

*As delivered*

**Speech on the Occasion of the conferring of  
the Ambassador's Commendation on Ms Janice Brennan  
at the Ambassador's Residence  
by Ambassador Koji Tsuruoka  
on Wednesday 1 March 2017**

Welcome to the residence of the Japanese Ambassador, and thank you very much for attending this very important celebration.

It's a great honour for me to welcome the distinguished guests who have participated in the seminar at the Middle Temple. I have heard great things about this seminar, which has been held every year since 2005.

I understand that the first such occasion was organised to give Japanese officials a grounding in how the British jury system works before the introduction of a citizen participation trial system in Japan. However, since the system was safely introduced in 2009 and subsequently took root in Japanese society, the seminar has turned into an occasion when Japanese officials can expand on their knowledge of various legal topics they have discussed.

The Middle Temple received a Commendation from the Foreign Minister of Japan in 2008 for its great contribution to the development of modern law in our country and has become a precious intellectual link between British and Japanese lawyers. On this occasion I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Middle Temple and all the people here who have contributed to these seminars. In particular, it is my great pleasure today to announce that I am to confer a Commendation on Ms Janice Brennan, one of the Benchers of the Middle Temple.

Alongside practising criminal law as a criminal barrister since 1981, she has been engaged in the education of young lawyers, especially in the field of advocacy. The impact of her advocacy training, replete with brilliant insights, has been felt far and wide, and even on the opposite side of this planet. Consequently she was invited to Tokyo as a lecturer by the United Nations Asia

and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 2014. I think you are all aware that, although that institution bears the name of the United Nations, it is in fact managed by Japan's Ministry of Justice and public prosecutors.

Ms Brennan has been a source of constant help and inspiration to Japanese lawyers – including the Legal Attaché at the Embassy. In fact, our Legal Attaché probably could not survive without her! We have relied so heavily on her help that this celebration has been able to attract the best and brightest lawyers in London, so again I thank you very much for your participation.

Her assistance has been crucial not only at seminars in the Middle Temple, but whenever Japanese lawyers have needed her help by explaining the British legal system, introducing them to experts on particular topics or taking them to real courtrooms. Numerous Japanese lawyers have been inspired by her cheerful character and her huge reservoir of experience.

Of course, you know very well that we rely considerably on the experience of British lawyers, barristers and solicitors as well. We have a legal tradition of our own but, of course, yours dates back many years beyond ours, so we try to learn from your expertise, both practically and intellectually. This is how Ms Brennan has helped us. We now have a number of lawyers who are currently studying in the UK, and I would like to thank the British lawyers concerned for helping us continue to improve our knowledge.

We, the Government of Japan and the Japanese people, sincerely appreciate the invaluable contribution of Ms Brennan. Thus, today it is a great pleasure for me to announce to you all that I am conferring upon Ms Brennan this Commendation in my name, in recognition of her invaluable service in developing the relationship between British and Japanese lawyers and her tireless support in enlightening her Japanese counterparts with her knowledge and expertise concerning British legislation.

Thank you very much and many congratulations.

Let me now read the English version of what the Commendation says:

‘This is a Certificate of Commendation. The Ambassador of Japan extends his deepest regards to Ms Janice Brennan in recognition of her distinguished service in contributing to the deepening of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and other nations. Awarded on 1st March in London by the Ambassador of Japan to the United Kingdom, Koji Tsuruoka.’

I would like to add some additional words after hearing that great speech by Ms Brennan. We are two countries in different parts of the world – one in Europe, one in Asia – but we do have a common and strong commitment to the rule of law. In Japan we believe we have a responsibility for bolstering and gaining wider support for this stance and for using it as a basis for developing stronger relations with our neighbours. Will the UK continue to be active in promoting this fundamental principle, which underlies democracy and is the ultimate protection for individuals? If there is no institutional protection, then we are all at the mercy of tyrants and dictators; that is not a path along which either the UK or Japan would like to go.

There is great scope for the lawyers of our two countries to join forces in promoting the rule of law universally. This is something not just for our two peoples to treasure but for everyone to share. In a world increasingly without borders, if you have cross-border activities that are not predictable, fair or based on the rule of law, the stability and prosperity we have come to enjoy could be destroyed.

Let me declare, then, that Ms Brennan is a worthy recipient of the Ambassador’s Commendation not just for the reasons I have outlined but because she has also helped the Embassy to promote these very important ideas. So thank you once again, Ms Brennan, for everything you have done. And let me also thank your parents for joining us for this very festive occasion.

Well, you have not come here just to listen to speeches. We have some food prepared by the Embassy chef as well as drinks, sake included, so please enjoy the evening.