

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
for the Japanese British Lawyers' Networking Reception 2023
12th October 2023

My Lords, My Ladies, Distinguished guests,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all here for the fifth Japanese British Lawyers' Networking Reception, co-hosted by the Embassy of Japan and the British Japanese Law Association.

This evening my wife and I are delighted that the most prominent legal professionals from various fields of law are with us, including the most senior justices from the UK's courts, a senior justice from the Japanese Supreme Court, and the new president of the Law Society.

As Ambassador of Japan to the UK, I am always delighted to see that the partnership between Japan and the UK has developed solidly and is now flourishing more than ever. It has been sustained and nurtured by many people from our two countries. And I am sure that cooperation in the judicial sector and the relationships among lawyers are some of the key cornerstones of this pleasing trend.

As a matter of fact, cooperation between British and Japanese lawyers has a long history. Indeed, it has contributed to Japan's adoption and development of core values such as the rule of law. To this day, a great number of Japanese judges, prosecutors and private lawyers have come to the UK to learn about the UK's legal systems and exchange their knowledge and expertise with legal professionals in the UK. And vice versa, Japan has also received many visits from British judges and lawyers.

Our two sides are now working together to promote these core values around the world. As recently as July, Japan hosted the G7 Justice Ministers' meeting in Tokyo under the "Justice Affairs Diplomacy" initiatives, with the attendance of the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice from the UK.

At the end of the meeting, the ministers issued the "Justice Ministers' Communiqué", which emphasised the importance of promoting our shared values, in particular the rule of law. In addition, at the bilateral meeting, Justice Minister Ken Saito and Lord Chancellor Alex Chalk signed the "Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of Japan and the Ministry of Justice of the United Kingdom in the field of legal and justice affairs". I believe this is one of the milestones in the long history of cooperation between the UK and Japan in this field and look forward to yet deeper collaboration in the months and years to come.

I would like to note the presence this evening of Japanese Supreme Court Justice Yasumasa Nagamine who is also among my predecessors as Japanese Ambassador to the UK. It is the first time for a Japanese Supreme Court justice to attend this reception. I consider this a symbol of the strong bonds between Japan and the UK.

I also wholeheartedly commend the distinguished guests here today for your continuous efforts and support towards developing and strengthening the partnership between us. My embassy highly regards the development of our strong ties across legal fields and will continue our efforts in collaboration with you all.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute to Professor Chizu Nakajima and Mr Scott Hopkins for their ongoing creative endeavours. The BJLA has tirelessly facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience between our legal professionals for as long as 25 years.

Before closing, I want to share my wish that you, the distinguished legal professionals gathered here today, make the most of this opportunity to revive established connections and create new networks. Incidentally, as some of you might know, snapdragons, which feature in today's flower arrangements, are said to be associated with justice and are also known for their toughness and resilience. I would like to mention that these magnificently colourful flowers symbolise the manner in which our partnership in the judicial field will continue to prosper.

Thank you very much indeed.