

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at the Praemium Imperiale Lunch

Lord Patten, Lady Patten,
Distinguished guests,

Good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to attend this lunch today to celebrate the Praemium Imperiale and its remarkable laureates.

This award honours the vision of His Imperial Highness, the late Prince Takamatsu, who believed deeply in the universal power of arts to inspire people, transcend national boundaries, and build friendships across the world.

I had the privilege of meeting His Imperial Highness Prince Takamatsu when I was in

university more than 40 years ago. He was open and engaging, and how he encouraged young people to pursue their dreams left a deep impression on me.

Today, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the laureates of this year's Praemium Imperiale.

I am particularly pleased to see a British laureate among this year's recipients.

He is Andy Goldsworthy, who has a strong connection with Japan. He first visited Japan in 1987, and stayed in Mie and Kagoshima for some time to create his art. He came back to Japan in early 1990s, and visited Tochigi, Mie and Mt Fuji. All these led to his major exhibitions in Japan from 1993 to 94.

Japan enjoys long standing connections with two more recipients.

Herbert Blomstedt first conducted the NHK Symphony Orchestra in 1981. It is a privilege for the Orchestra to enjoy 45 years' partnership with him. At age 99, he still continues to be Honorary Conductor Laureate of the NHK Symphony Orchestra.

Cate Blanchett, who spent many years in the UK, is currently captivating audiences at the National Theatre and is also helping to promote Japanese sake, called TOKU Sake, produced in Hokkaido.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to Lord Patten for his dedication and longstanding support as an International Advisor to this award.

Lord Patten, your remarkable insight, vision, and enduring commitment have been invaluable in helping the award grow into a truly world-leading prize.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Japan Art Association, Fuji Sankei Group, and all those involved who make this prize possible.

In closing, I would like to, once again, congratulate all the recipients of the award for this year.

Thank you very much.