

Remarks by H.E. Mr SUZUKI Hiroshi,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at the Presentation Ceremony and Reception to celebrate
the Bestowal of the Foreign Minister's Commendation
upon SISJAC and Mr Simon Kaner
on 7th November 2024

Professor Kaner,
Distinguished Guests,

I would like to thank you all for coming this evening. This is actually my first official engagement here at the Embassy since my return to London as Ambassador of Japan to the UK.

Today it is my great privilege to present the Foreign Minister's Commendation both to the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, as an organisation, and to its Executive Director, Professor Simon Kaner, as an individual, on the auspicious occasion of the Institute's 25 anniversary.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest respect for the tremendous contributions that the Sainsbury Institute and Professor Kaner have made over many years in promoting knowledge and understanding of Japanese arts and culture.

In fact, I fondly remember visiting the Sainsbury Institute 12 years ago, guided by then-Executive Director, Ms Mami Mizutori. I was pleasantly surprised by its rich and diverse collection of Japanese artefacts and works of art.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Sainsbury Institute, and throughout this period the Institute has made it its mission to promote world class research and be a leader in its highly specialised field. It has also played an indispensable role in deepening cultural exchange between Japan and the UK.

Since 2018, Professor Kaner, as a renowned archaeologist specialising in the prehistory of Japan, has used his expertise to explore and present the diverse aspects of Japanese arts and culture to the international community.

In addition, he has demonstrated outstanding leadership in his roles as Head of the Centre for Archaeology and Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute, Director of the Centre for Japanese Studies, and Chair of the Japan Country Dialogue Group at the University of East Anglia.

His dedicated efforts and remarkable achievements have served as a cultural bridge between Japan and the UK, contributing significantly to the understanding and appreciation of Japanese arts and culture in this country.

The presentation of the Foreign Minister's Commendation today is a token of Japan's gratitude and respect for the work that the Sainsbury Institute and Professor Kaner have accomplished.

Their efforts have gone beyond the confines of academia, making diverse aspects of Japanese arts and culture more accessible to the public at large. I believe this Commendation will further strengthen the cultural ties between Japan and the UK, and I look forward to seeing even greater developments in this regard from now on.

Let me close by expressing my best wishes to the Sainsbury Institute for its continued success, and to Professor Kaner for your continued great success and good health in the future.

Congratulations!