



INTERNATIONAL EQUITY FUND

## RBC JAPANESE EQUITY FUND

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December 31, 2023

**Portfolio Manager** RBC Global Asset Management Inc. ("RBC GAM")

Sub-Advisor: RBC Global Asset Management (Asia) Limited, Hong Kong, China

The Board of Directors of RBC Global Asset Management Inc. approved this annual management report of fund performance on March 7, 2024.

### **A Note on Forward-looking Statements**

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Fund, its future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Fund action. The words "may," "could," "should," "would," "suspect," "outlook," "believe," "plan," "anticipate," "estimate," "expect," "intend," "forecast," "objective" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance. Forward-looking statements involve inherent risks and uncertainties, both about the Fund and general economic factors, so it is possible that predictions, forecasts, projections and other forward-looking statements will not be achieved. We caution you not to place undue reliance on these statements as a number of important factors could cause actual events or results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forward-looking statement made in relation to the Fund. These factors include, but are not limited to, general economic, political and market factors in Canada, the United States and internationally, interest and foreign exchange rates, global equity and capital markets, business competition, technological changes, changes in laws and regulations, judicial or regulatory judgments, legal proceedings and catastrophic events.

The above list of important factors that may affect future results is not exhaustive. Before making any investment decisions, we encourage you to consider these and other factors carefully. All opinions contained in forward-looking statements are subject to change without notice and are provided in good faith but without legal responsibility.

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*This annual management report of fund performance ("MRFP") contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the Fund. You can get a copy of the financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling 1-800-463-FUND (3863), by writing to us at RBC Global Asset Management Inc., P.O. Box 7500, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P9, or by visiting our website at [www.rbcgam.com/regulatorydocuments](http://www.rbcgam.com/regulatorydocuments) or SEDAR+ at [www.sedarplus.ca](http://www.sedarplus.ca). Security holders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the Fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.*



## MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION OF FUND PERFORMANCE

### Investment Objective and Strategies

The Fund seeks to provide long-term capital growth by investing primarily in equity securities of Japanese companies.

To achieve the Fund's objectives, the portfolio manager uses primarily fundamental research to assess the economic outlook for Japan, including expected growth, market valuations and economic trends. The portfolio manager may invest as much as 10% of the Fund's assets in other funds managed by RBC GAM or an affiliate of RBC GAM.

### Risk

There were no significant changes to the investment objective and strategies that affected the Fund's overall level of risk during the reporting period. The risks of investing in the Fund and the suitability of the Fund for investors remain as discussed in the Simplified Prospectus.

### Results of Operations

The Fund's net asset value rose to \$4.4 billion as of December 31, 2023, from \$4.2 billion at the end of 2022. The increase was due to investment returns, partially offset by net redemptions.

Over the past year, the Fund's Series F units gained 15.3%, which underperformed the 17.1% rise in the benchmark. The Fund's return is after the deduction of fees and expenses, while benchmark and broad-based index returns do not include any costs of investing. See the Financial Highlights section for the management expense ratios and the Past Performance section for the returns of any other series, which may vary because of differences in management fees and expenses.

Japanese stock markets were among the world's best performing in 2023 as efforts to reform corporate governance in recent years continued to contribute to an improvement in shareholder returns. Many companies made strides both in prioritizing investments based on a search for the best returns and disposing of low-return businesses.

The changes to Japanese governance were reflected in a 31% year-over-year increase in shareholder proposals at annual meetings in 2023. The proposals included calls for companies to reconstitute their boards to make them more shareholder-friendly; increase share buybacks and special dividends; and eliminate cross-shareholdings – a common Japanese corporate structure in which companies own shares in each other and thereby limit changes that might improve shareholder returns.

Sector allocation had a limited impact on the Fund's relative returns. The portfolio's returns were aided by an underweight allocation to the Health Care sector, which trailed the benchmark during the period,

offset by the negative impact of the Fund's underweight allocation to Industrials, which performed relatively well. Security selection had a slightly negative impact on performance. Weaker security selection in the Health Care sector was partially offset by security selection in Information Technology and Materials.

The top individual contributor to the Fund's performance was Screen Holdings, which sells equipment used to manufacture semiconductors, flat-panel displays and precision technology. Hitachi, a diversified industrial company, was also a strong performer, driven by its renewable-energy business and the exposure of its digital business to advances in artificial intelligence. The Fund's relatively low exposure to Toyota and Honda hurt performance as auto stocks benefited from a weak Japanese yen. Daiichi Sankyo, a pharmaceuticals company, limited performance as experimental treatments failed to meet expectations in clinical trials.

Portfolio turnover can be high for the Fund, as the portfolio manager attempts to generate better returns through active security and sector selection.

### Recent Developments

Japan's economy enters 2024 against a solid economic backdrop. A mix of loose monetary and fiscal policy, coupled with labour shortages, is supporting Japan's exit from 25 years of low inflation, and wage hikes have been coming through to support consumer spending. Headline CPI is expected to remain at 3% in 2024, supporting gradual increases in interest rates. The Bank of Japan (the "BOJ") has responded to the rise in inflation pressures and more competitive overseas interest rates by gradually loosening its grip on bond yields. The sub-advisor believes therefore that the BOJ may undertake small rate hikes in the second half of 2024.

Effective January 1, 2023, Suromitra Sanatani was appointed as Chair of the Independent Review Committee ("the IRC"). Effective February 1, 2023, Joanne Vézina was appointed as a member of the IRC. Effective March 1, 2023, Enrique Cuyegkeng was appointed as a member of the IRC.

### Related-Party Transactions

#### *Manager, Trustee and Portfolio Manager*

RBC GAM is an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada ("Royal Bank") and is the manager, trustee and portfolio manager of the Fund. RBC GAM is responsible for the Fund's day-to-day operations, holds title to the Fund's property on behalf of its unitholders, provides investment advice and portfolio management services to the Fund and appoints distributors for the Fund. RBC GAM is paid a management fee by the Fund as compensation for its services. The Fund pays a fixed administration fee to RBC GAM,



which, in turn, pays certain operating expenses of the Fund. Both the management fee and fixed administration fee are calculated and accrued daily as a percentage of the net asset value of each series of units of the Fund. RBC GAM, as trustee, earns a fee, which is paid by the manager from the fixed administration fee paid by the Fund.

RBC GAM or its affiliates may earn fees and spreads in connection with various services provided to, or transactions with, the Fund, such as banking, brokerage, securities lending, foreign exchange and derivatives transactions. RBC GAM or its affiliates may earn a foreign exchange spread when unitholders switch between series of funds denominated in different currencies. The Fund also maintains bank accounts and overdraft provisions with Royal Bank for which Royal Bank may earn a fee. Affiliates of RBC GAM that provide services to the Fund in the course of their normal businesses are discussed below.

#### ***Sub-Advisor***

RBC Global Asset Management (Asia) Limited is the sub-advisor and provides investment advice for the Fund. The sub-advisor earns a fee which is calculated and accrued daily as a percentage of the net asset value of each series of units of the Fund. The sub-advisor is paid by the manager from the management fee paid by the Fund.

#### ***Distributors***

RBC GAM, Royal Mutual Funds Inc., RBC Direct Investing Inc., RBC Dominion Securities Inc. and Phillips, Hager & North Investment Funds Ltd. are principal distributors of, or may distribute certain series of units of, the Fund. Dealers may receive an ongoing commission based on the total value of their clients' investment in certain series of units of the Fund.

#### ***Registrars***

RBC GAM, RBC Investor Services Trust ("RBC IS") or Royal Bank (or a combination thereof) are the registrars of the Fund and keep records of who owns units of the Fund. The registrars earn a fee, which is paid by the manager from the fixed administration fee paid by the Fund.

#### ***Custodian***

RBC IS is the custodian and holds the assets of the Fund. RBC IS earns a fee as the custodian, which is paid by the manager from the fixed administration fee paid by the Fund.

#### ***Securities Lending Agent***

To the extent the Fund may engage in securities lending transactions, RBC IS may act as the Fund's securities lending agent. Any revenue earned on such securities lending is split between the Fund and the securities lending agent.

#### ***Other Related-Party Transactions***

Pursuant to applicable securities legislation, the Fund relied on the standing instructions from the Independent Review Committee with respect to one or more of the following transactions:

##### ***Related-Party Trading Activities***

- (a) trades in securities of Royal Bank;
- (b) investments in the securities of issuers for which a related-party dealer acted as an underwriter during the distribution of such securities and the 60-day period following the conclusion of such distribution of the underwritten securities to the public;
- (c) purchases of equity, debt securities or mortgages from or sales of equity, debt securities or mortgages to a related-party dealer, where it acted as principal; and

##### ***Inter-Fund Trading***

- (d) purchases or sales of securities of an issuer from or to another investment fund or managed account managed by RBC GAM.

The applicable standing instructions require that Related-Party Trading Activities and Inter-Fund Trading be conducted in accordance with RBC GAM policy and that RBC GAM advise the Independent Review Committee of a material breach of any standing instruction. RBC GAM policy requires that an investment decision in respect of Related-Party Trading Activities (i) is made free from any influence of Royal Bank or its associates or affiliates and without taking into account any consideration relevant to Royal Bank or its affiliates or associates, (ii) represents the business judgment of the portfolio manager, uninfluenced by considerations other than the best interests of the Fund, (iii) is in compliance with RBC GAM policies and procedures, and (iv) achieves a fair and reasonable result for the Fund. RBC GAM policy requires that an investment decision in respect of Inter-Fund Trading is in the best interests of each Fund.



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the past five years or for the periods since inception. This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements.

### Change in Net Assets Per Unit (\$)

For the Year/ Period Ended	Net Assets Beginning of Year/Period	Increase (Decrease) from Operations <sup>1</sup>					Annual Distributions <sup>2</sup>				Net Assets End of Year/Period	
		Total Revenue (Loss)	Total Expenses	Realized Gains (Losses)	Unrealized Gains (Losses)	Total	From Income (Excluding Dividends)	From Dividends	From Capital Gains	Return of Capital		
<b>Series A</b>												
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>11.49</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>(0.28)</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.60</b>	–	–	–	–	–	<b>13.10</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	14.32	0.25	(0.26)	(1.90)	(1.04)	(2.95)	–	–	–	–	–	11.49
Dec. 31, 2021	15.44	0.22	(0.34)	0.64	(1.02)	(0.50)	–	–	(0.68)	–	(0.68)	14.32
Dec. 31, 2020	12.76	0.19	(0.32)	2.66	1.92	4.45	–	–	(1.74)	–	(1.74)	15.44
Dec. 31, 2019	11.05	0.18	(0.26)	0.28	1.61	1.81	–	–	(0.11)	–	(0.11)	12.76
<b>Series D</b>												
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>12.31</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>(0.18)</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>1.80</b>	–	<b>(0.06)</b>	–	–	<b>(0.06)</b>	<b>14.10</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	15.32	0.28	(0.19)	(2.11)	(4.63)	(6.65)	–	(0.08)	–	–	(0.08)	12.31
Dec. 31, 2021	16.38	0.23	(0.22)	0.68	(1.09)	(0.40)	–	–	(0.73)	–	(0.73)	15.32
Dec. 31, 2020	13.42	0.20	(0.21)	2.74	1.82	4.55	–	–	(1.85)	–	(1.85)	16.38
Dec. 31, 2019	11.53	0.19	(0.17)	0.29	1.65	1.96	–	–	(0.12)	–	(0.12)	13.42
<b>Series F</b>												
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>12.40</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>(0.15)</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.86</b>	–	<b>(0.10)</b>	–	–	<b>(0.10)</b>	<b>14.19</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	15.41	0.27	(0.14)	(2.05)	(0.61)	(2.53)	–	(0.10)	–	–	(0.10)	12.40
Dec. 31, 2021	16.44	0.23	(0.18)	0.68	(1.13)	(0.40)	–	(0.01)	(0.73)	–	(0.74)	15.41
Dec. 31, 2020	13.43	0.20	(0.17)	2.79	2.17	4.99	–	–	(1.85)	–	(1.85)	16.44
Dec. 31, 2019	11.54	0.19	(0.14)	0.29	1.55	1.89	–	(0.03)	(0.12)	–	(0.15)	13.43
<b>Series O</b>												
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>12.33</b>	<b>0.27</b>	–	<b>0.21</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>2.05</b>	–	<b>(0.25)</b>	–	–	<b>(0.25)</b>	<b>14.10</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	15.33	0.27	–	(2.05)	(0.77)	(2.55)	(0.01)	(0.24)	–	–	(0.25)	12.33
Dec. 31, 2021	16.38	0.23	–	0.68	(1.09)	(0.18)	(0.01)	(0.19)	(0.74)	–	(0.94)	15.33
Dec. 31, 2020	13.36	0.20	–	2.77	2.28	5.25	(0.01)	(0.13)	(1.86)	–	(2.00)	16.38
Dec. 31, 2019	11.48	0.19	–	0.29	1.70	2.18	(0.01)	(0.17)	(0.12)	–	(0.30)	13.36

<sup>1</sup> Net assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the financial period. This table is not intended to be a reconciliation of beginning to ending net assets per unit.

<sup>2</sup> Distributions are reinvested in additional units of the Fund or paid in cash.



**FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)**

**Ratios and Supplemental Data**

As at	Net Asset Value Per Unit (\$)	Net Asset Value (\$000s)	Number of Units Outstanding (000s)	Management Expense Ratio (%) <sup>1</sup>	MER Before Absorption (%) <sup>1</sup>	Portfolio Turnover Rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	Trading Expense Ratio (%) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Series A</b>							
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>13.10</b>	<b>8 575</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>105.33</b>	<b>0.14</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	11.49	7 824	681	2.22	2.22	112.05	0.16
Dec. 31, 2021	14.32	10 822	756	2.21	2.21	122.99	0.15
Dec. 31, 2020	15.44	10 470	678	2.21	2.21	85.23	0.14
Dec. 31, 2019	12.76	5 775	453	2.22	2.22	95.57	0.20
<b>Series D</b>							
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>14.10</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>105.33</b>	<b>0.14</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	12.31	736	60	1.38	1.38	112.05	0.16
Dec. 31, 2021	15.32	6 598	431	1.37	1.37	122.99	0.15
Dec. 31, 2020	16.38	8 186	500	1.37	1.37	85.23	0.14
Dec. 31, 2019	13.42	3 365	251	1.36	1.36	95.57	0.20
<b>Series F</b>							
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>14.19</b>	<b>14 584</b>	<b>1 028</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>105.33</b>	<b>0.14</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	12.40	14 538	1 173	1.11	1.11	112.05	0.16
Dec. 31, 2021	15.41	13 695	889	1.11	1.11	122.99	0.15
Dec. 31, 2020	16.44	11 530	701	1.11	1.11	85.23	0.14
Dec. 31, 2019	13.43	5 714	425	1.11	1.11	95.57	0.20
<b>Series O</b>							
<b>Dec. 31, 2023</b>	<b>14.10</b>	<b>4 401 690</b>	<b>312 162</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>105.33</b>	<b>0.14</b>
Dec. 31, 2022	12.33	4 139 538	335 803	0.02	0.02	112.05	0.16
Dec. 31, 2021	15.33	4 459 092	290 797	0.02	0.02	122.99	0.15
Dec. 31, 2020	16.38	3 465 487	211 545	0.02	0.02	85.23	0.14
Dec. 31, 2019	13.36	1 508 834	112 946	0.02	0.02	95.57	0.20

<sup>1</sup> The management expense ratio ("MER") is based on the direct expenses charged to the Fund and the Fund's proportionate share of the expenses of underlying funds, if any, for the stated period, excluding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs, and is expressed as an annualized percentage of the daily average net asset value during the period. RBC GAM may, at its discretion and without notice to unitholders, waive or absorb certain operating expenses. MER includes the waiver or absorption by RBC GAM of certain operating expenses, while the MER before absorption shows the MER prior to operating expenses being waived or absorbed by RBC GAM.

<sup>2</sup> The Fund's portfolio turnover rate gives an indication of the level of activity employed by the portfolio manager. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the year. The higher the Fund's portfolio turnover rate in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of the Fund. The portfolio turnover rate is not applicable to money market funds.

<sup>3</sup> The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs of the Fund and the Fund's proportionate share of such costs of underlying funds expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period. The trading expense ratio is not applicable to fixed-income transactions.

**Management Fees and Administration Fees**

Management fees and administration fees of each series of the Fund are payable to RBC GAM and calculated at the following annual percentages, before GST/HST, of the daily net asset value of each series of the Fund. The management fee, breakdown of services received in consideration of the management fee, as a percentage of the management fee, and the administration fee for each series are as follows:

	Management Fees	Breakdown of Services		Administration Fees
		Distribution	Other*	
Series A	1.85%	54%	46%	0.15%
Series D	1.10%	23%	77%	0.15%
Series F	0.85%	–	100%	0.15%
Series O	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.02%

Series O – no management fees are paid by the Fund with respect to Series O units. Series O unitholders pay a negotiated fee directly to RBC GAM for investment-counselling services.

\* Includes all costs related to management, trustee, investment advisory services, general administration and profit.

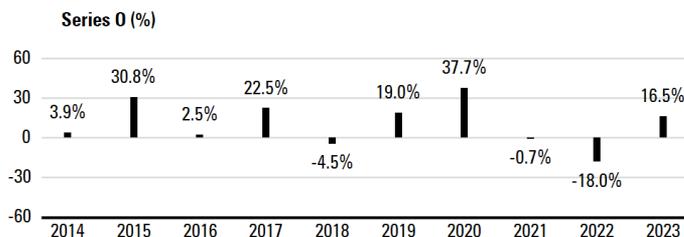
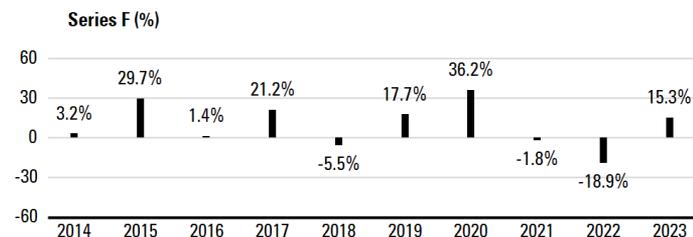
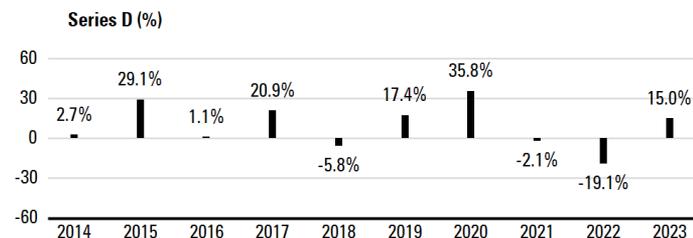
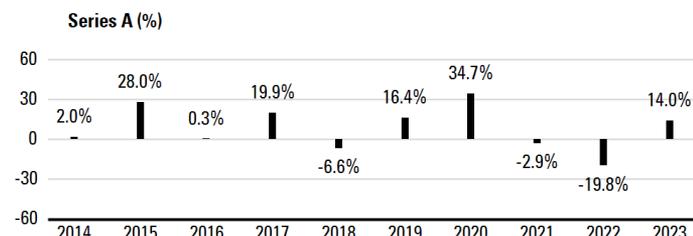


**PAST PERFORMANCE**

The performance information shown assumes that all distributions made by the Fund in the periods shown were reinvested in additional units of the Fund and would be lower if distributions were not reinvested. The performance information does not take into account sales, redemption, distribution, optional charges or income taxes payable that would have reduced returns or performance. Past performance does not necessarily indicate how the Fund may perform in the future. A fund with more than 10 years of performance history is only permitted to disclose the past 10 years.

**Year-by-Year Returns (%)**

The bar chart indicates the Fund's performance for each of the years shown, and illustrates how the Fund's performance has changed from year to year. The bar chart shows, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on the first day of each financial year would have grown or decreased by the end of the financial year.



**Annual Compound Returns (%)**

The table shows the annual compound returns for each series of the Fund and for each of the periods indicated ended on December 31, 2023, compared with the following benchmark:

**MSCI Japan Total Return Net Index (CAD)**

	Past Year	Past 3 Years	Past 5 Years	Past 10 Years	Since Inception
Series A	14.0	-3.9	6.9	—	7.6
Benchmark	17.1	1.8	6.2	—	7.4
Series D	15.0	-3.1	7.8	—	8.5
Benchmark	17.1	1.8	6.2	—	7.4
Series F	15.3	-2.8	8.0	—	8.8
Benchmark	17.1	1.8	6.2	—	7.4
Series O	16.5	-1.7	9.2	—	9.9
Benchmark	17.1	1.8	6.2	—	7.4

The returns of each series may vary because of differences in management fees and expenses. Benchmark and/or broad-based index returns do not include any costs of investing. See Management Discussion of Fund Performance for a discussion of performance relative to benchmark and/or broad-based indexes.

Series A, Series D, Series F and Series O units have been available for sale to unitholders since March 10, 2014.

Inception dates are not provided for series that have been in existence for more than 10 years.

**INDEX DESCRIPTIONS**

**MSCI Japan Total Return Net Index (CAD)** This index is a broad measure of the Canadian-dollar performance of the large and mid-cap segments of the Japanese stock market. The net total return index reinvests dividends after the deduction of withholding taxes, using (for international indexes) a tax rate applicable to non-resident institutional investors who do not benefit from double taxation treaties.



## SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

*(after consideration of derivative products, if any)*

*As at December 31, 2023*

### Investment Mix

	% of Net Asset Value
Consumer Discretionary	20.5
Industrials	18.0
Information Technology	17.1
Financials	13.1
Materials	7.0
Real Estate	6.5
Consumer Staples	6.1
Health Care	3.4
Communication Services	3.4
Utilities	1.9
Energy	1.4
Cash/Other	1.6

### Top 25 Holdings

	% of Net Asset Value
Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc.	5.0
Hitachi Ltd.	4.1
Sony Group Corp.	4.0
Mitsui Fudosan Co. Ltd.	3.2
Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc.	3.2
Tokyo Electron Ltd.	3.2
Mitsubishi Corp.	3.0
Shin-Etsu Chemical Co. Ltd.	2.7
Nintendo Co. Ltd.	2.4
Oriental Land Co. Ltd.	2.3
ITOCHU Corp.	2.3
Disco Corp.	2.2
Nippon Steel Corp.	2.2
Ajinomoto Co. Inc.	2.1
SCREEN Holdings Co. Ltd.	2.1
Kansai Electric Power Co. Inc.	2.0
Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd.	1.9
Keyence Corp.	1.8
Mitsubishi Estate Co. Ltd.	1.7
Nitori Holdings Co. Ltd.	1.6
Sumitomo Electric Industries Ltd.	1.6
Nissin Foods Holdings Co. Ltd.	1.6
Tokio Marine Holdings Inc.	1.5
Daiichi Sankyo Co. Ltd.	1.5
Fast Retailing Co. Ltd.	1.5
Top 25 Holdings	60.7

The Summary of Investment Portfolio may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the Fund and a quarterly update is available at [www.rbcgam.com/regulatorydocuments](http://www.rbcgam.com/regulatorydocuments).