

## A Message from the Chair of the CCCJ

Our Chamber represents Canadian and Japanese business people involved in the Canada Japan trade and investment relationship. One of our fundamental aims is to promote the development of commerce between Canada and Japan.

One of the first drivers of any good international commercial relationship is an understanding between the parties and understanding underpins respect. Most often this understanding springs from shared cultural experiences.

Sunshine (for that is his stage name), is a Toronto native. He received a degree in Classics at the University of Toronto. He was a playwright after graduation producing amongst other things, a version of the Greek comic Aristophanes' "Clouds" which ran for 15 months in Toronto and later toured Canada. He came to Japan in 2008 and was fascinated by the comedic storytelling tradition of "Rakugo". He became the 15<sup>th</sup> apprentice to the great Rakugo master Katsura Bunshi VI (then Katsura Sanshi), from whom he received the name Katsura Sunshine. In November of 2011, Sunshine successfully completed the rigorous three-year apprenticeship.

Sunshine blends both Japanese and English into understandable and hilarious stories which prove to audiences that, at least in his case, humour can cross cultural boundaries. He performed at this year's CCCJ GALA and wowed the mixed Japanese and Canadian audience. He is truly as he says, a Canadian son and an adoptive son of Japan.

On August 7, at a press conference at the Canadian Embassy, Sunshine's forthcoming tour of North America was announced. With the strong support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Foundation, he will perform in over 30 shows in 20 cities throughout the US and Canada from August 29 to October 5<sup>th</sup>, ending in a grand finale show at Toronto's historic Winter Garden Theatre.

Also on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, the CCCJ announced the appointment of Katsura Sunshine as our Cultural Ambassador. We believe that he can through his work leverage on the long time but relatively nascent interest in Japan by making this country 'interesting' and that this will help us all bridge an understanding gap – or at least an 'interest gap'.