

**Speech on the Occasion of the Bestowal of
the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette
upon Captain Robert Lincoln Guy, LVO at the Ambassador's Residence
by Ambassador Keiichi Hayashi
on Friday 27 November 2015**

It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you here today to celebrate the well-deserved decoration conferred upon Mr Robert Lincoln Guy, LVO – or Captain Guy, as we are used to calling him. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I am honoured to present Captain Guy with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette for his longstanding service for the strengthening of friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and the United Kingdom.

As you know, Captain Guy is a retired Captain of the Royal Navy who served in key positions both at home and abroad. You may also know that he was a devoted Polo player. Captain Guy once astonished me by revealing that while serving on active duty during the Falklands War, he dared to bring his Polo equipment along, just in case he could play a game after landing, conscious that Argentinians are enthusiastic about the sport! What strategic thinking!

Polo, which is arguably one of the most exciting and dangerous sports in the world, is sometimes described as hockey on horseback with a mental element suggestive of chess. It is a team sport that requires not only physical strength and supreme skill but also tactics, strategy and courage. I believe that these are the exact characteristics that portray Captain Guy himself.

On his retirement in 1997 from the Royal Navy after 31 years of distinguished service, Captain Guy soon joined the Japan Society, serving as Executive Director for a decade, and ever since as a Consultant. On reflection, some may wonder how a warrior quickly fitted into a new role in an organisation whose primary mission was building friendship between Japan and the United Kingdom, but actually his naval background strikes a particular chord.

Historically, the Japanese Navy was founded by, and learned a great deal from, the Royal Navy, and, despite the tragic four-year break in relations during WWII, the Royal Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force still enjoy a particularly close friendship and cooperation.

The commanding presence of a former Captain of the Royal Navy trained in strategic thinking was just what was needed to navigate a friend-“ship” called the Japan Society through choppy waters and fast currents into a new century.

His voyage as the Captain of this friend-“ship” has indeed been an exciting one. His term began in 1998, the year when Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan paid a once-in-a-generation State Visit to the UK. As Executive Director, Captain Guy commanded the Japan Society so that its forces could be combined with those of

the JCCI and the Nippon Club. These organisations together co-hosted a huge welcome reception for their Majesties.

Captain Guy also helped to strengthen the undercurrent of our bilateral relationship, by working to expand and advance the Society's activities in such areas as building an inter-school network between our two countries and cooperating with the British Council to host Japanese language- related events. His military background was instrumental in supporting the efforts for reconciliation from the wounds of the War. Furthermore, in his last year as the Executive Director in 2007, he successfully managed the merger of the Society with "Japan 21", a foundation focussing on cultural and educational exchange between the UK and Japan, thus considerably broadening the scope of the Society's work and consolidating its organisation. Furthermore, as he actively contributed to fundraising, the income of the Society tripled in the ten years that he served as Executive Director.

Even since retiring from this position, Captain Guy has been vigorously contributing to the Society as a Consultant. He has continued to forge creative partnerships with the corporate members, who have become important contributors to the Society's funds. He has also supported the activities of regional Japan Societies in the UK and other relevant organisations while cooperating with the Japan-British Society in Tokyo.

In 2008 when the 150th anniversary of the relationship between Japan and the UK was commemorated, Captain Guy was deservedly awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation for his role in promoting the relationship between Japan and the UK. As the Japan Society will commemorate the 125th anniversary of its foundation next year, it seems even more appropriate to celebrate Captain Guy's achievements with his friends and colleagues for his long period of service for Japan-UK friendship.

Thus Captain Guy is a most worthy recipient of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette. I am sure not only all of you here today but also many people elsewhere in the UK and in Japan will join me in congratulating him on the recognition duly accorded to him.

Thank you!