

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
At the Presentation Ceremony of the Foreign
Minister's Commendation
to Dr John Robert Pritchard
on 22 September 2025

Dr Pritchard, Lady Pritchard,
Distinguished guests,

Thank you for coming to the Japanese Embassy
this evening. I am truly delighted to welcome back
Dr Pritchard and his family.

It is my great pleasure as Ambassador of Japan to
the UK to present the Japanese Foreign Minister's
Commendation to Dr Pritchard.

Firstly, I understand that Dr. Pritchard will soon celebrate his 80th birthday. It may be a bit premature, but let's give Dr. Pritchard a big round of applause. Congratulations!

Dr Pritchard harboured deep-rooted interest in Japan's beauty, and cultural richness from his childhood, which made him become interested in studying modern history to pursue his desire for peace and friendship with Japan.

I deeply respect his incredible achievements through his dedicated efforts in Japanese studies over many years.

From 1981, Dr Pritchard spent eight years compiling and publishing a comprehensive record on the International Military Tribunal for the Far East comprising 22 volumes.

Furthermore, to supplement these records, Dr Pritchard spent 9 years from 1998 to 2007 to compile and publish an enormous work, comprising 124 volumes of records, as well as explanatory texts on the history and legal aspects of the Tribunal, accompanied by a comprehensive index.

These publications remain integral primary and secondary sources for reference on the Tribunal. They are held in libraries worldwide and continue to be cited by students and researchers globally.

This work has been widely commended for dramatically improving access to materials concerning the Tribunal.

Dr Pritchard's diligent research activities have made a significant contribution to promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the UK.

Furthermore, Dr Pritchard has actively engaged in the production of historical documentaries made by British television networks.

He endeavoured to revise content that stoked division based upon one-sided assertions, striving instead for content that would promote a balanced understanding of the respective positions held by both Japan and the UK during the war, emphasising a fair historical assessment.

As Churchill said, ‘the further back you can look, the further forward you are likely to see.’ Dr. Pritchard’s enormous historical research serves as a lighthouse illuminating the future.

As a distinguished historian, Dr Pritchard has made outstanding contributions to promoting post-war reconciliation between Japan and the UK.

Dr Pritchard has facilitated visits to Japan by younger generations, primarily the grandchildren of former British prisoners of war and civilian internees.

He lectured these young people on Japanese culture, history, the Pacific War from both British and Japanese perspectives.

Therefore, awarding this Commendation to Dr Pritchard, 80 years since the end of the Second World War, holds profound significance.

At the 80th anniversary of the end of the War, I was deeply moved by the message issued by His Majesty The King: ‘In times of war and in times of peace, the greatest weapons of all are not the arms you bear, but the arms you link. That remains a vital lesson for our times.’

Dr Pritchard has worked tirelessly to link the youth of both our nations. His extensive academic achievements and dedicated mentorship to younger generations provide a solid foundation for future Japan-UK relations.

As the Ambassador of Japan, I express my deep admiration and gratitude to Dr Pritchard for promoting mutual understanding and fostering friendship between Japan and the UK.

Beside every great man stands a great lady. Lady Pritchard, without your dedicated support, Dr Pritchard could not have made such an outstanding achievement.

In closing, let me congratulate you once again, Dr Pritchard, on receiving the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation. I look forward to your continued contributions to further promoting friendship between Japan and the UK.

Thank you very much.