

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
On the occasion of the bestowal of The Grand Cordon  
of the Order of the Rising Sun to the Rt Hon Lord  
Patten of Barnes  
on 30th January 2025

Lord Patten, Lady Patten

Members of the Patten Family,

The Earl of Kilmorey,

My Lords, My Ladies,

Excellencies,

Esteemed Guests,

And my friends,

It is my huge honour and great privilege to present The Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun to Lord Patten.

His extraordinary contributions to international peace, prosperity and stability during his long years of public service need no explanation.

Lord Patten is famous throughout the world as the last Governor of Hong Kong. I read ‘East and West’ again after a quarter century, and was deeply struck with how hard he endeavored to ensure that freedom, democracy and prosperity continued after the handover. He reformed the electoral system, held a de-facto free election and constructed a new airport and a new town.

Throughout fierce negotiations, Lord Patten stood tall to safeguard freedom, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the market economy.

Tokyo highly valued his visits to Japan nearly every year to hold close consultations with the then-Prime Ministers and -Foreign Ministers.

As European Commissioner, he established annual consultations with Japan. Subsequently, as Chancellor of Oxford University, Japanese Studies and cultural exchange flourished under his leadership.

Meanwhile, Lord Patten was instrumental in the establishment of Japan House London. Since its opening, it has attracted over two million visitors.

He has also served as an International Advisor to the Praemium Imperiale, dubbed the “Nobel Prize in arts and culture”. He has attended almost all its awards ceremonies in Japan since 2009.

This decoration is particularly timely in view of Lord Patten's contribution to the success of last year's State Visit by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress. He warmly hosted Their Majesties at Oxford, becoming a rare dignitary in welcoming two generations of Japanese Emperor and Empress.

Last but not least, behind a great man there is a great lady. Lady Patten has supported Lord Patten through his long years of public service, rain, shine or storm.

In closing, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to thank you, Lord Patten, for your invaluable contributions to fostering warm friendship and strengthening the vital partnership between Japan and the UK.

Thank you very much.