACHER

How Ranald MacDonald ignited English studies in Japan

By Tim Hornyak

PHOTO: COURTESY MUSEUM OF NEW HISTORY COLLECTION, K. ROSS TOOLE ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, MISSOULA



Ranald MacDonald, July 5, 1891

**In 1848, Shogun Ieyoshi, the 12th supreme warlord in the Tokugawa dynasty, ruled Japan. The people were saddled with harsh austerity laws and Japan was still a deeply feudal state, closed to the world. U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry's fleet wouldn't arrive to demand port and trade concessions for another five years.**

Nevertheless, 1848 is when North American explorer Ranald MacDonald chose to be dropped off by a whaler at Rishiri Island off Ezo, today's Hokkaido. MacDonald was fuelled by an intense curiosity about Japan. "My plan was to present myself as a castaway and to rely on their humanity," he wrote. "My purpose was to learn of them; and, if occasion should offer, to instruct them of us."

Calling MacDonald North American is one way to skirt questions about his nationality. He was born in 1824 in present-day Astoria, Oregon, on territory that was then controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company. Oregon Country itself was shared by Britain and the United States; further complicating affairs was the fact that MacDonald's father was a Hudson's Bay official and his mother was a Chinook princess.

## SAMURAI STUDENTS

Posing as a shipwrecked sailor, MacDonald was found by indigenous Ainu, brought to the local authorities, interrogated and then carted off to Soya, then Matsumae, and finally Nagasaki, at the time the only Japanese port open to external trade.

He was concealed from the public at all times. He wasn't one of the Dutch traders allowed at Dejima, and the local mandarins didn't know what to do with him. They

## MacDonald was fuelled by an intense curiosity about Japan.

confined him to a room at Daihian, a Buddhist temple, for 10 months.

The enterprising MacDonald made the best of it. At the time, there were no English teachers or fluent speakers in Japan — and foreign ships had begun circling the archipelago like ravenous sharks. MacDonald offered his captors language instruction, and 14 samurai took English lessons from him.

MacDonald had become one of the first English teachers in Japan, but he had also carefully studied the local language and culture and took the knowledge overseas. At the end of April 1849, he was put aboard the U.S. warship *Preble* — which had come to Nagasaki to pick up U.S. sailors who had deserted a whaler — and sent home.

After returning home, MacDonald submitted a report about Japan to Congress that praised the Japanese for their orderly, cultivated society. That helped pave the way for Perry's mission. Japan's chief interpreter for the historic negotiations with the United States was Einosuke Moriyama, MacDonald's star pupil.

## A MAN FROM MANY PLACES

MacDonald traveled extensively in Europe, Asia and Australia. After his journeys he first went to "Canada East" (present-day Québec), but then spent many years in what is now British Columbia, running a packing business and a ferry service on the Fraser River.

He participated in expeditions to Vancouver Island and the Cariboo, an inland region of British Columbia, and retired to a log cabin near present-day Colville, Washington.

MacDonald died in 1894, and was buried in eastern Washington State near the Canadian border; there are memorials to him in Astoria, Nagasaki and on Rishiri.

While MacDonald made conflicting statements about his nationality over his lifetime, historians in both the United States and Canada have laid claims to him.

"Ranald could have claimed to be a U.S. citizen, a Canadian, or a British citizen," says Frederik L. Schodt, author of *Native American in the Land of the Shogun: Ranald MacDonald and the Opening of Japan*.

"I believe he told his interrogators in Japan that he was from Oregon which, in his parlance, meant everything from the Columbia River north to British Columbia, and included the state of Washington and part of Idaho, I suspect. To say that he was a Canadian is somewhat true, but a bit disingenuous, because of course when he was born modern Canada did not exist and when it did first come into being it was British."

Whatever his nationality, however, by being the first native English teacher of Japanese interpreters, MacDonald planted a seed of internationalization in Japan that grew into a core pillar of its modernization. 🍁





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