

As delivered

**Speech at a Ceremony to commemorate the Bestowal of
The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette
upon Mr Stephen McEnally
at the Embassy of Japan
by Ambassador Koji Tsuruoka
on Thursday 2 March 2017**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you here today to pay tribute to Mr Stephen McEnally for his sterling work in promoting bilateral cultural and personnel exchange between Japan and the UK. There is testimony to that. Right here we have people working on Japan-UK cultural exchange who have come from far and wide from all over the UK. I'm very, very grateful to you for having travelled to join us this evening.

Stephen just told me that tonight he has with him people who have worked very closely with him over many, many years. The results of this collaboration are clear for all to see. Indeed, these endeavours have made a huge impact both in the UK and Japan. As a result, it is our Emperor's wish to recognise Mr McEnally's great service by bestowing an award upon him, and we are here for an official celebration of his achievement.

Mr McEnally's dedication to his noble cause can be traced back to the time when he joined the British Council. From 1979 to 1983 he was the Council's Assistant Representative in Tokyo and then Director of its Kyoto Office, where he oversaw its work in western Japan. He also managed the first cohort of British graduates to teach in Japan, an initiative he helped to set up in 1978, now well-known as the Japan Exchange and Teaching, or JET, Programme. He was the Council's Regional Officer for Japan and East Asia in the 1980s.

In 1994 Mr McEnally was appointed Director of Programmes at the Japan Foundation in London. In this role he contributed to the development of programmes in Japanese language education, Japanese Studies and cultural

projects that laid the foundations for people-to-people exchange between the UK and Japan for more than ten years.

After becoming Chief Executive of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation in 2006, he set up two major funding programmes to promote Japanese Studies in British universities, both with grants from The Nippon Foundation. The Sasakawa Lectureship Programme, a £2.5 million project, funded 13 new lectureship posts in Japanese Studies at 12 British universities between 2008 and 2013. Since then as many as 11 of those institutions have continued to offer the related courses under their own funding. This is quite amazing. Indeed, such outcomes don't often happen either in Japan or here. Then, in 2013 he launched, again with a grant from The Nippon Foundation, a £1.5 million studentship programme that is providing up to 30 Japanese Studies postgraduate studentships per year and will continue until 2018. Meanwhile, in 2013 Mr McEnally helped to initiate with The Nippon Foundation a joint five-year Conference Programme with Chatham House under which issues of common concern to both countries and potential areas for future collaboration are being discussed. No doubt one of the most important issues facing the UK today, Brexit, will be one of the topics on this programme.

In 2011, as a board member of the Japan Society, he was instrumental in the decision to allow researchers and students affiliated to the Sasakawa Foundation to participate in the Society's activities. Their involvement has had a highly positive impact.

Mr McEnally has worked tirelessly to promote deeper mutual understanding through the activities and initiatives of the organisations with which he has been associated. With his rich network of contacts in the UK-Japan community and his deep insights about Japan, he is highly trusted by Japanese organisations and businesses in the UK as well as by Japan-based bodies interacting with this country.

Since retiring from the Foundation, he has been appointed a Senior Fellow at SOAS, University of London, and an Associate Member at the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies, University of Oxford. In addition to these appointments, I

have heard that Oxford Brookes University is to award him an Honorary Doctorate in June. So we had to be sure to award him the Emperor's decoration before that!

Before closing, I would also like to say that this is a tribute to many of you here as well. What we do may not necessarily have immediate results. But if we don't plant seeds, there will never be flowers. And if, after planting seeds, you don't water them? Maybe there will not be any flowers. So it's an effort that has to be ongoing and you can only succeed when you have people working with you in a spirit of collaboration. But you still need people who are willing to dedicate themselves and even to make sacrifices so that the flower missing today will eventually bloom. The presence here today of representatives of so many British universities offering Japan-related course testifies to the truth of this principle.

Thus, thanking him again for the great contribution he has made, it is my honour, on behalf of the Government of Japan and on behalf of my Emperor, to confer upon Mr Stephen McEnally the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette. I'm sure that he will continue to feature prominently in efforts to promote UK-Japan relations because, as we see with other individuals who have been honoured by the Emperor, receiving a decoration is not the end but rather an invitation to work harder!

Thank you very much, Mr McEnally, and many, many congratulations!