

As delivered

**Speech at Embassy of Japan
at 101-104 Piccadilly London W1J 7JT
by Sir David Wootton
on Thursday 8 March 2018**

Mr Ambassador, Ladies and Gentleman my name is David Wootton. I am a lawyer so I suggest the Ambassador should feel comfortable with me as he should with all of us, all of the lawyers here Ambassador are nice lawyers, and looking at this almost full and very well populated room I can only say that the one thing wrong is that they aren't enough lawyers in it.

I was a partner in an international firm based in London which has a large and successful office in Tokyo. Which has in it lawyers from the UK, lawyers from Japan, lawyers from the United States and from many other jurisdictions, and the cooperation between that office and the other offices is replicated in many other instances of law firms and industries many of you will be represented here, and we all recognise the important common links, the common values the two counties have, belief in the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the independence of the legal professions, and the important contribution which law and lawyers can make to society in general and prosperity in particular.

I was a few years back the Lord Mayor of the city of London and the city of London and in particular its head the Lord Mayor, played an important role in the promotion of trading links between the city of London, the UK and other countries and in that work our relationship with Japan is very important and, it was not that many years since I was in this room joining in the celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the first formal contacts between England and Japan and business activity, trade, and investment has gone on between the City of London in particular and Tokyo, since then. Rather late in the day one might think, last year the city of London entered into a memorandum of understanding, an MOU with the metropolitan area of Tokyo to promote mutual business links particularly in financial services, but also in professional services and activity links and investment between the two cities.

The British Japanese Law Association has been going for rather more than a year, for 20 years, and I would like to congratulate Scott and Chizu for their imagination in founding and launching the Association and, to them and all members of it for taking the Association from the start to where it now is. I know that the Association is very appreciative of its link not just with its members but other bodies here in particular the Law Society, it is very good to see Donna Evans and her colleagues of the Law Society here this evening. I congratulate the BJLA on everything it has done so far, I wish it well in the future, and we all want it to do more to go on to greater success in developing links in the legal area between our two countries and, to give the second twenty years the best possible start. I would like us all to please drink a toast to the British Japanese Law Association, the BJLA.