

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
for Bestowal of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette
upon Mr. Timothy Thorburn Clark
(12 July, 2021)

Distinguished Guests,

Today, we have indeed an outstanding task of honouring the invaluable contribution of Mr Timothy Thorburn Clark to Japan-UK cultural relations with his illustrious career spanning well over three decades.

Having joined the British Museum in 1987 and overseen the steady progress of the Japanese Department, which was established at that time, Mr Clark involved himself in numerous projects including Japan-related exhibitions and lectures. All of them did a great deal to foster wider and deeper understanding of Japanese culture and art, not just in the UK but throughout Europe and beyond as well. For instance, I imagine all of you still recall vividly the exhibition ‘Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave’, held from May to August in 2017, which attracted a record number of visitors and was a resounding success. My wife and I wish we had been here at that time to appreciate the exhibition for ourselves.

Mr Clark also played a central role in two large-scale refurbishments of the Mitsubishi Japanese Galleries, while also accommodating temporary exhibitions. Through numerous exhibitions, Mr Clark has worked closely with other museums and research institutions, thereby helping establish the networks between researchers and museums with collections of Japanese art around the world.

Although Mr Clark retired as the Head of the Japanese Section of the British Museum at the end of 2019, his role continues as an honorary research fellow there. I am delighted to know that the British Museum is now planning a special exhibition ‘Hokusai: The Great Picture Book of Everything’, based on 103 recently acquired Hokusai drawings intended as illustrations for a book which was never published, along with Mr Clark’s newly published research on the drawings.

In view of his sterling work in fostering closer relations between our two countries and peoples, Mr Clark is a worthy recipient of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette which has been bestowed upon him. Please join me in congratulating Mr Clark on his magnificent achievement.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.