

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
on the occasion of the presentation of the Ambassador's
Commendation to the BAJS,
on 18th December 2025

Professor Coates,
Professor Goodman,
Dear friends of Japan,

I have been looking forward to
meeting all of you today to celebrate the
Golden Jubilee of the British Association
for Japanese Studies, or BAJS.

It is my enormous pleasure to present
the Ambassador's Commendation to the
BAJS today.

Since its establishment in 1974, the BAJS has played a pivotal role in developing Japanese Studies in the United Kingdom.

Through its conferences, its publication of Japan Forum, and its support for young scholars, to name just a few, BAJS has become the vital foundation for academics specialising in Japanese Studies.

As a diplomat, it is my job to explain Japan to people here in the United Kingdom. But when I meet scholars of Japanese Studies, whose fields may range from Japanese history, to political economy, to arts and literature, and even to anime and manga or to film, I often feel that I should be the one taking notes! Your expertise is truly amazing.

Today Japan–UK relations are better than ever, supported by the solid academic foundation built by decades of Japanese Studies.

“Keizoku wa chikara nari” (continuity generates strength). Japanese Studies have created many talented people who serve with love and understanding for Japan in public institutions and private companies. They are important bridges underpinning the vital Japan-UK partnership.

Yet this foundation is now facing a profound challenge due to budget cuts at a number of universities across the UK.

For example, this year, Japanese Studies at Cardiff University and the University of Sheffield came on the verge of reduction or closure. There have been some developments, but the crisis is far from over. I have written personally to both universities, as well as to the First Minister of Wales, to express my grave concern.

If you become aware of similar challenges at your institutions, please contact me or Minister Maeda and his education team as soon as possible. We stand ready to support you and to work together to safeguard the Japanese Studies in the UK.

Looking ahead to the next fifty years,
my Embassy remains fully committed to
working hard in hand with you to further
promote Japanese Studies across the UK.

Thank you very much.

(End)