

Covington & Burling Grabs Japan Expert From Pillsbury

By James Mills

Law360 (November 15, 2021, 3:06 PM EST) -- Covington & Burling LLP has snatched a Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP attorney to be co-head of its Japan Initiative, serving the needs of the firm's Japanese clients and advising them on differences between American and Japanese laws.

Taisuke Kimoto has joined Covington as a partner in its corporate practice group after spending seven years as a partner at Pillsbury, where he also represented Japanese clients' needs. Kimoto, licensed to practice law in both America and Japan, specializes in mergers and acquisitions, general corporate matters, technology issues and dispute resolution. He will be based in Covington's Los Angeles office in Century City.



Taisuke (Tai)
Kimoto

"Covington's Japanese practice already has a strong track record, representing many blue chip companies," Kimoto told Law 360 during an interview Monday morning. "That made [Covington] attractive to me as well as their strong technology industry practice and life science industry practice. The collaborative nature of the firm was also quite attractive to me."

Kimoto calls himself a mergers and acquisitions lawyer. Some of his recent casework includes representing a Japanese company acquiring real estate in the Silicon Beach section of Los Angeles and closing a transaction for a semiconductor company. He also helped Panasonic sell a subsidiary company.

Kimoto, born in Japan and raised in Tokyo, earned his law degree in 1999 from Keio University in Tokyo and soon went to work for a Japanese law firm, Anderson Mori & Tomotsune.

Lawyers in Japan working for international firms typically go to a British or American firm for an internship and then return to Japan. However, in Kimoto's case, after he earned his Master of Laws at UCLA in 2007 and completed his internship at a New York firm, he didn't want to go back.

"I really loved the life in L.A.," Kimoto said. "I thought this might be a good opportunity for me to help Japanese companies from outside of Japan. I realized it might be better to be outside of Japan for advising Japanese companies on U.S. laws."

As a result, he ended up with Reed Smith LLP for five years and a partner at Pillsbury for seven years, all the time working closely with Japanese clients doing business in America.

All that experience made Kimoto extra attractive to Covington as the firm expands its Japan Initiative advising Japanese corporations, trade associations and governmental agencies on legal issues in the U.S., Europe and China.

Covington Chair Doug Gibson thinks Kimoto will be a valuable asset for the firm's clients.

"Drawing upon his long-standing business and legal relationships in Japan, Tai will be an ambassador of the firm to the Japanese business community and to Japanese law firms," Gibson said in a statement.

Covington and Burling, headquartered in Washington, D.C., has more than 1,100 attorneys in 13 offices around the globe.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.

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