

Ambassador Hayashi's remarks
at Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford
7 June 2022

Professor Shaw,
Distinguished Guests,

We are standing here this evening surrounded by the very same pots that were exhibited in the Embassy of Japan in London. The items now adorn the halls, cases and mantles of this beautiful college: waiting at every turn to delight those who encounter them.

The opening of the exhibition here at Harris Manchester College marks the continuation and flourishing of the developing collaboration between the Embassy and the University of Oxford.

This collaboration was facilitated by the Oxford University Kilns Project, with its unique model of practical academic research which includes the firing of kilns of Japanese design with ceramics practitioners from across the world. The project has contributed not only to introducing Japan's traditional firing skills and its natural beauty to the British people but also to connecting potteries between Japan and the UK.

The project would not have been possible without the extensive support from the team at Wytham Woods, the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, and of course, Harris Manchester College. I would like to extend my gratitude to all who have been involved in making this project a reality, including the many ceramics institutions that coordinated students' work or held workshops ahead of the firings.

May I pay tribute to Dr Robin Wilson, who went to great lengths to coordinate the firings and teach the new teams how to fire his anagama kilns. The work is subtle and complex, and I hope everyone

here this evening enjoys spending time with these astonishing works of art that exist as a symbol of our beautiful collaboration.

When we talk about collaboration on potteries between our two countries, I have to pay a particular tribute to Bernard Leach, an outstanding British potter, and his close Japanese associates such as Yanagi Muneyoshi and Hamada Shoji. It was in 1920 when Bernard Leach, after returning back from Japan, opened a climbing kiln at St Ives in Cornwall and started extensive pottery works in the UK. He certainly pursued his artistic career based on what he studied and acquired through his friendship and collaborations with Japanese counterparts. By doing so, he has made it clear that pottery is definitely a form of arts.

Before closing my short remarks, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Jane Shaw and her colleagues here at Harris Manchester College. They kindly and prudently host this new take on the exhibition and extend the opportunity for educational outreach here in Oxford.

Thank you indeed for your kind attention.