

**Speech by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Mr Koji Tsuruoka**

Thank you all for coming. I welcome you to this residence to celebrate the commendation for British Japanese Law Association led by the two Co-Chairs persons, Professor Chizu Nakajima and Mr Scott Hopkins. We are surrounded by their friends, their family members and long-time associates.

Let me mention a few reasons why the two BJLA co-chairs have been selected for this commendation. It was in 1998 that the BJLA was established. The objective being to promote and develop legal ties between Britain and Japan, and of course, promoting fellowship and understanding so that the legal professions of both countries would be able to work together and enhance understanding. The activities of the BJLA since 1998 have contributed greatly to promote understanding between the two legal professions, and we are very grateful for this hard work which has produced tremendous results, with our two countries being able to develop mutual understanding. These are very important to promote more mutual understanding of justice and the rule of international law, which unfortunately today, seems to be more and more in jeopardy I am sorry to say. It helps promote study abroad in the UK and Japan. This is why, I think, it is quite timely that both are determined to continue to promote rule of law. Our commendations are aimed at encouraging people to continue with this good work.

You may recall that it was on 8 March when the Japanese Embassy and BJLA co-hosted the reception to mark the 20th Anniversary of the BJLA at the Embassy. It was the first opportunity to gather together. We had more than 120 distinguished lawyers attending, including Supreme Court Judges and the Lord Chief of Justice of England and Wales. It shows the importance of these bilateral relations.

Let me now turn to the specific work of Professor Nakajima and Mr Hopkins. Professor Nakajima, in addition to co-chair of BJLA, has been a co-organiser of the Cambridge International Economic Crime Symposium. This is a very important symposium, so important that I attended it soon after my arrival to London two years ago. We plan to hold another symposium again late this year. Professor Nakajima has helped in bringing participants to this symposium, and it has helped a great deal to the Japanese prosecutor's office in the Ministry of Justice. They have come every year to attend the seminar, and they have been able to learn and mix with many other international lawyers in charge of administrative criminal law as well as practising lawyers. This is a very important opportunity because criminal law is becoming more and more international, and unfortunately, crime crosses international borders. I would also like to thank Professor Nakajima for assisting us to open Japan House and she is a member of Japan House Committee which meets regularly. Japan House is now open and it is just a few minutes' walk from Kensington High Street. I recommend if you haven't been there, you should visit and it will not be a waste of time. I was happily surprised that even government funding can do something. That is thanks to Professor Nakajima's guidance on how we should address this.

Mr Hopkins is well known to the people in the legal profession, and he has had a remarkably successful career as a lawyer at law firm Skadden, based in London. He is a frequent traveller to Japan and has a number of contacts with Japanese firms and Japanese lawyers to work on major investment projects including the Nikkei acquisition of the Financial Times, Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance purchase of Amlin, one of the largest insurance companies in the UK. These have been most successfully productive thanks to the work of Mr Hopkins.

Of course Mr Hopkins has been helping, for a long time, the Japanese Embassy and the Japanese legal attaches who are seconded from the Ministry of Justice. They are in fact public prosecutors but may not be so aware of the UK law. Mr Hopkins has been helping the legal attaches in their work in London and I would therefore, like to thank Mr Hopkins for his continued support. Of course although these are

experts in Japanese law, they have to be aware of the UK law system as well.

The government and people of Japan sincerely appreciate the invaluable contributions of both Professor Nakajima and Mr Hopkins. Therefore, it is a great honour and pleasure for me to confer upon Professor Nakajima and Mr Hopkins this commendation in my name, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to strengthening and developing the relationship between Japan and the United Kingdom in the field of law. I think this is very important because having a collaborative relationship in law can also be established between two countries that share values. The values are; respect of human rights, democracy, and a means of ensuring the rule of law. And, the lawyers are the guardians of these values. The collaboration crosses borders internationally and the value can be protected internationally as well. The association has been working since 1998, 20 years is a long time, but there will be another 20 years that will have to continue because of the hard work and challenges that are currently seen. So I would like to present my commendations to both.