

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
for Bestowal of the The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star
upon Professor Sir Michael Arthur
(24 March, 2023)

Distinguished guests,
Good afternoon, and welcome to my residence.

It is a privilege to have this opportunity to honour Professor Sir Michael Arthur for his outstanding contribution to promoting academic exchange and mutual understanding between Japan and the UK.

Let me outline the salient professional achievements of Sir Michael, though most of today's guests will understand these achievements.

After many successful years in medicine at the University of Southampton and as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Leeds, he became President and Provost of University College London in 2013.

That year marked the 150th anniversary of the Chōshū Five - the first Japanese students to study abroad - who arrived at UCL in 1863. Since this milestone year, Sir Michael has actively promoted UCL to increase the number of applicants from Japan, and during his tenure, Japanese students at UCL have increased and the activities of the UCL Japan Society have flourished.

His initiatives have also helped to actively strengthen UCL's links with Japan. Previously, there had been research exchange agreements between UCL and Japanese universities by individual researchers and departments, but Sir Michael developed a far-reaching university-to-university partnership framework to widen these exchanges and accelerate cooperation.

For example, a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding between Tohoku University and UCL was signed in 2013. This MoU helped to build

cooperation with a wide range of Japanese organisations in the Tohoku region, in not only academia, but also industry and local authorities. As a result, such occasions were brought about as discussions with them on cooperation in the recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake which had struck the region in 2011.

In addition to such bilateral partnerships, he strived to promote multilateral cooperation between universities from Japan and the UK. In this regard, in collaboration with the Embassy of Japan, he led the organisation of the "Japan-UK Universities Conference for Collaboration in Research and Education" in 2014. This was an unprecedented event which brought together Presidents and Chancellors of 30 universities - 14 Japanese and 16 UK universities. The conference was organised on the occasion of the then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to the UK and was a milestone in Japanese-UK university cooperation.

As organiser, Sir Michael was actively involved in setting the agenda, and he led the conference to develop concrete discussions. As a result, a wide range of future visions were discussed, such as measures to promote international student and researcher exchange between Japan and UK universities, and the establishment of a multi-university framework for Japan-UK cooperation, opening up new prospects for academic exchange.

It is certainly difficult to fully cover all of Sir Michael's contributions and achievements towards the academic cooperation between Japan and the UK.

However, in view of his sterling works in this field, Sir Michael is clearly a most worthy recipient of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, which has been bestowed upon him by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

Please join me in congratulating Sir Michael on this magnificent achievement.

Congratulations!