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A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Tokyo American Club turns 90



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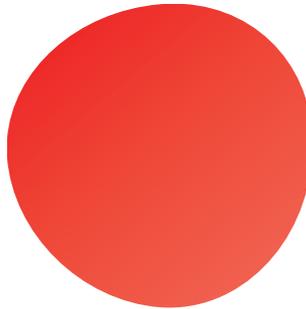
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The Mission of the European Business Council

To promote an impediment-free environment for European business in Japan.



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“[we] offer members a user experience that fits their lifestyle and their requirements”

A diverse community

By Yung-Hsiang Kao





First Focus

Golden Week in Japan, this year from 28–30 April and 3–6 May, has traditionally been a time for holidaymaking. While some go abroad — South Korea, Taiwan and Hawaii being a few popular destinations — others go to domestic attractions, such as Universal Studios Japan in Osaka. Rather than flying on a fully booked plane, these thrill-seekers took to the skies on The Flying Dinosaur in the Jurassic Park area of the amusement park. The fast aerial ride sure beat the holiday traffic jams, with vehicles bumper to bumper for up to 40 kilometres.

Photo by Mr.pinate
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David McNeill has been in Japan since 2000 and writes for *The Economist* and other international publications. He is co-author of *Strong in the Rain* and is writing a book exploring differences between the Japanese and Western mass media.

➔ *“Japan probably has the highest rates of IVF treatment in the world, and the lowest success rate. European companies say it can do better. They are helping to lead the campaign for an IVF law, which should help more Japanese women conceive and slow the dramatic decline of Japan’s population.”*



Tokyo journalist **Tim Hornyak** has covered technology in Japan for IDG News, CNET, Scientific American and other media, and is the author of *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*. He has also co-authored Lonely Planet’s guidebooks to Japan and Tokyo.

➔ *“IT has changed many aspects of our lives, and one of the big holdout industries, insurance, is finally getting with the programme. Insurtech is providing solutions such as instant quotes, automated underwriting and policies offered at checkout when shopping online — all of which can benefit consumers. It’s time to look at what your provider is doing to keep up.”*



Writing in and about Japan since 2000, **Gavin Blair** contributes articles to magazines, websites and newspapers in Asia, Europe and the US on a wide range of topics, many of them business related.

➔ *“The EU’s General Data Protection Regulation, which comes into effect 25 May, was getting bad press in the US and being dubbed protectionist. But when the full extent of Facebook’s (mis)use of data became apparent, the tone changed rapidly. Indeed, when Mark Zuckerberg testified before Congress in April, the European regulations suddenly became the benchmark to be aspired to.”*



A former newspaper and wire service reporter, **Geoff Botting** has called Japan home for over a quarter of a century. He now works as a freelance journalist and translator, writing mostly about business, economics and travel.

➔ *“Japan imposes tariffs on a range of industrial materials, including ones its key industries rely on. But once the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU is finalised, these levies are expected to disappear. That would leave the Materials Committee with time to work on a host of new issues.”*

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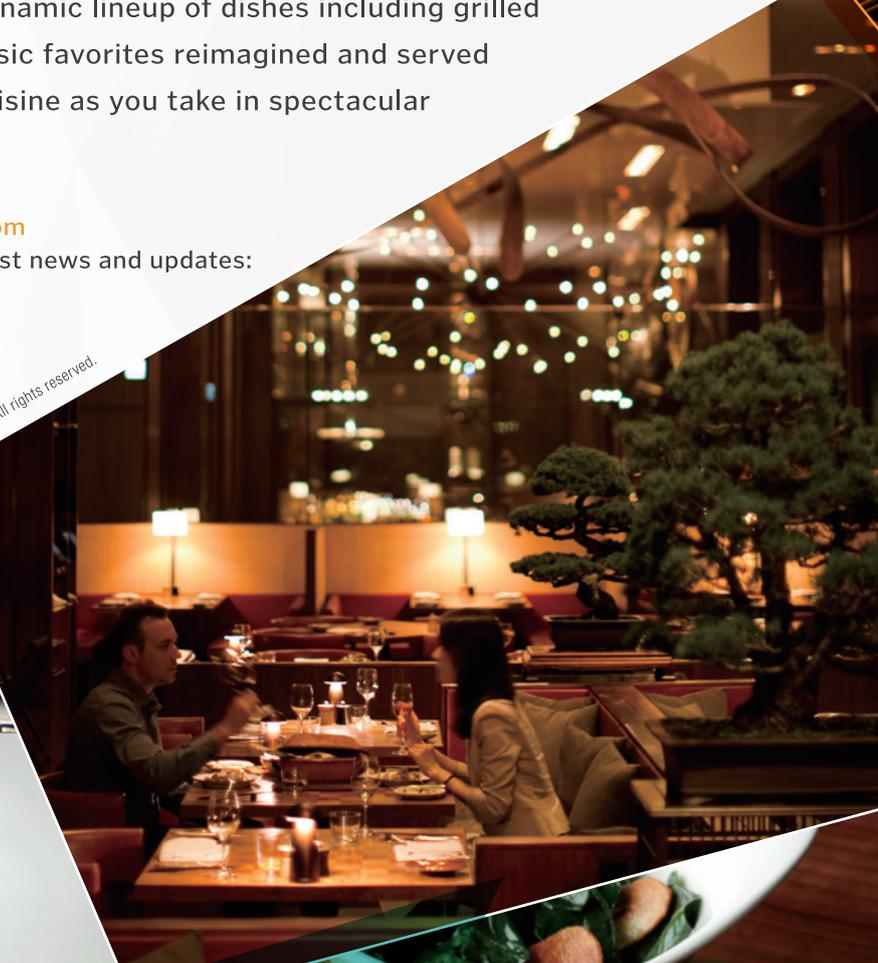
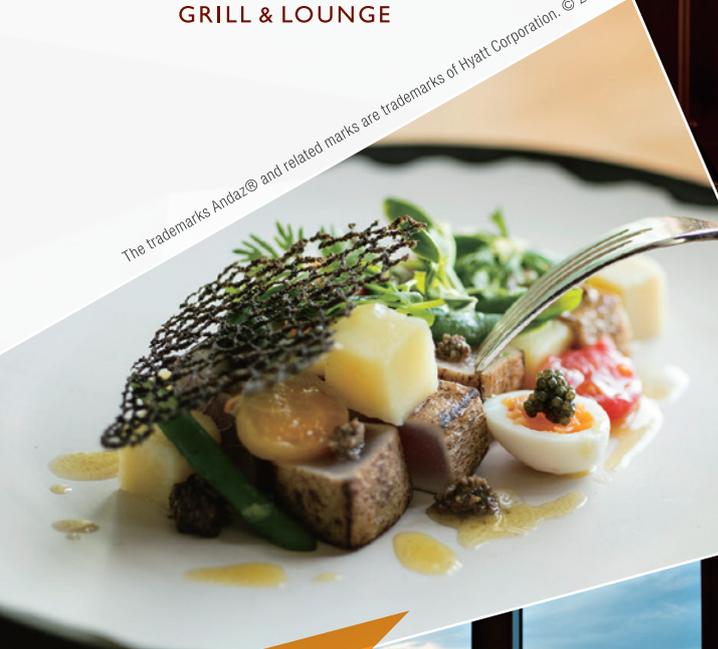


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Getting up to snuff

In the eyes of the EU, Japan is inadequate in terms of the level of data protection it offers. The free flow of personal data across borders — such as credit card details used for online purchases — is essential for conducting business smoothly today. Currently, additional authorisations are required when transferring personal data between the EU and Japan. But this may soon change. Mutual adequacy talks are underway with the aim of having Japan recognised as “adequate”.

This month, the EU steps up its own regulations on data protection. The General Data Protection Regulation gives individuals more rights over how their information is handled and tightens rules on how firms can

collect and process this data. In *Looking out for the common netizen* (page 18), Gavin Blair gives details about the new rules and how they could affect EU firms doing business in Japan.

With the highest number of women in the world seeking IVF treatment, but the lowest success rate — at 20% — Japan’s IVF industry isn’t up to snuff. European firms are offering support, but the onus is on the Japanese government to provide better legal guidelines and financial aid so that the nation will see a higher number

of babies born and slow its population decline. Read David McNeill’s *A fertile business* on page 14 to learn more.

The unceasing efforts of Danish Ambassador Freddy Svane to further strengthen Denmark–Japan ties are well beyond adequate. In *Turning words into actions* (page 20), he speaks about the Crown Prince Couple’s visit to Japan and the push to turn the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two countries into concrete actions.

Never settle for good enough, but adequate is often a good place to start. ●

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A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Tokyo American Club turns 90

On 23 May 1928, a group of 51 American businessmen founded Tokyo American Club (TAC) as an exclusive place for expatriate Americans

to gather. However, over the past 90 years, the club has undergone several transformations, occupying six buildings in different locations around Tokyo. Its present home, an eight-storey complex, opened in Azabudai, Minato ward, in January 2011. It has also seen a transformation in terms of its demographics.

“Over time, we’ve diversified and broadened the membership, growing it dramatically from a small group of American expats to the large diverse group we are today,” says Michael Alfant, representative governor of the club since 2016.

TAC has some 4,000 members, drawn from more than 50 countries, including a sizable percentage of Europeans. There are no nationality requirements to become a member.

“There are Europeans who have served on the board and Europeans who currently serve as volunteer leaders, as committee chairs, and are integral to the governing structure here,” says Alfant, an American entrepreneur from New York, who has been a member of the club for 15 years. “There’s a huge demographic of European members in the club.”

Alfant points to several benefits of membership that draw Europeans to the club.

“Firstly, you become a part of the largest business community in Japan — and that’s focused specifically on international business,” he says. “But it’s not a business organisation; it’s a social community, a club that’s largely populated by international businesspeople that

4,000

TAC has some 4,000 members, drawn from more than 50 countries



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provides a good opportunity to expand your personal network here.”

Among other benefits, members have access to meeting and event facilities, top-end restaurants with award-winning wine collections, seven guest suites — and excellent fitness facilities.

“Part of being a good businessperson is having stamina and being *genki*,” says Alfant — using the Japanese word for “healthy and energetic” — who

improved, and regularly do. Alfant is a proponent of the Japanese practice of *kaizen* and encourages incremental improvements to be made each day.

And while each US ambassador serves as the honorary president of the club, Alfant says TAC is “very politically uninvolved”.

“Our present mission is to create a community for everyone, not just for Americans, but for everyone in Japan that’s interested in international business, international relations, diversity, expanded horizons,” he says. “What I’m always trying to create is a sense of community amongst our members.”

The club’s range of dining and recreational amenities — which include an impressive top-floor swimming pool, full-size gymnasium, spa and library — play host to a packed calendar of events and programmes. Besides American holiday celebrations, such as the Fourth of July, the club organises wine-maker dinners, author talks, tours, children’s summer camps and a multitude of fitness and cultural classes.

“Just about anything you can imagine we use as an excuse to have an

Fukushima, a relationship nurtured by the club since the triple disaster of 2011.

Thanks in part to its central location, excellent facilities and iconic status, TAC was selected to host Team USA during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The US Olympic Committee (USOC) has designated the club as its USA House, or headquarters, during the Games. Athletes, staff and USOC partners will take over half of the complex, with the other half reserved exclusively for members’ use.

Alfant hopes TAC members will have opportunities to mingle with the athletes on Team USA.

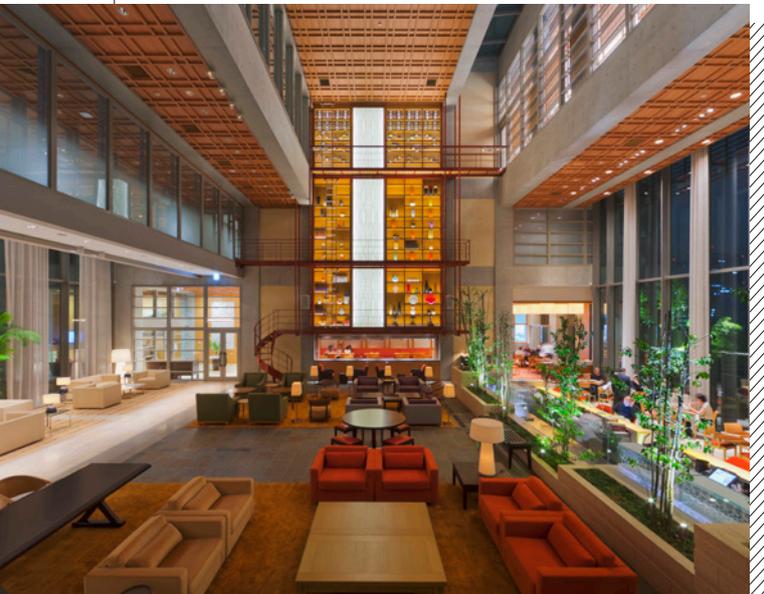
“Obviously, the athletes are here for a specific reason and they have an overriding priority, but we’ll certainly make our facility available to them,” he says. “We will welcome them when their events are done, or even before their events are done, to take advantage of the club.”

With more foreign companies setting up or expanding operations in Tokyo ahead of the Games and the 2019 Rugby World Cup, the club recently launched a membership option aimed specifically at expats on short-term assignments.

One particular group who are increasingly making the most of the club are families, who represent the most popular membership option. The club today has a formal side and a family side, a distinction not available in previous incarnations of the club.

“The nice thing that we can do is offer members a user experience that fits their lifestyle and their requirements,” Alfant says. “Partly because the club is so large and so diverse, you can make of it what you want to make of it.” ●

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works out at the club five days a week. “The gym here opens at 5:45 ... And we have parking available for members, so you can get here early, get your workout in and be at your office by 7:30, without a problem.”

Furthermore, members can take advantage of reciprocal membership arrangements with 150 similar clubs around the world, including several in European countries such as Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the UK.

As a private club, members are invited to make suggestions on how the club can be

event and to have a great time with it,” says Alfant.

The variety of offerings helps retain members long-term, and draws new ones.

“I think the club offers people several unique value propositions — whether it’s a swimming pool that’s open early in the morning, or a world-class steakhouse, or guest suites, or US sports on television ... to activities for young people and adults,” he says. “There is no member who accesses everything the club has to offer — there’s just too much.”

Registered as an *ippan shadan hojin*, or general incorporated association, TAC is involved in community outreach, community service and charity work, an important part of the club’s identity. In one recent event, member families hosted schoolchildren from



European firms are helping Japan make more babies.

It shouldn't be a surprise that a country running short of children has one of the world's busiest fertility hospitals. The Kato Ladies Clinic in Shinjuku, central Tokyo, performs an average of 27,000 in vitro fertility (IVF) cycles per year. Dozens of women file through its operating suites every day to have their eggs stimulated, extracted, fertilised, frozen and implanted. All that effort produces about 4,000 successful pregnancies annually, says a spokesperson for the clinic.

That's still a relative drop in the bucket. In 2016, the number of births in Japan dipped below one million for the first time since the government began keeping statistics in 1899. Japan's fertility rate — the average number of children a woman will bear over her lifetime — is 1.44, only a slight increase on the postwar low of 1.26 recorded in 2005, but still far below the population replacement rate. Without a change in Japan's immigration policy, government estimates predict the nation will lose a third of its current population of 127 million by the middle of the century.

Fertility treatment can help soften this demographic crunch, says Klaus Jacobsen, president of Origio Japan. Origio is a Danish company that sells IVF products and services to many of the roughly 600 hospitals in Japan that help infertile couples. The firm provides everything from the devices used to extract eggs to the cryopreservation technology to freeze them.

"Between one in five and one in six couples in Japan now struggle to conceive," Jacobsen points out.

That makes Japan a growing market — and a distinctive one.

IVF treatment helped bring over 50,000 Japanese babies into the world last year — 5% of all births in the country — according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The figures are a testament to

A FERTILE BUSINESS

Europe is helping Japan to improve its birth rate

“Between one in five and one in six couples in Japan now struggle to conceive”

how badly many parents want to conceive, despite the cost: about ¥300,000 to ¥500,000 per attempt, and sometimes more.

Japan has the highest rate of IVF treatment in the world, according to Akiko Matsumoto, president of the NPO Fertility Information Network (Fine) — and, she laments, the lowest success rate of about 20%. One reason for this is the increasingly advanced age of recipients: Japanese women are, on average, older than Europeans when they first attempt IVF. And the older women get, the harder it is for them to conceive. Career pressures and the cost of living are forcing many to put off marriage; social pressures mean there are far fewer babies born out of wedlock than in Europe. The upshot is that many are trying to get pregnant in their late thirties or their forties.

Another key issue, notes Origio’s Jacobsen, is the big gap in success rates of clinics.

“There is no independent auditing or ranking,” he says. Specialist training for embryologists is in short supply, too, he adds.

Still, scientific advancements have dramatically improved success rates since Japan’s first “test-tube” baby was born in 1983.

For example, analysis of hormone levels, which can reveal causes of infertility, can today be done extremely quickly.

“It is very important to evaluate hormone levels during a consultation to determine the diagnosis and the course of treatment,” explains Mikio Matsumoto, manager of the Clinical Marketing Group at Roche Diagnostics K.K., a Swiss-based healthcare firm and manufacturer of in vitro diagnostics medical equipment. “Our analysis equipment and reagents used for hormone-level measurement takes only 18 minutes to yield results, and they are used in many IVF clinics.”

Additionally, more and more women are successfully giving birth later in life.





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“These days it is possible to reach pregnancy at a higher age than ever before,” says Kaoru Koyama of Vitrolife, a Sweden-based company with an office in Tokyo that also offers assisted reproduction services. “However, the cost of adopting these technologies is also on the rise.”

Without better insurance coverage, she says, many will have to rule out IVF treatment.

Unlike many European countries, Japan’s national health insurance does not cover treatment. However, since 2004, a subsidy system pays for the first attempt and ¥150,000 for a limited number of follow-ups — with conditions: the recipient must be under age 43 and not earning more than ¥7.3 million a year. These subsidies are dispersed for about 160,000 cases annually. Thousands more people pay out of their own pockets; Matsumoto says one woman who came to Fine for help had tried four times a year for over a decade.

In a country where deaths now outstrip births by about 300,000 a year, more could be done, bemoans Matsumoto. She notes that hundreds of Japanese people travel abroad for donors and surrogates every year.

“The government should offer better financial and emotional help,” Matsumoto says.

With proper legal guidelines and financial aid, IVF could help produce 300,000 to 400,000 more babies in Japan annually, claims Jacobsen of Origio.

There is some shifting ground. Starting this year, the health ministry will extend its IVF subsidies to include couples who are not married, a recognition that many common-law partners also want children.



IVF is emerging from the shadows: for years, women often underwent difficult and emotionally draining treatment in secret. Japan has come a long way since journalists were warned off discussing the taboo subject of fertility treatment for Princess Masako, wife of Crown Prince Naruhito, who gave birth a few days before her 38th birthday in 2001 to Princess Aiko.

Yet, prenatal screening, sperm donors, oocyte (egg) freezing, surrogate pregnancy and other aspects of reproductive healthcare are still vaguely and unsatisfactorily governed by “guidelines” issued mainly by the — mostly male — Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. According to Matsumoto of Fine, government ministers still cling to the comforting certainties of natural birth and traditional families. Fine, Origio and other organisations are lobbying for a comprehensive IVF law.

The legal foot-dragging will become more glaring as the industry advances. IVF technology now allows for the freezing of oocytes and ovaries to preserve fertility. Donation is becoming more sophisticated. The hot topic today, says

50,000

IVF treatment helped bring over 50,000 Japanese babies into the world last year — 5% of all births in the country

Koyama of Vitrolife, is pre-implantation genetic analysis.

“This makes it possible to reduce the risk of passing on genetic diseases to offspring,” she says.

It can also improve the chances of getting pregnant. Screening for, or selecting, certain genetic traits will become increasingly common. Ultimately, though, notes Jacobsen, it is politicians, not technicians, who will help shape the industry’s future.

“You need a political agenda,” he says, “or nothing will change.” ●



When Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before the US Congress last month about his company's dubious handling of users' personal information, he was pressed on whether he would extend the protections of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to users globally. His responses did not reassure people outside the EU.

However, for those in the EU, the new regulations will come into effect on 25 May. They will update the previous directive of 1995, a time before multinationals were making billions from leveraging data online. The GDPR strengthens rights individuals have over the way their data is treated; tightens rules on how companies can collect, store and process personal information; and significantly increases penalties for companies that fail to comply with the new regime.

Another crucial aim of the GDPR is to harmonise data protection across the EU.

"In the past, at the EU level, there was only the directive ... a kind of guideline that had to be implemented into national law by the member states," explains Ulrich Kirchhoff, a lawyer at Tokyo's Arqis Foreign Law Office, who has been advising companies in Japan on the new landscape. "But since the directive only provided a certain framework, the regulations varied to a certain extent between member states."

As a result, one of the main problem areas has been cross-border enforcement.

"If you live in Austria or Germany and provided your data to a company headquar-

tered in Ireland, and there was an issue with how they treated your data ... where do you make your claim?" says Kirchhoff. "It will be much easier under the new regulations; you will be able to enforce your rights as a data subject in your own country."

As with many new laws governing areas as complex as this, exactly how some aspects are to be interpreted has yet to be

clarified. There will undoubtedly be consequences for companies doing cross-border business, which could be an EU resident buying a product from a website in Japan.

The GDPR's expanded territorial jurisdiction is probably the most significant change to the regulatory environment, potentially affecting companies no matter where they are located. The GDPR will not only apply to the processing of personal data in the EU but also where the processing activities are related to offering goods or services — even when free of charge — to EU residents from abroad.

For a Japanese e-commerce company, for example, to come under the GDPR, it would have



Looking out for the common netizen

The EU's General Data Protection Regulation comes into force



to actively be marketing its services to customers residing in the EU, such as by allowing payment in euros or having European languages on its website.

What is less clear, however, is a situation where a Japanese company, or a foreign company operating in Japan, collects data from Japanese individuals and then transfers it to a server in the EU. If it is processed in the EU, then does the legal basis for obtaining the personal data in Japan — not currently considered “safe” in terms of data protection — serve to justify its processing in the EU and a subsequent transfer back to Japan?



According to a European Commission official, “the EU and Japan are currently working on reciprocal adequacy decisions which would be of great benefit for our companies.” This would result in Japan being treated “like an EU member state for the purpose of data transfers.”

Another complex issue, albeit a more familiar one, is the right to be forgotten. Formally known as “the right to erasure” in the GDPR, the issue has attracted attention since a European court in 2014 ordered Google to allow EU citizens to have some



information about them removed from its search results. The US tech giant has since received more than 650,000 requests to remove certain websites from its results.

The GDPR details, clarifies and broadens the scope of the right to be forgotten, making it a fundamental right of data subjects, as well as requiring data controllers to enable individuals to exercise that right. It also clarifies the exceptions to the rule, including freedom of expression and information, legal obligation compliance, public interest and scientific or historic research.

Another change surrounds the issue of consent. The mere ticking of a box on a website or form will no longer give companies blanket permission to do what they will with personal data.

According to Dr Tobias Schiebe, a lawyer at Arqis with a specialisation in HR compliance and labour law, the approaches to obtaining consent from employees in Japan and Europe are very different, something that is being solidified under the GDPR.

“In Europe, under the GDPR ... consent can only serve in exceptional cases as a valid and reliable legal basis for processing of employees’ data,” explains Schiebe. “[This is] due to the fact that it is often arguable whether consent can be freely given ... due to the subordinate–superior relationship between employee and employer.”

Other rights that will be strengthened in favour of individuals under the GDPR include those related to privacy, the right to be notified of a data breach within 72 hours of a company becoming aware of it, the right of access to any stored personal information and the ability to receive and transfer that data elsewhere.

The GDPR strengthens the rights individuals have over the way their data is treated

On the companies’ side, the requirements for data protection officers (DPOs) will be bolstered, with their roles and responsibilities clearly defined and expanded. DPOs must now report directly to the highest level of management and not carry out any other tasks in the company that could result in conflicts of interest.

Laws are usually only as effective as the sanctions behind them and penalties have also been increased under the GDPR. Companies in breach of the new regulations can be fined up to €20 million, or 4% of annual global turnover, whichever is greater. That is surely more than enough to grab Mr Zuckerberg’s attention. ●





Turning words into actions

Ambassador of
Denmark to Japan
Freddy Svane



With a career in the Danish Foreign Service spanning more than 35 years, Ambassador of Denmark to Japan Freddy Svane is adept at seizing every opportunity to strengthen ties between Denmark and Japan and encourage greater collaboration between the two nations. He is also an unflagging champion of economic diplomacy, promoting his nation's business interests wherever he goes. He spoke to *Eurobiz Japan* about Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's landmark visit to Denmark last year, Danish companies' growing interest in the Japanese market and his embassy's goals for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

“There's a growing confidence among Danish companies that Japan is no longer a sleeping beauty”

What was the outcome of last year's celebration of the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Denmark and Japan?

It has made our already very cordial, very close ties even stronger. Partnership is something you can build on, but friendship takes a long time. Last year, we jointly recognised that our partnership is also about friendship. We see eye-to-eye on many, many issues, and are focused on creating gateways to the future.

We had a lot to celebrate. It was 150 years ago we signed the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation. We gifted a copy of the treaty to Japan; they had lost theirs in 1923. The Scandinavian airline SAS celebrated their 60th anniversary of direct trans-polar flights between Copenhagen and Tokyo. Royal Copenhagen, perhaps the best-known Danish brand out here, celebrated their 50th anniversary in Japan.

Prime Minister Abe was in Denmark last year. It was the

first ever visit for bilateral talks by a Japanese prime minister. The shared objective of this visit was to move the focus of the Strategic Partnership Agreement we signed in 2014 from nice words into actions. And the two prime ministers did that. We now have a shared vision and shared ambition. And we are working hand in hand to translate our good ideas into practical, measurable actions.

Can you tell me about the Crown Prince Couple's trip to Japan?

Denmark's Crown Prince Couple [Frederik and Mary] came in October, and we were graced by fantastic weather. They came in on a Sunday and went to Toyosu Park in Koto ward for a walkathon. Thousands of people took part. After that, we saw some Olympic sites. And then we took them to Kanazawa in Ishikawa prefecture; there was an exhibition up there on Danish design in daily life.

The visit was a great success. I think our biggest achievement



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ROBERT WALTERS

was that the Crown Prince [Naruhito] and Crown Princess [Masako] of Japan participated. And we had both a formal event where we celebrated 150 years, where the two Crown Prince couples came, and we had a gala dinner. It also showcased that ties between the imperial family and the royal family are very strong. That's also a gateway to the future.

How would you describe Denmark's current level of interest in the Japan market?

It's growing. There's a growing confidence among Danish companies that Japan is no longer a sleeping beauty. The Japanese economy is no longer in the ICU, though it is still a patient to some extent. Japan has had quite significant positive growth, if you look at this year and last year, so it is quite attractive, despite the fact that it's a mature economy. Japan obviously has some challenges: the ageing population, taxation. But we have a number of products and services that fit into Japanese society that can help it deal with these challenges. Our companies are investing in maintaining their market position in Japan.

Japanese companies are also investing in Denmark. They are looking at a number of sectors. One sector is related to renewable energy. We have a big joint venture between Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Vestas, the world's largest manufacturer of offshore wind turbines.

Then there are pharmaceuticals, medical devices, everything related to health. In the context of Japan's ageing population, we're seeing a lot

of investment. Areas such as welfare robots and big data are very important.

What are the embassy's goals for this year?

Of course, what we call economic diplomacy. That is the core.

We set out three priorities every year for what we are doing. This year, we are continuing with the Strategic Partnership agreement. It's far-reaching. We have already signed a number of Memorandums of Collaboration under the umbrella of this agreement on maritime, on health, and on innovation, technology and science.



The second priority is to ensure that the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement is not just signed but is also put into operation. So we have formed a task force here for all Danish companies to get the maximum output of the free trade agreement. We are collecting information on issues and challenges; we are informing, we are advising.

The third priority is the Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo in 2020. Japan is using this external impulse to generate new technologies, to make a leap into the future. It's very important for us to be part of that process, to raise our awareness about Japan, but also for Japanese to raise their awareness about us.

We have been working for almost two years to get a hospitality pavilion in Hibiya

Park, not only for the Olympics, but also the Paralympics. It will be a sustainable structure, with wood from Fukushima prefecture and electricity produced by wind turbines or solar panels up there, turned into hydrogen, and brought to our pavilion.

What is one of the concrete goals of the Strategic Partnership?

One is to secure a closer collaboration, bilaterally as well as in international fora. The maritime sector is very important to Japan and Denmark.

Shipping, and everything related to the maritime industry, has been a very strong tie between our two countries. Maersk, the biggest container company in the world, has been here for many years.

When you talk about the maritime business, it's not only about securing easy access to harbours and terminals, there's also the setting of standards for international shipping. Recently, there was an agreement on reducing the sulphur content in fuel for big vessels. Sulphur has a huge, negative impact on the environment. Since shipping is such a big part of the global trade system, this agreement is very important.

One other concrete example that we are pursuing is autonomous vessels. The day that you don't have any people on board these huge container vessels is closer than we think. With regard to security, how do you create systems that can secure safe operation of this kind of logistics? We're very keen to cooperate on this, and we have already had consultations in Denmark and in Japan. ●



Denmark

Home to happiness

For seven consecutive years, Denmark has held one of the top three places on the UN’s World Happiness Report — and the Danes have plenty to be happy about.

New parents are entitled to a combined total of 52 weeks of paid maternity leave. And Denmark is one of only a handful of countries that provides free university tuition, which is available to students from across the EU.

The nation’s robust labour market is known for its “flexicurity” system, which balances flexibility and security for both employers and employees.

With the signing of the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, Danish businesses are expecting to see an increase in exports to Japan, including from sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices and agriculture. That’s another reason to keep smiling.



Area

43,094km².
Coastline: 7,314km.

Climate

Temperate; humid and overcast; mild, windy winters and cool summers.



Major cities

Copenhagen (capital), Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg and Esbjerg.

Population

5,605,948 (July 2017, estimate).
Urban population: 88% of total population (2017). 38.76% are 25–54 years of age.

88%

Urban population

Natural resources

Petroleum, natural gas, fish, arable land, salt, limestone, chalk, stone, gravel and sand.



Trade with Japan

Imports from Japan: €363.2 million
Exports to Japan: €1.7 billion

SOURCE: STATISTICS DENMARK (2015)





BUSINESSES FROM ...

DENMARK

A LOOK AT SOME COMPANIES FROM THE REGION



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EBC PERSONALITY

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PHOTO BY KAGEAKI SMITH

JARI VAARIO

Always two
steps ahead



"I have always wanted to focus on doing something rather than becoming something; on interesting topics rather than career development," says Jari Vaario, head of Asia intellectual property regulatory at Nokia, based in Japan. "And I have a lot of interests."

Vaario, from Savonlinna in eastern Finland, was drawn to computer technology when he was in high school.

"I wanted to master everything," he says. "I learned electronics and programming, and everything in between."

In 1983, Vaario chose to write his Master's thesis on operating systems (OSs), a topic that was not part of any computer studies programme in Finland at the time. Using Unix OS source code, Vaario designed his own OS.

"I must have been one of the first people in the world to make a Unix system work on a PC," he states.

But then something else grabbed his attention. A magazine column piqued Vaario's interest in Japanese technology, and he organised a trip to Japan with some university friends. On his first day in Tokyo, he fell in love with the country and vowed to move here as soon as he could.

"I was completely taken by Japan," he says. "While I was writing my thesis, my interest had shifted to Japan and I wanted just to get rid of the whole business."

After completing his Master's, he was hired by the Finnish telecommunications giant Nokia as its AI products manager,

but he continued to look for an opportunity that would take him to Japan. His efforts finally paid off a couple of years later when he was awarded a Rotary Scholarship to study in Japan. He took a leave of absence from Nokia and moved to Tokyo in 1988, immersing himself in his Japanese language studies

Another of Vaario's passions, fanned during his time at Nokia, was AI. In 1989, he was accepted to The University of Tokyo and began work on a PhD, studying how neural networks are formed in the human brain and how this can be applied to engineering, specifically manufacturing.

"I looked at how neural networks make meaningful connections — that's the basis for remembering," Vaario explains. "I think I was a little too far ahead of my time."

In 1994, he finalised his doctoral thesis and, later that year, his first son was born. While standing at the window in the maternity ward, looking at the newborn, he started talking with another new father who told Vaario about a position in the computer science department at Nara Women's University. Vaario applied and — at the age of 34, only 11 months after completing his PhD — was offered the job.

"Even my old professor didn't believe it; he had to call to the university to confirm," Vaario says. "At that time, I was said to be the youngest full professor at a national university in Japan."

When Vaario heard Nokia was starting a research centre in Tokyo in 1998, however, he decided to return to the company.

"At the research centre, we developed, among other things, the world's first smart-watch prototype, e-book reading device and miniaturised cameras," he states. "That time was really exciting."

Following a stint in Finland, where he worked on a prototype of an internet tablet, he became the director of R&D at Nokia China. It was there that one of his current interests, intellectual property (IP), began to develop.

Do you like natto?

Time spent working in Japan:
Altogether, 16 years.

Career regret (if any):
I should have tried to become an architect, but I was discouraged by my teachers who said I wasn't good enough at drawing.

Favourite saying:
"It's already done."
(I usually get things done before I'm asked to do them.)

Favourite book:
Mika Waltari's *The Egyptian*. This book has influenced my thinking more than any other. It helped me think in terms of long-term goals and strategies.

Cannot live without:
Strong black coffee. I need my daily shot.

Lesson learned in Japan:
Don't try to become too Japanese; just proudly be a polite foreigner.

Secret of success in business:
Foresight. Always be two steps ahead.

Favourite place to dine:
At home. If we do eat out, I like to try places I haven't been to before.

Do you like natto?:
I can't say that I like it. But my wife and kids do.

"Later, I was responsible for creating the company's patent filing strategies," he says. "And today, this portfolio is the basis for Nokia's patent licensing business. In 2017, patent and brand licensing exceeded €1.6 billion."

The firm has one of the largest wireless communication patent portfolios — with roughly 20,000 patent families and 1,300 new inventions coming through the R&D pipeline annually. It has more than 100 licensees for its patents around the world.

"I've had the freedom to work on whatever I've been excited about," he says. "I've told my subordinates to stay with Nokia as long as they feel they have something new to learn. I've followed this principle myself." ●

Jari Vaario is head of Asia intellectual property regulatory for Nokia, based in Japan, and a member of the EBC Telecommunications Equipment committee.



Better than business as usual

The 20th EU–Japan Business Round Table

Since 1999, senior executives from businesses in Japan and the EU have met annually to discuss ways of encouraging greater trade and investment. The forum, called the EU–Japan Business Round Table (BRT), boasts leaders from nearly 50 well-established multinationals, including Airbus, Bayer, IKEA and Rolls-Royce on the EU side, and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Nissan, Sony and Toshiba on the Japanese side. The EBC has participated in the BRT from the outset.

On 20 April 2018, members of the BRT along with representatives from the EU Commission and the Japanese government came together at the Conrad Tokyo for the 20th BRT meeting. The day of discussions was divided into four themes: the Japan–EU Economic

Partnership Agreement (EPA); the digital and data economy, cybersecurity and blockchain; the Sustainable Development Goals; and regulatory cooperation and interoperability.

As this was the first BRT meeting held since the finalisation of the Japan–EU EPA in December, participants’ talks throughout the day – including those by the high-level government officials present – addressed this major achievement and what lies ahead.

“I believe that the successful finalisation of this agreement is indeed an outcome of close cooperation within the business sectors represented by this BRT and other players,” said Kazuyuki Nakane, Japan’s state minister for foreign affairs.

The EPA will create an unprecedented trading block, covering a combined population of more than 600 million and 30% of global GDP. Trade and investments are expected to grow substantially on both sides.

From the EU Commission, Lowri Evans, director-general for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs emphasised the need to ensure the EPA

is implemented effectively.

“It won’t be implemented unless businesses take advantage of the new opportunities, unless businesses understand that this agreement means it’s not business as usual, it’s better than business as usual,” she said.

Evans noted that raising awareness about the opportunities of the EPA, especially

among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), was a top priority for the EU – and critical for the agreement’s success in an increasingly protectionist world.

“The EU and Japan,” she explained, “have to be seen to be delivering the agreement and showing the world ... that open, fair and regulated markets deliver benefits for our respective economies and our people.”

During the discussion on the EPA, a talk given by Duco Delgorge, president and CEO of organic food supplier Mie Project and an EBC member, underscored this need for SMEs to be able to use and reap the benefits of the agreement. According to Delgorge’s figures, there are some 3.8 million SMEs in Japan that account for 99.7% of the nation’s total

3.8mn

There are some 3.8 million SMEs in Japan and approximately 21 million in the EU

number of companies. In the EU, there are approximately 21 million SMEs, representing 99% of the total there.

“SMEs can be considered to be the heart of Europe’s economy,” he said. “[However,] SMEs are the most vulnerable if there



Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry





In the months prior to the BRT, four working parties held discussions to compile a list of joint recommendations in areas including life sciences and biotechnology; and energy, the environment and sustainable development.

One of the working parties, co-chaired by EBC Chairman Danny Risberg, dealt with trade relations; investment and regulatory cooperation; as well as financial services, accounting and taxation.

“Our first recommendation [to the Japanese government] is to harmonise and mutually recognise standards and product certifications, accepting [EU] standards where applicable so that, ultimately, products meeting all the require-

is a lack of commitment, from either side, to removing the non-tariff barriers [as set out in the EPA] ... or new regulations may come up, indirectly affecting SMEs.”

Another discussion dealt with the digital and data economy, cybersecurity and blockchain.

“Digital will change not only the digital sector, but also society and the way that we do trade,” said Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, director general of DigitalEurope, an organisation representing the digital technology industry in Europe.

Referring to the EPA, Bonefeld-Dahl said she believed the agreement signalled the start of strong leadership in the realm of digital trade, adding that the EU and Japan can set a good example to the world of “how data protection rules and data

flow can be handled in an international environment between two like-minded entities.”

Norihiro Ishiguro, senior executive vice president at IT firm NEC, also expressed the view that without the smooth flow of data across borders, it will be hard to achieve the level of growth in trade anticipated between Japan and the EU.

“Data is an essential resource within the development of AI and the digital economy,” Ishiguro stated. “However, many countries around the world have created new regulations and restrictions on the international flow of data ...

The EU and Japan should work together with the USA to establish a safe and secure environment for the global use of data, which serves as the basis of corporate activity.”

ments for safety in the EU can automatically be accepted in Japan,” Risberg said. “This would obviously shorten the time it takes to release a new product to the market and also reduce costs, making products more accessible to the consumer.”

Another of the working group’s recommendations to the Japanese government was to “lower the threshold for public tenders to significantly improve access to the public procurement market in Japan,” Risberg said.

All four working parties’ recommendations were formally submitted to the EU Commission and the Japanese government after the BRT ended.

To conclude the BRT, Hiroshige Seko, Japan’s minister of economy, trade and industry, briefly addressed the attendees.

“Today, the global free trade system is facing various challenges,” he said. “Against that backdrop, it is Japan and the EU that will be leading the effort to create the 21st century’s economic order based on free and fair rules.” ●



Materials

A new era for the building blocks of modern industry

The EBC Materials Committee is preparing to turn a new page in its history of advocacy. The group has spent much of its existence calling for the lifting of the tariffs that Japan imposes on a range of materials, including the metals, chemicals and polymers that are the building blocks of modern industry. But many, if not all, of those duties could be lifted soon after Japan and the European Union ratify their Economic Partnership Agreement, which is expected to come into force next year.

The implementation of this deal would mark not merely the end of an era for the committee, but also the beginning of a new one.

“Even if the tariffs are gone,” says committee chair Carl-Gustav Eklund, “we will still have plenty of things to work on.

“We will have more time to look at sustainability and environmental impacts,” he adds. “When trade becomes less of an issue, we can spend more time on best practices, sustainability, et cetera.”

One example Eklund notes is the issue of making packaging in Japan biodegradable.

The committee would also be able to give greater focus to a couple of issues already on its agenda. One is the handling of potentially dangerous chemicals.

Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is normally in charge of regulating chemicals used in

industry. But several years back, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare became involved in efforts to label substances that can be harmful to workers. The committee contends this work took place in isolation and that the health ministry’s new system, introduced in 2016, “lacks logic”.

“We all want safety for workers — the people who handle all kinds of materials,” says Eklund, who is also president of Höganäs Japan K.K. “But, unfortunately, there have been subjective results in how workers’ health and safety standards are interpreted.”

The committee is calling for transparency from the health ministry towards importers regarding its chemical-related regulations.

A similar issue involves the Chemical Substances Control Law. In a situation common in many other industries, the EU and Japan maintain separate chemical-registration systems. The committee is calling for the systems to be harmonised. This would eliminate the need for companies to retest and make duplicate submissions to have chemicals approved in Japan.

“It’s important to be clear and transpar-

ent and to have the same rules, not just in Europe and Japan, but globally,” the committee chairman says.

Meanwhile, Eklund is optimistic that Japan’s tariffs on industrial materials will soon become a thing of the past, noting his industry doesn’t carry the political baggage associated with food, automobiles and some other items.

Japan imposes duties on materials used in such products as electric vehicles and solar-power equipment. Some are aimed at protecting domestic producers, while others seem to have no rationale at all. The committee points out that the added cost of paying the duties is passed on to Japanese manufacturers, making them less competitive.

For example, the duty on nickel — an essential material for any industrial society — is around 3% to 3.5%.

“It will be quite positive for the end-users — which in our case range from stainless-steel makers all the way to the advanced electronics industry that includes the fast-growing rechargeable battery market — to have this import tariff removed,” says Denis Lencou-Bareme of Eramet International, a French mining and metallurgy company. “More and more, the makers have to compete against competitors like the ones in China.”

“I think we have a chance here,” says Eklund, referring to the possibility of having such barriers removed once and for all. “The momentum is there, and it depends on political will and that people take a holistic view, seeing this as good in the long run for both sides.” ●

Carl-Gustav Eklund is chairperson of the EBC Materials Committee and president of Höganäs Japan K.K.

Advocacy issues

➔ Tariffs

The lifting of all the tariffs Japan imposes on industrial raw materials.

➔ Chemical Substances Control Law

The EU and Japan should harmonise their registration systems for chemical substances.

➔ Labelling of chemicals

Japan’s health ministry should be more transparent about its regulations concerning the safety of chemicals.



The Agenda

MAY
17

SPANISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

TTT — Third Thursday Tapas night**TIME:** 19:00-21:00**VENUE:** Amor de Gaudi in Roppongi, Tokyo**FEE:** No entrance fee. Buy your own food and drinks.**CONTACT:** info@spanishchamber.or.jpMAY
25

BLCCJ, CCIFJ & SCCJ

BeLux-France-Swiss Golf Tournament 2018**TIME:** 8:00-17:00 (approx.)**VENUE:** Tomisato Golf Club, Chiba Prefecture**FEE:** ¥21,500, ¥26,000 (transportation provided)**CONTACT:** Respective chambersMAY
18, 24

GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN (AHK JAPAN)

German Asparagus Dinner 2018 in Tokyo & Osaka**TIME:** 18:30-21:30**VENUE:** Palace Hotel Tokyo (18th), Hilton Osaka (24th)**FEE:** ¥20,000 (members), ¥25,000 (non-members)**CONTACT:** events@dihkj.or.jpMAY
30

BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Delighting Customers in Japan seminar**TIME:** 18:30-21:00**VENUE:** BNP Paribas Office, Tokyo**FEE:** ¥5,000 (members), ¥7,000 (non-members)**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpMAY
19

BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Royal Wedding Viewing Party**TIME:** 19:00-21:30**VENUE:** Conrad Tokyo, 28F, China Blue (for guests who booked before 18 April 2018), Twenty Eight Bar and Lounge**FEE:** ¥10,500**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.comJUNE
7

BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Belgian Beer and Food Academy in Tokyo VI**TIME:** 18:30-21:30**VENUE:** Hilton Tokyo, Yamato Room**FEE:** ¥14,500 (members), ¥17,000 (non-members)**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpMAY
21

BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Monthly Beer Gathering**TIME:** 19:00-22:00**VENUE:** Belgian beer café in Tokyo**FEE:** No entrance fee. Buy your own food and drinks.**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpJUNE
22

SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

June Luncheon — Brice Koch, CEO, Hitachi Automotive**TIME:** 12:00 to 14:00**VENUE:** Imperial Hotel, Tokyo**FEE:** ¥6,500 (members), ¥7,000 (non-members)**CONTACT:** info@sccij.jpMAY
23

SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

Swiss Young Professional Gathering Kansai**TIME:** 18:30 to 21:00**VENUE:** Nescafé Sannomiya Kobe**FEE:** ¥1,000 (including food and drinks)**CONTACT:** info@sccij.jpJUNE
24

BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

BCCJ Cup — Annual Golf Day**TIME:** 9:15-15:00**VENUE:** Gold Tochigi President Country Club, 561 Chizuka-machi Tochigi-shi, Tochigi**FEE:** ¥25,000**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.com



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Also, upon request, we have strollers, cribs, and bed guards available for you to use.



Say Yes to Noh

A month-long celebration of the passionate emotions of Noh drama

There's no need to leave the hotel to learn about *Noh*, Japan's ancient stage art, which has been named by UNESCO an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Teaming up with the National Noh Theatre, Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo is hosting a free exhibition on *Noh*. This special exhibition focuses on the tragic women of *Noh* dramas and their passionate love, bitter jealousy, and profound sorrow. On display will be items such as the masks and costumes used in the well-known plays *Dojoji*, *Aoi no Ue*, and *Kanawa*, which all have a tragic female as their main character.

Free performances with English interpretation will be held in the lobby on June 7 and 21, featuring *Noh* actors performing scenes from the play *Kakitsubata*. The performances start at 5:00 p.m. and run for about 20 minutes.



Delicate and Refined

New and antique Arita and Imari porcelain works on display, and on sale

Summer in Japan is a time for festivals and, every summer for the past 38 years, Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo has held a festival of Arita and Imari porcelain.

This year, from July 1 through August 1, porcelain works from the porcelain-making region in Kyushu are on display in locations throughout the hotel, and are also available for sale.

Among the highlights is a special exhibition of urns in the old Ko-Imari and Ko-Karatsu style from famed Tokyo antique shops. Contemporary creations from modern masters are also available.



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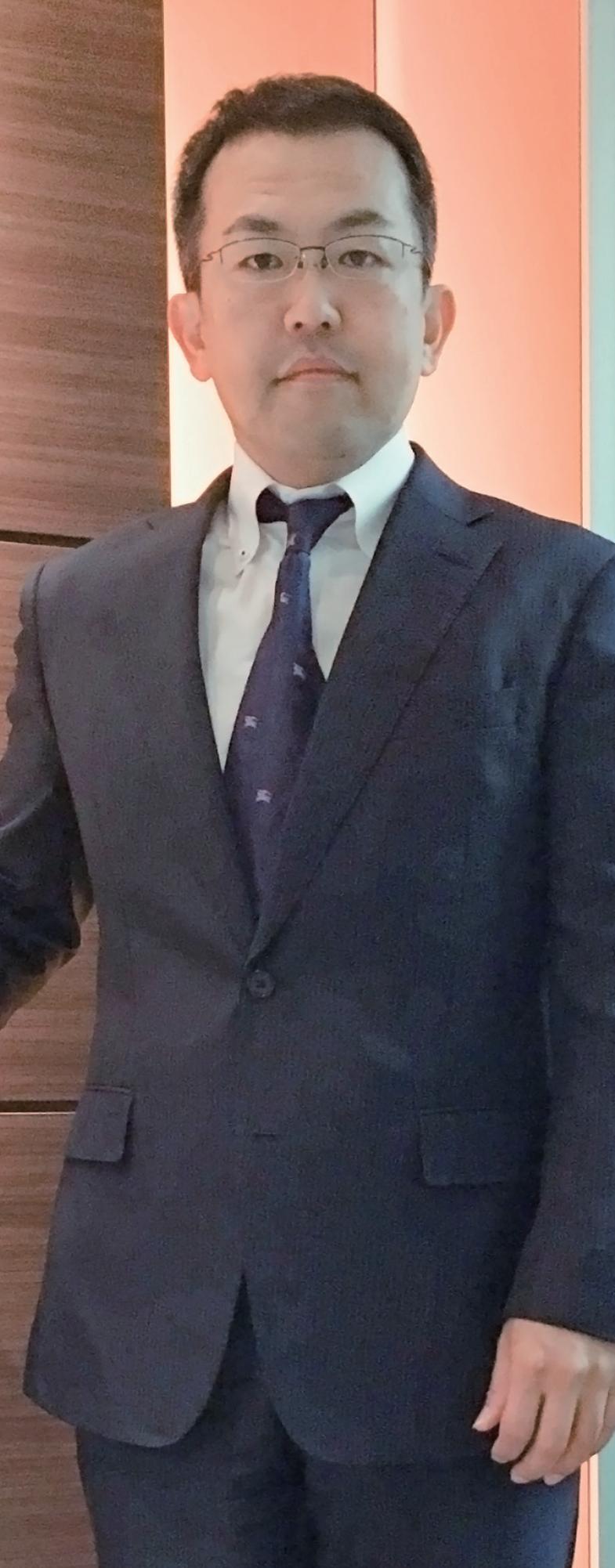


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Masahiro Shimizu
Partner



Masashi Takahashi
Attorney-at-law



Making a comeback

Osaka strives to become a global innovation hub

Welcome to Hack Osaka 2018, an opportunity for innovations of every kind to get some attention and, possibly, find some investors. Now in its sixth year, the event is organised by the Osaka Innovation Hub. This year's Hardware Cup winner was Japanese startup Hachi Tama, which developed a high-tech, IoT kitty litter box, called TOLETTA, replete with camera, scale and urine sensor to detect chronic kidney failure in cats.

Hack Osaka is just one manifestation of Osaka's efforts to become a global innovation hub and expand the reach of tech in areas as diverse as life sciences, trade, travel, retail, education and, yes, pet care. The city — packing an economic punch on par with a small country — is working towards a 21st century return to its stature of the 5th century, when it was a crossroads for foreign products and new ideas.

Central Osaka is currently being given a complete makeover. The area around Osaka and Umeda stations, under construction for six years, will no longer be little more than a commuter crossroads for 2.5 million people daily; a large plot under development is set to open in 2024. Already known for its retail and dining, the district is looking to add firms in sectors such as life sciences and IoT, cementing a profound comeback for the nation's No. 2 economic dynamo.

Amid the trillion-yen Umeda development plan, Osaka's business incubator Knowledge Capital — another hallmark of city efforts — has opened facilities where domestic and European firms can trial their products. One of these is France's

Cap Enfants, which has been exhibiting its “learning bubble” room for preschoolers since last month. It will receive visitor feedback over the next few months to help tailor its product launch for Japan and

of Technology (OIT) and Kansai University, are developing strong human capital. Their campuses are in the heart of the Osaka-Umeda district, and each school sees senior student hiring rates at close to 99%.

Product design and robotics are among the key topics taught. Currently on display at OIT is a robot *benza*, or robotic toilet, which takes hygiene one step further than the standard washlet with its bidet function: it actually wipes. For the infirm or elderly, that'll be a feature that's appreciated. Thinking outside the box is truly finding traction in the city.

OIT Professor Kenji Matsui says the 1,000 young students at his school are not necessarily more driven than their parents,



other destinations worldwide. Businesses from six European cities are involved in projects or business matchmaking with Knowledge Capital, according to its director.

“In a town known for laughter and *takoyaki* [balls of octopus meat], people wonder whether this concept will succeed,” said Takuya Nomura, general producer at Knowledge Capital, “but science and tech interests are high.”

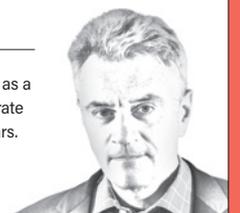
Osaka may have a ¥9-trillion economy still mainly driven by the majors, but there is a youthful vibe; and educational facilities, such as the Osaka Institute

just wired. When asked if he thinks this generation is special, he answers, “They're happy.”

Japan wants to be the most innovative nation in the world, but its current place in last year's Global Innovation Index was a lowly 14th, far behind the top three of Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands.

Looking to its past, Osaka has plans to push Japan into a more innovative future. ●

Dan Sloan has covered Asia as a journalist, author and corporate content chief for over 20 years.





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A new kind of coverage

Insurtech reshapes the insurance industry

The next time you're shopping online for electronics in Europe, you might be offered an extended warranty when you're checking out. This quick, convenient service is offered by *simplesurance GmbH*, in partnership with insurers, such as Munich Re. Founded in Germany in 2012, *simplesurance* has already spread to 2,000 online shops in 30 countries, mostly in the EU. With an investment from Japan's Rakuten last year, it has raised more than €30 million in funding.

Simplesurance is a good example of how high-tech startups, as well as established companies around the world, are rethinking how the staid insurance industry operates. Known as insurtech (from "insurance" and "technology"), this trend is part of the insurance revolution sweeping a wide range of financial services.

"We have driven the insurance industry towards a paradigm shift," *simplesurance* CEO Robin von Hein recently told fintech platform *Fintastico*. "[We have] created an insurance service platform that connects different sets of services that illustrate the entire supply value chain — starting with the sale of insurance to insurance claim and repair management, to after-sales support and extension of the customer life time — by offering additional products within the insurance sector."

Insurtech is already a big business and could have a huge impact on corporate performance. In a 2016 survey by PwC, 20% of responding insurers said they are

already working with fintechs. Meanwhile, the *2017 World Insurance Report* by consulting firm Capgemini and industry body Efma found that nearly a third of insurance customers are using insurtech solutions. UBS estimates that insurtech and other technologies could help banks in Asia save around \$300 billion annually by 2025.

While North America still leads in terms of the value and number of insurtech deals, Europe is quickly emerging as a leading ecosystem. The number of insurtech deals there

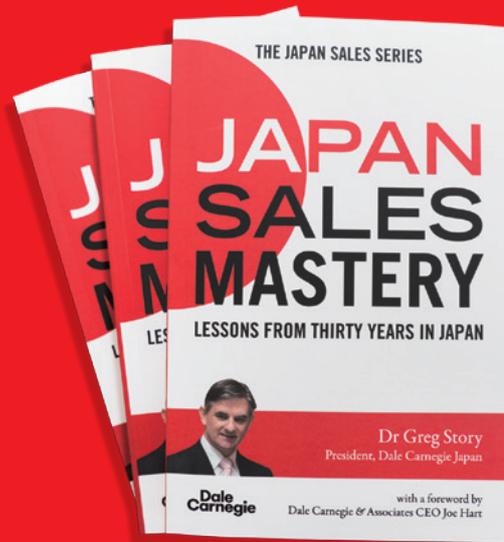
increased 118% in 2017, while the total value of deals jumped 385% to \$679 million, according to global professional services company Accenture.

There are many examples of how insurtech startups in Europe are changing the industry. UK-based *Homelyfe*, for instance, was launched in October 2017 and promises home insurance quotes in just four minutes. Users of its app only have to answer a few questions, and once they sign up for coverage they can make adjustments and file claims — all through the app.

Meanwhile, traditional insurance companies are also exploiting fintech by teaming up with new firms. Aside from partnering with *simplesurance*, Allianz SE has invested in English-Swedish microinsurer BIMA, which uses automation for underwriting, as well as New York-based *Lemonade Insurance Company*, which offers AI-crafted policies via its app.

"Constructive disruption does not happen suddenly," Allianz Chief Digital Officer Solmaz Altin said in a blog post last year. "It creeps into the nooks and crannies of business operations. Changes in the digital age occur in an exponential way. We need to look out for early signs of disruptions, recognise patterns and use these insights to build our customer solutions." ●

"Constructive disruption ... creeps into the nooks and crannies of business operations"



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West coast golf

The best courses Chiba has to offer

When a golfer thinks about the west coast of California, what comes to mind are classic golf courses such as Pebble Beach and Torrey Pines, both characterised by the beauty and power of the Pacific Ocean. Even though Japan's shores share the same ocean, talking about the east coast of Chiba doesn't call to mind the same kind of beauty — or the same kind of golf courses. But the west coast of Chiba, facing Tokyo Bay and the Miura Peninsula in Kanagawa Prefecture, has a bit more going for it.



Tokyo Bayside Golf Course

TATEYAMA COUNTRY CLUB

Pride of place has to go to Tateyama Country Club at the southwestern tip of the Boso Peninsula. Tateyama CC has 27 holes and is situated in a popular tourist area, making it ideal for a weekend or holiday stay. There are plenty of hotels in the area and distractions for non-golfers.

The course itself is typically tropical — well, faux tropical — with plenty of pines and palms to decorate its fairways. The drive up to the clubhouse from Route 257 is a spectacular palm-lined avenue; but beware of flying golf balls as it is flanked by the opening and closing holes of the Naka Course. The three courses are short and relatively tame in golfing terms but ideal for the occasional golfer.

TOKYO BAYSIDE GOLF COURSE

Rivalling Tateyama CC for views is Tokyo Bayside Golf Course, perched on top of a hill overlooking Tokyo Bay. As with Tateyama CC, you will get a good view of Mt Fuji on a clear day, but there are fewer oceanside holes as the course winds its way through the woodlands on the hillside. In fact, the first hole is a vertiginous plunge into a valley and, from there, you wander through the

undergrowth until you reach the 7th hole when the ocean finally comes into view. Both the 9th and 18th holes present the course in its best light as you come towards the neat Spanish-style clubhouse and try to avoid the massive lake and bunker that separates the fairways.

The best views at Tokyo Bayside are actually seen from the clubhouse. But when you're playing golf, the back nine are the most scenic, offering a good distraction from your wayward shots.

BRISTOL HILL GOLF CLUB

Just up the road from Tokyo Bayside is Bristol Hill Golf Club, which — while lacking the views of the above two — offers association with one of Japan's superstars. The "Young Prince", Ryo Ishikawa, has a house on the course. No doubt it's a marketing ploy as Bristol Hill is set up as a resort course dotted with some nice houses around the fairways.

However, the club has a touch of class that puts it above the rest. For a start, when you arrive at the course, you are faced with a pair of iron gates that open automatically after you stop. The clubhouse has a spectacular modern design and its baths are among the very best — including private showers, two saunas and three pools. The food is wonderful — made in conjunction with a well-known Tokyo restaurateur. Even with GPS on the carts, players are presented with a very good yardage booklet, a necessary item for some of the blind holes.

All three courses are easily accessed from Tokyo via the Tateyama Expressway. Tokyo Bayside and Bristol Hill are little more than an hour from downtown Tokyo, while Tateyama CC will take you about a half hour longer. Great golf is closer than you think. ●



Legacies in wine

Winemaking families that have defined modern wine

In all industries, there are revolutionaries who pave the way for innovation and change, and the wine industry is no different. These pioneering wine families have largely dictated what we know and love about wine today.

THE MONDAVIS

Italians Cesare and Rosa Mondavi relocated their family to Lodi, California in 1922. Their sons Robert and Peter both went into the family's wine business, Robert focusing on sales while Peter focused on winemaking. In 1943, at the age of 30, Robert convinced his father to purchase the Charles Krug Winery in Napa Valley. With Robert and Peter's help, it became one of Napa's best-known wineries in the 1960s, a pivotal time for the California wine trade.

Robert went on to found Robert Mondavi Winery in Oakville in 1966, the first new winery in Napa since the late 1930s. It was here that Napa earned its reputation for Cabernets and Chardonnays, and where Robert Mondavi earned his reputation as the father of California wine. He co-founded the famous winery Opus One with Chateau Mouton-Rothschild and helped establish the Napa Valley Wine Auction.



Critics blame Robert Mondavi for creating the modern wine styles that dominate markets today — such as heavily oaked reds and buttery whites — so much so that he's vilified in the 2004 documentary *Mondovino*. The film pitted Mondavi's style against traditionalists who value terroir over winemaking. Regardless, Robert Mondavi was a force of nature, and his three children remain heavily involved in Napa's wine scene.

THE GAJAS

In 1961, Angelo Gaja took over his family's winery in the town of Barbaresco, Italy. At the time, Barbaresco was considered table

wine — especially in the shadows of the iconic neighbouring Barolo region — as was most of Italy's wine production. Feisty and irreverent, Angelo's desire to change the status quo peaked in 1973 when he met Robert Mondavi, who was at the forefront of the American wine revolution. Mondavi inspired Gaja to modernise his winemaking practices, and Gaja became one of the first winemakers in Italy to induce malolactic fermentation, to practice green harvesting, to bottle single-vineyard Barbaresco and to oak-age wine in small French barrique barrels. He even planted Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay in Piedmont, all moves that some traditionalists still resent. Say what you will about Gaja's globally minded winemaking, but it indeed ushered in a new era for fine Italian wines.

In 1971, Gaja hiked the prices of his wines to the same level as top-tier Burgundy and Bordeaux, which in turn caught critics' attention and set off a chain reaction that now has Italian wines back on the top shelf. Gaja is now set to hand over the reins to his three children, and we shall see what kind of grit remains in the Gaja family. ●





Georg Loeer

Company: NRW Japan K.K., the Economic Development Agency of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia

Official title: President and Representative Director

Originally from: Germany, but was born in Tokyo

Length of time in Japan: 30+ years

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

My favourite place for a light lunch is the soba restaurant Toshi-an in Shirokanedai. It has a classic wooden Japanese interior. And the soba is excellent.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I take fitness lessons with a personal trainer at the Tokyo American Club. Alas, my lessons have not taken my sweet tooth away.

Name a favourite movie: *The Music Lovers*, directed by Ken Russell.

Favourite musician:

Beethoven. I've been singing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Kokugikan in Tokyo with 4,999 other singers for the last few years.

Favourite album: Miles Davis's *Seven Steps to Heaven*.

Favourite TV show: *Wilsberg*, which is set in Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia.

Favourite book: The works of



Evelyn Waugh are among my most favourite books.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

I was born in Tokyo in the mid-1950s and have spent more than half of my life in Japan.

Cats or dogs?

Definitely dogs. I had a poodle called Franky when I lived here in the late 1950s.

Summer or winter?

Having lived in the tropics (Indonesia and Singapore), I truly cherish the fact that we have four seasons in Japan.

What's your ideal weekend?

A quiet weekend at home — brunching with my wife, reading a novel in bed, doing some (not too much) gardening, if the weather permits.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

Sushi Harvest in Todoroki is a favourite place to go with friends.



Ryo Sato

Company: Eschenbach Optik of Japan

Official title: President

Originally from: Chiba, Japan

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

One of the many ramen shops around our office in Kanda, Tokyo.

What do you do to stay in shape?

Walking to meetings whenever I can, and I work out regularly at home.

Name a favourite movie: *Star Wars*. Especially *Return of the Jedi*.

Favourite band: It's a tie between Maroon 5 and Daft Punk.

Favourite album: *Songs About Jane* by Maroon 5.

Favourite TV show: *Shōten*. It's taught me how to speak well, and the importance of timing.

Favourite books: *Predictably Irrational* by Dan Ariely and *Ryōma Goes His Way* by Ryotaro Shiba.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

I read 10 books a month.

Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

Summer or winter?

Summer. I love watching the high school baseball championships held at Koshien Stadium.

What's your ideal weekend?

Spending time with my family.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

Home.



"I love watching the high school baseball championships held at Koshien Stadium."

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