





# CHINA

Chinese law firms continue to set the pace in Asia as they grow at a rate that eclipses all other firms in this year's *ALB Fast 30*. The challenge for these quick-moving firms now will be to ensure their business models are premised not only on aggressive growth but also sustainability in the mid to long term

## Yingke

**Managing partners:** Mei Xiangrong, Hao Huizhen, Zheng Shuchun, Zhao Xingren, Li Hua

**Offices:** Beijing, Shi Jiazhuang, Tianjin, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hohhot, Shenyang

**Revenue growth:** 787%

**PEP growth:** 828%

**Partners:** 82 (+1,071%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 341 (+380%)



### Summary:

Triple-digit financial and headcount growth is something few law firms can match, but PRC firm Yingke brought on board enough new partners to register growth figures in quadruple digits. The firm opened branches in Shi Jiazhuang, Tianjin, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hohhot and Shenyang, and the growth won't stop there, according to Mei Xiangrong, the larger-than-life director of the firm's managing committee, who has his heart set on making Yingke the country's next Dacheng. "It's increasingly difficult for smaller firms to stay competitive in this market. So the partners have decided to attract a large number of talented lawyers and together we aim to forge a leading PRC firm on a global scale," he explained. Yingke plans to open more than 40 branches and grow total headcount to over 1,000 in the next three years. The firm dipped its feet into the international market earlier this year through a tie-up with Hungary's Varnai & Partners and established a framework to set up a Yingke & Varnai legal alliance in Europe.

## Zhongyin

**Managing partners:** Zhao Cenghai, Tang Jinlong

**Offices:** Beijing, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Shanghai, Guiyang, Guangxi, Sichuan, Jinan, Jixi, Taizhou

**Revenue growth:** 130%

**PEP growth:** 30%

**Partners:** 32 (+88%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 349 (+50%)



### Summary:

Formed by the 2008 merger between Zhongyin and fellow Beijing outfit Zhengtai, the firm has clearly retained its appetite for expansion. 2010 marks the second year in a row that Zhongyin has made the *ALB Fast 30*. The firm makes the cut this year for its 130% spike in revenues, ostensibly on the back of the success that its recently opened branch offices have had in attracting and retaining new clients. Two of these offices, in Xiamen and Fuzhou, were opened to attract more cross-strait legal work (set to blossom following the signing of the ECFA), while branches in Jinan, Jixi and Taizhou have significantly broadened the firm's regional client base. In a year that was defined by the international expansion of PRC law firms, Zhongyin was also active.

The firm struck an alliance with Malaysia's Azmi & Associates and Jordanian firm Abunameh & Partners. The firm saw an increase of 30% in PEP, but managing partner Zhao Cenghai, seemingly unhappy with such a 'modest' increase, believes profits will grow faster in the year ahead as the firm's prudent expansion starts to pay dividends.

"We are focusing on the future and long-term success instead of immediate gratification and will continue to put efforts in 'investment activities'," he said. Perhaps a model of sustainability that other PRC law firms may want to emulate in the years ahead?

## Jade & Fountain

**Managing partners:** Scott Guan, Mark Ho

**Offices:** Beijing, Shanghai

**Revenue growth:** 30%

**PEP growth:** 15%

**Partners:** 18 (+35%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 55 (+25%)



### Summary:

2010 was another strong year for this Shanghai-based outfit. The firm registered a 30% increase in revenue on the back of increased activity in its core areas of practice: FDI, M&A and PE. Jade & Fountain also made a number of high-profile lateral hires after raiding the mainland operations of a number of international law firms. Song Liwei (from Gide Loyrette Nouel) and Jeffery Yang (Freshfields) were two such hires. The firm also welcomed Henry Xiao, William Lu and Lawrence Guo (Lu and Guo joined from fellow PRC firm Broad & Bright after both working in the Beijing office of Allen & Overy).

## LexField

**Managing partner:** Jan Liu

**Offices:** Beijing

**Revenue growth:** 29%

**PEP growth:** -41%

**Partners:** 8 (+167%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 15 (+150%)



### Summary:

IP boutique LexField's solid fee-earner growth sees it included in this year's *ALB Fast 30*. The firm posted a 29% increase in takings over the last financial year and increased its partner and fee-earner stocks by 167% and 150%, respectively. On the lateral-hire front, the firm welcomed seasoned IP practitioner Jiang Hongyi and his ten-strong team and also secured the services of an experienced Beijing High Court judge, Cheng Yongshun, who joined as a senior counsel. The firm will hope that its somewhat alarming decrease in PEP (down by 41%) will be improved in the year ahead and is planning continued organic growth in 2011 to this end.

## Gaopeng & Partners

**Managing partners:** Wang Lei, Hu Lianping

**Offices:** Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Yangzhou, Taizhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou

**Revenue growth:** 29%

**PEP growth:** 29%

**Partners:** 46 (+35%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 96 (+47%)



### Summary:

2010 may be the first year that this Beijing-based firm has made the ALB Fast 30 cut, but that isn't to say that it hasn't been registering strong growth over the past few years. On the back of strong demand in its core areas of practice – WTO and international trade, infrastructure projects, real estate and media, entertainment and sports – the firm has seen its revenues increase by 29% and its fee-earner count expand by a similar margin. The firm also solidified its foothold in the lucrative Yangtze River Delta (YRD) region (the firm opened offices in Yangzhou, Taizhou, Nanjing and Hangzhou), an area which it clearly acknowledges will fuel its future growth plans. "We've always preferred to establish ourselves in regional areas. One of the impetuses for our decision is the increasing exportation business in the YRD region," said managing partner Wang Lei. "The branch offices will work closely with our headquarters – we are looking to integrate international business work across the board."

## JC Master

**Managing partner:** Justin Ma

**Offices:** Nanjing

**Revenue growth:** 27%

**PEP growth:** 20%

**Partners:** 8 (+0%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 19 (+19%)



### Summary:

A winner at the 2010 ALB China Law Awards in the 'Jiangsu Law Firm of the Year' category, JC Master can now also lay claim to being one of Asia's fastest growing law firms, after registering a 27% increase in revenues. Unlike so many of its peers in the Chinese legal services market, the firm says it is committed to organic growth. This is evident in its reluctance to laterally hire partners from its competitors – a strategy that is perhaps vindicated by the firm's strong PEP growth (20%).

## Dacheng

**Managing partner:** Wang Zhongde

**Number of offices:** 32

**Revenue growth:** 24%

**PEP growth:** 16%

**Partners:** 396 (+40%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 1,200 (+20%)



### Summary:

2010 will mark the fourth year in a row that Dacheng has been named as one of Asia's fastest growing law firms – a feat no other firm in the region can match. Already the largest law firm in Asia (its most recent hires means it is now more than double the size of the region's second-largest law firm) the firm continued to grow at an astounding rate last year. Not only did it acquire regional

firm Yunnan BaQian Law Group, but it also subsumed Guangzhou Xin Yang, as well two Beijing-based outfits Kingfield and Fengqing. The firm's managing partner Wang Zhongde has somewhat ominously stated that there is more to come. The firm already has alliances in Singapore and India, leaving South-East Asia as the next destination.

## Zhejiang L&H

**Managing partners:** Zheng Jindu, Li Jing,

Zhu Yayuan, Dai Wenliang, Chai Shanming,

Gao Zhenghua, Jin Weiwen

**Offices:** Hangzhou, Zhoushan, Yiwu

**Revenue growth:** 22%

**PEP growth:** 20%

**Partners:** 30 (+3%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 109 (+19%)



### Summary:

The Hangzhou-based outfit's 2008 merger with Yaxiya saw its revenues spike. The firm's takings were up by almost a quarter (22%) courtesy of the firm's core areas of practice – corporate, IPOs, finance, real estate, IP and cross-border investment.

Zheng Jindu, the firm's founder and managing partner, believes the key to future growth lies with servicing the ever-increasing number of budding entrepreneurs in the Zhejiang area. "Post-GFC, our clients are placing more importance on being able to withstand risks, so they also have stricter requests and higher demand for quality legal services," Zheng says. "This mindset brings about more work, since our clients require stringent regulatory and compliance advice."

## Han Kun

**Managing partners:** Charles Li, Joseph

Hwang, Chao Yijun, Chen Dafei

**Office:** Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen

**Revenue growth:** 20%

**PEP growth:** -30%

**Partners:** 11 (+38%)

**Qualified lawyers:** 31 (+40%)



### Summary:

Despite its relatively tender age, Han Kun has won mandates that are elusive to even more established players in the market. This may have something to do with the calibre of partners at the firm; each has previous work experience in international law firms, and long relationships with important clients such as Ku6.com, AsiaInfo, Huawei, Sequoia Capital, TeamSun and General Electric. The strength of these relationships is perhaps indicated by the fact that the firm registered a 20% increase in revenues during this period, partly due to having opened new offices in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

### ► METHODOLOGY

The ALB Fast 30 is based on a survey distributed to over 400 law firms across the Asia-Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand). Partner, fee-earner and financial data was supplied by the law firms themselves and used to produce the ranking of the 30 fastest growing law firms. Only firms who responded to ALB's request for figures were considered for the final ranking, and all information is accurate to end of October 2010. The growth figures for PRC law firms is accurate to 30 June 2010. Only the Asia and Middle East growth of international law firms was considered.

# SOUTH & SOUTH-EAST ASIA

For the suite of dynamic firms in South and South-East Asia, 2010 was a year of measured growth. Most saw a spike in revenues flowing from increasing their partner and associate ranks and by moving into new markets and new practice areas. As the attention of investors in the US and Europe continues to turn to Asia, watch for these players to consolidate their 2010 gains with another strong year of expansion in 2011



## Khaitan & Co

**Managing partner:** Multiple  
**Offices:** Bangalore, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi  
**Partners:** 44 (+29%)  
**Lawyers:** 203 (+27%)

### Summary:

2010 was a phenomenal year of growth for this perennial ALB Fast 30 firm. Not only did Khaitan & Co increase its partner stocks by nearly a third, but it brought on board 43 new lawyers. Most impressive was the firm's revenue performance, which saw a considerable increase. This expansion was not limited to the firm's headcount or financials. In addition to taking up 32,000 sqft of office space in the upmarket One Indiabulls Centre to cater for its fast-growing Mumbai office, the firm added to its portfolio a number of new clients, including Hutchison, Lafarge, Blackstone and Caterpillar.



## Azmi & Associates

**Managing partner:** Azmi Mohd Ali  
**Offices:** Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Kota Bahru, Singapore  
**Revenue growth:** 13.8%  
**Partners:** 8 (-11.1%)  
**Lawyers:** 35 (+12.5%)



### Summary:

Azmi & Associates has made something of a name for itself in terms of growth over the last few years, having been named in the ALB Fast 30 in 2008 and 2009. The firm's performance in 2010 was equally as solid, registering gains in the headcount and revenue areas. But it was arguably the firm's international expansion and alliance building activities that made the most headlines throughout the year. In addition to signing three strategic collaboration agreements with other law firms (Zhong Yin, China; Global Law Firm, Sudan; Remy & Partner, Indonesia) the firm also opened its



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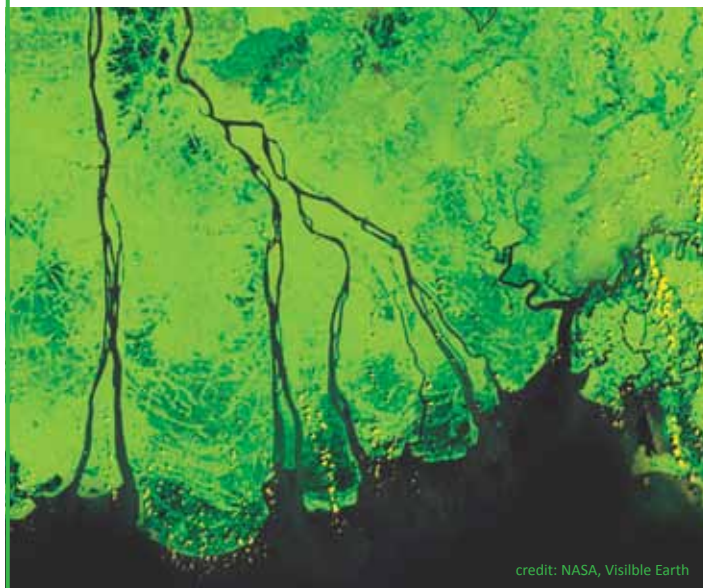
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first overseas office, in Singapore. More expansion could be on the horizon, according to Azmi Mohd Ali. "We feel that our best years are ahead of us. Looking forward to the next 10 years, the firm's immediate plans are to expand its practice regionally. We welcome more collaborative arrangements with law firms across Asia."

 **DFDL Mekong**

**Managing partner:** Martin Desautels  
**Offices:** Yangon, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Phnom Pen, Samui, Phuket, Bangkok, Vientiane, Singapore  
**Revenue growth:** 33.8%  
**Partners:** 5 (0%)  
**Lawyers:** 92 (+23.9%)



**Summary:**

2010 has been an impressive year for this Indochina heavyweight. Not only did it subsume McEvily & Collins' two Thailand offices, but its revenue and fee-earner numbers increased substantially—up by 33.8% and 23.9%, respectively. In late 2010, the firm also revealed plans to transform its Singapore office (currently a representative office) into a fully-fledged foreign law practice citing tremendous growth in the firm's Singapore client base as the rationale behind the move. "Our objective for setting up in Singapore is to serve our existing Singapore-based clients who have projects and investments in the Greater Mekong region and also South Asia," said David Doran, partner in-charge of the firm's Bangkok and Vientiane offices. "Another reason is to be close to the financial centres as the financing of these regional projects is increasingly coming out of Singapore."

 **Indochine Counsel**

**Managing partner:** Dang The Duc  
**Offices:** Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh  
**Revenue growth:** 45%  
**Partners:** 6 (+20%)  
**Lawyers:** 25 (+20%)



**Summary:**

Another solid year of growth across the board sees this up-and-coming Vietnamese firm register back-to-back entries in the ALB Fast 30. The firm's revenues in this period shot up by almost half (45%) and it also added a partner as well as five new lawyers to its ranks to increase its

total headcount by 20%. In 2011, managing partner Dang The Duc says, the firm will continue to look to increase its roster of talent and to this end, has taken on extra office space in Ho Chi Minh City. With the firm's work becoming increasingly cross-border in nature, watch for it to establish an alliance in South-East Asia.

 **Oon & Bazul**

**Managing partner:** Bazul Ashhab  
**Offices:** Singapore, Kuala Lumpur\*  
**Revenue growth:** 20%  
**Partners:** 6 (0%)  
**Lawyers:** 10 (+40%)



**Summary:**

Oon & Bazul backed up its 2009 ALB Fast 30 debut with an equally impressive showing in 2010. In addition to bringing four new lawyers on board, the firm also saw a 20% rise in revenues during the year. While the firm's shipping practice continues to be busy handling work for clients spanning the entire spectrum of the area, it is disputes, particularly international arbitration, which is shaping up as a real catalyst for further growth. To cope with the increased demand for its arbitration expertise, the firm says it plans to take another six lawyers, including one partner, on board next year.

*\*Associate office*

 **WongPartnership**

**Managing partner:** Rachel Eng  
**Offices:** Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Singapore, Shanghai, Doha  
**Partners:** 80 (+14%)  
**Lawyers:** 250 (+4%)



Arguably one of the most consistent of Singapore's 'Big Four' in the growth stakes, 2010 was another strong year for WongPartnership. The firm welcomed 10 new partners, including star insolvency & restructuring partner Manoj Sandrasegara from rival Drew & Napier, and Andrew Watson from Clyde & Co, to jointly head its fast-growing Middle East practice. Other high-profile laterals include Simon Tay, former chairman of Singapore's National Environmental Agency, as senior consultant to the firm's first-of-its-kind environmental and green economy practice. The firm also expanded its mainland China presence by opening a second China office – in Beijing.

# NORTH ASIA

Growth has always been a hallmark of the expansionist firms in North Asia and 2010 was no exception. The Japanese and Korean law firms that made the ALB Fast 30 this time around grew strongly, albeit for differing reasons. As the Korean economy continues to rebound, and Japan slowly but surely meanders its way out of its sustained economic quagmire, watch for law firms in each country to continue to grow in the year ahead



## Anderson Mori & Tomotsune

**Managing partner:** Hirohito Akagami

**Offices:** Beijing, Tokyo

**Partners:** 72 (+7.46%)

**Lawyers:** 233 (+6.88%)

The Japanese 'Big Four' player's growth this year has come on the back of solid organic gains. The firm welcomed five new partners last year and also increased its lawyer numbers by 15, and is expected to further internationalise its practice in 2011. What form this internationalisation will take remains to be seen, but perhaps Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu's recent alliance with Australia's Allens Arthur Robinson is telling. South-East Asia may be the next battleground on which the country's 'Big Four' wage war.



## Atsumi & Sakai

**Managing partner:** Hiroo Atsumi

**Offices:** Tokyo

**Partners:** 30 (+15%)

**Lawyers:** 61 (+11%)

**Summary:**

2010 was a successful year of growth for the firm formerly known

as Atsumi & Partners. The firm welcomed a nine-strong team from TMI Associates, including highly-regarded partner Yutaka Sakai. These lateral hires, as well as organic growth, are responsible for increasing the firm's partner and lawyer headcount by 15% and 11%, respectively. As transactional levels start to pick up in 2011 further lateral hiring may well be around the corner, especially to bolster the firm's already highly-regarded corporate practice.



## Bae Kim & Lee

**Managing partner:** YS Oh

**Offices:** Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai

**Partners:** 84 (+12%)

**Lawyers:** 232 (+10%)

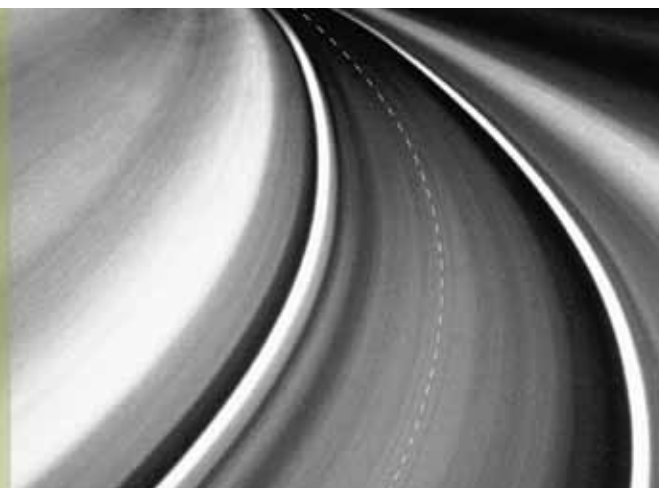


A 12% increase at the partner level, as well as 10% growth in fee-earner numbers was enough to land Korean firm Bae Kim & Lee back-to-back entries in the ALB Fast 30. Although the firm did not officially reveal its revenues for the past year, sources close to ALB confirm that Bae Kim & Lee also saw strong growth on this front, even eclipsing the mark it set in previous years. The sources attribute this to the number of high-profile, high-fee mandates the firm earned in 2010, including acting on Mahindra's acquisition of Ssangyong Motors, Hana Bank's acquisition of KEB, and the watershed privatisation of Woori Financial Holdings. As the Korean legal services market edges ever closer to liberalisation, watch for the firm to build up its resources in the areas of international arbitration and IP.

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C A D W A L A D E R



## Shin & Kim

**Managing partner:** Kim Doo-Sik  
**Offices:** Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai  
**Revenue growth:** 4%  
**Partners:** 72 (+14%)  
**Lawyers:** 212 (+32%)



Last year, *ALB* singled out Shin & Kim as “one to watch” in our annual *ALB* Watchlist feature and the firm has certainly lived up to expectations. The firm managed sizeable increases in both its partner and lawyer ranks, with gains of 14% and 32%, respectively. The firm also significantly bolstered its resources in a number of areas. Apart from its extremely successful venture into international arbitration, Shin & Kim also acquired litigation boutique Evergreen Law Group. In late 2010, the firm also increased its international footprint by opening its second China office, in Shanghai, and establishing its Latin America practice group. The latter makes it the first law firm in the country to have such a capability. Kim Doo-Sik, the firm’s managing partner, promised more of the same from the firm in 2011. “2010 was a year of challenges and opportunities for Shin & Kim. The slow economic recovery caused many firms to be cautious, but we see better times ahead and have actually grown a great deal in 2010, both in terms of headcount and expanded practice group offerings,” he said. “We expect 2011 to bring more opportunities for growth and development, and are hopeful that the economic recovery will



## Yulchon

**Managing partner:** Woo Chang Rok  
**Offices:** Seoul, Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi  
**Partners:** 66 (+65%)  
**Lawyers:** 165 (+1.23%)



No stranger to the *ALB* Fast 30, Yulchon has followed its 2009 and 2008 Fast 30 listings with another entry in this year’s edition. This time around, the emphasis was very much on strong organic growth, the firm swelling its partner ranks by as many as 26. In terms of other growth, the firm opened its second Vietnam office (Hanoi) in late 2009 and is set to announce the opening of its first China office in coming months. The firm has also racked up an impressive deal list in 2010. For instance, it was Korean counsel to Honam Petrochemical in its US\$1.27bn acquisition of Malaysia’s Titan Chemicals and represented the Czech subsidiary of Hyundai Motors on its US\$500m US-denominated bond issue.

# INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRMS



## Ashurst

**Managing partner (Asia):** Geoffrey Green  
**Asia offices:** Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo  
**Revenue growth:** 52%  
**Partners:** 18 (+22.2%)  
**Lawyers:** 43 (+32.5%)



For so long a firm that has flown under the radar in Asia, Ashurst’s strong 2010 has certainly brought it deserved attention. The firm brought four new partners on board to increase its partner ranks by just over 22% and welcomed 14 new lawyers on board to yield a 32.5% increase. The firm’s impressive growth also extended to its revenue. In this period, the firm saw a 52% increase on the back of increased demand for its corporate, finance and energy & projects practices. Here, the firm acted on some of 2010’s most high-profile transactions. In Singapore, the firm acted on the watershed Singapore Sports Hub PPP, the blockbusting IPO of Coal India, and Korea Housing Finance Corporation’s inaugural (US\$500m) covered bonds issue. The firm’s managing partner Geoffrey Green said that Ashurst is aiming for more of the same in 2011. “Despite (or perhaps because of) being one of the last major international firms to set up in Hong Kong, we have achieved in 18 months what we thought would take 3 years, with 52% growth over that period. We are driven by ... clients at the top of the market, and are not seeking a dash for growth at any cost. We would rather be at the top of our game in fewer areas, than mid market in all of them,” he said.



## Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft

**Managing partner (Asia):** Rocky Lee, Jiannan Zhang  
**Asia offices:** Beijing  
**Partners:** 2 (+100%)  
**Lawyers:** 12 (+100%)



A newcomer to the *ALB* Fast 30, Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft’s growth this year has been impressive. In addition to bringing seven new fee-earners on board, the firm pulled off one of the most high-profile lateral hires of the year when it secured the services of PE/VC guru Rocky Lee, from the China offices of rival US firm DLA Piper. Since coming on board as the firm’s joint managing partner for Asia, Lee has significantly expanded the firm’s Asia practice and is said to have played a major role in increasing the firm’s revenues, despite only having joined the firm in the second half of 2010. Not content with its strong 2010 growth figures, the firm has plans to invest even more resources in growing its burgeoning Asian operations in 2011. The firm says it will look to bring on board further reinforcements in Beijing and has outlined plans to open its second Greater China office, in Hong Kong, at some stage this year.



## Gibson Dunn & Crutcher

Managing partner: **Kenneth Doran**  
 Asia offices: **Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore**  
 Revenue increase: **3.97%**  
 Partners: **7 (+25%)**  
 Lawyers: **9 (+14%)**

US firm Gibson Dunn & Crutcher ended its one-year hiatus from the ALB Fast 0 after a strong 2010 which saw it venture into new markets. In mid-2010, the firm opened its third office in the region in Hong Kong, after the lateral hire of former GE compliance and litigation counsel Kelly Austin. In addition to leading the firm's new office with fellow partner Joseph Barbeau, Austin will also spearhead the firm's white-collar crime and corporate compliance practice in the region – both areas which are considered to be among the fastest-growing in the Asia-Pacific legal services market. Watch for the firm to expand its Greater China presence with an office in the mainland in the year ahead.



## K&L Gates

Managing partner: **David Tang**  
 Asia offices: **Beijing, Dubai, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Taipei Tokyo**

Revenue increase: **7.8%**  
 Partners: **27 (+29%)**  
 Lawyers: **65 (+8.3%)**

K&L Gates backed up its strong 2009 with an equally impressive 2010. Over the last 12 months, the firm not only opened its seventh office in Asia, in Tokyo, but it also welcomed a number of new partners on board. The firm hired two new partners for its Dubai office, lured capital markets veteran Brian Wesol from the Singapore office of Jones Day, and in Japan made a triple swoop on the Tokyo office of Latham & Watkins for counsels Ryan Dwyer, Takahiro Kawaguchi and Robert Melson.

All three will play an important role in bringing the firm's newest Asia office to critical mass as soon as possible. The firm's managing partner, David Tang, said the firm is "compelled" to continue growing in the region. The scene is set for another year of solid growth for the firm which can lay claim to being the fastest growing US law firm in Asia.



## Mayer Brown JSM

Managing partner (Asia): **Elaine Lo**  
 Asia offices: **Bangkok, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong, Shanghai**  
 Partners: **59 (+5.4%)**  
 Lawyers: **140 (+4.5%)**



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Always a consistent performer in the ALB Fast 30, Mayer Brown JSM has had another year of solid growth. During this period, the firm welcomed three new partners and six new lawyers to the firm; its total number of fee-earners, excluding partners, is now 140. The firm's growth over the past year is even more remarkable considering that at one stage throughout the year, the firm was 60 lawyers lighter. But as soon as the economic conditions improved, the firm moved quickly to replenish its ranks. Watch for the firm to continue to invest in its Greater China practice in the year ahead.



Pinsent Masons makes its debut appearance on the ALB Fast 30 after a year of solid across-the-board growth. It was the winner of the 'Building & Construction Law Firm of the Year' at both the 2009 and 2010 ALB Hong Kong Law Awards. The firm saw strong gains in its fee-earner ranks (up 15%) and also reinforced its partner ranks with lateral hires of Ming Zu (Shanghai) and Lenka Glynn (Dubai) from DLA Piper, as well as former Shearman & Sterling partner David Platt for its Singapore office. Just as impressive were the firm's Asia-Pacific financials – revenues were up by a solid 7%. Despite the many achievements the firm has racked up throughout the year, it is perhaps its new joint law venture with long-time Singapore ally MPillay that is the most noteworthy. Not only can the firm expect to see a spike in work flowing from the new arrangement, but it has reinvigorated the somewhat flagging JLV model and established a model that may serve as a blueprint for firms considering structuring their Singapore practice under the JLV framework.



"The JLV provides flexibility, will help promote collaboration between the two firms and allow us to offer clients local law advice from a top five Singapore dispute resolution law firm, in full compliance with local bar regulations," said the firm's Asia-Pacific managing partner, Vincent Connor.

 **Norton Rose**

Managing partners (Asia): **David Stannard, Campbell Steedman** (Middle East senior partner)

Asia offices: **Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Jakarta (associate office), Riyadh, Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo**

Partners: **69 (+30%)**  
Lawyers: **219 (+23%)**



Included in our second annual ALB Watchlist feature as a firm to keep an eye on in 2010, Norton Rose's lightning growth in this period certainly vindicated its inclusion. The firm brought 16 new partners on board throughout the year and increased its fee-earner ranks by 41. Of all the firm's growth feats during this period, it is arguably the hiring of Justin Davidson and Gigi Cheah, along with their entire intellectual property/technology (IPT) team from DLA Piper, that will prove the most significant in the mid-to-long term – given the tremendous growth potential on offer in the IPT area. Likewise, the firm's large presence in Australia (and its more recently acquired offices in South Africa and Canada) will offer its Asia-Pacific practice a coverage that no other international law firm can provide. Peter Martyr, the firm's chief executive, said that the strategy in the region was already paying dividends. "We believe that the importance of Asia-Pacific to the global economy will only increase. Clients are already turning to us precisely because we are able to offer connections that will help them conduct their business, whether between China and Australia or at any point along the length of the Sydney–Singapore–Shanghai and Japan–Jakarta axes. The addition of the Australian practice gives the group the opportunity to support Asia-Pacific regional growth in a way that would be impossible, driven from Europe or the Middle East."

 **Stephenson Harwood**

Managing partners (Asia): **Martin Green (Singapore); Voon Keat Lai (Greater China)**

Asia offices: **Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai**  
Revenue growth: **17% (Greater China); 29% (Singapore)**  
Partners: **Greater China: 14 (+27%); Singapore: 10 (+11%)**  
Lawyers: **Greater China (+39%); Singapore: 20 (+11%)**

Stephenson Harwood consolidated its outstanding 2009 growth with another strong showing in 2010. The firm welcomed a total of four new partners to its Asia practice and increased its fee-earner ranks by 13, then also saw an across-the-board spike in revenues. In Greater China, the firm registered a 17% increase, and in Singapore 29%, bettering its 2009 revenue increase. The firm's strong growth this year is evidence that the diversification process it commenced two years ago is starting to reap rewards. While volumes in the firm's anchor areas of shipping and dispute resolution continue to grow, it has been the dealflow coming into relatively new areas such as aviation, insurance and reinsurance, and corporate that will be most pleasing to the firm. Watch for Stephenson Harwood to pull off further high-profile laterals in these areas in 2011.

 **Pinsent Masons**

Managing partner (Asia): **Vincent Connor**  
Asia offices: **Beijing, Dubai, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore (assoc office)**

Revenue growth: **7%**  
Partners: **26 (+8%)**  
Lawyers: **68 (+15%)**

 **Watson, Farley & Williams**

Managing partners (Asia): **Chris Lowe (Singapore); Steve Burkill (Thailand)**  
Asia offices: **Bangkok, Singapore**  
Revenue growth: **17% (Bangkok); 9% (Singapore)**  
Partners: **Bangkok: 4 (+33%); Singapore: 9 (0%)**  
Lawyers: **Bangkok: 16 (+23%); Singapore: 20 (+25%)**

Another firm to register back-to-back appearances in the ALB Fast 30, Watson Farley & Williams does so this year for the same reasons as in 2009: its strong revenue gains. The firm's Singapore operations saw a 9% increase in takings over the last 12 months while Bangkok also saw a healthy 17% spike. The firm also performed strongly in the partner and fee-earner stakes registering gains of 22.5% and 24%, respectively. Much of these gains have been fed by booming activity in the firm's core areas of shipping, oil & gas and international arbitration. Watch for the firm to look to expand its network in Asia in the years ahead and use lateral hires to increase its already-impressive bench of legal talent.



been within two recently added practice areas: dispute resolution and corporate finance. In 2010, the firm acted on a number of high-profile transactions, including the US\$1.113bn 'Rowan Viking Financing' for three offshore drilling units, and the US\$380m acquisition of two jack-up rigs by Atwood Oceanics Pacific. Earlier in 2010, the firm was retained as official legal advisor to the Norwegian government at the Shanghai World EXPO.

 **Wikborg Rein**

**Managing partner (Asia):** Stephen Fordham  
**Asia offices:** Kobe, Shanghai, Singapore  
**Partners:** 11 (+130%)  
**Lawyers:** 15 (125%)



A new entrant to the ALB Fast 30, this Norwegian firm is a clear standout for its impressive growth over the last 12 months. The firm increased its partner ranks by five and also welcomed eight new fee-earners, growth that has in large part

The graphic features the text 'ALB FAST' in white on a red vertical bar, followed by a large '30' in white on a blue background. The number '30' is filled with various law firm names and regional names like 'China', 'India', 'Japan', 'Malaysia', 'Vietnam', 'Indochine', 'Guanghe Hylands Jada', 'Atsumi & Partners Mori H', 'Luthra S', 'Bright Dacheng Global', 'an & Bazul Wor', 'Broad & Bright Dachen', 'Mori Hamada & M', 'Woodward W'. Below the '30' is the text 'law firms' in red. At the bottom, a red bar contains the text 'ASIA'S FASTEST GROWING LAW FIRMS' in white.

The banner has a black background with 'ALB' in large, light grey letters at the top right. Below it, the text 'Want to receive ALB weekly? Sign up to our free e-newsletter' is written in white. Underneath, 'Stay informed with breaking legal news, events and developments direct to your inbox' is also in white. At the bottom, a red bar contains the text 'ASIA AUSTRALIA / NZ MIDDLE EAST' in white, followed by 'www.legalbusinessonline.com' in white.