

Minutes of the 122nd Annual General Meeting of The Japan Society

*Held at the Embassy of Japan, 101-104 Piccadilly, London W1
at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 19 June 2019*

Bill Emmott

Bill Emmott, Chairman of the Japan Society, opened the meeting by welcoming members to the AGM along with the Society's President, the Japanese Ambassador, Koji Tsuruoka. He thanked everyone for their continued support of the Society's work.

The Chairman invited Ambassador Tsuruoka to say a few words.

Ambassador Tsuruoka

Ambassador Tsuruoka thanked Bill for the introduction and the Society for the work and support it has provided to the Embassy. He noted with pride that the Japan Society was the oldest such Society in the world, and the only one to have been gifted a contribution from the Emperor Meiji when it started. Since then it had been a driving force in promoting UK Japan relations in the UK, with particular emphasis on education and engaging the future generation. He welcomed Bill Emmott warmly as new chairman, with confidence that he would lead the Society well over the next six years following former Ambassador Sir David Warren's capable chairmanship.

The Ambassador noted that a new era, Reiwa, had started in Japan, and discussed the strong significance of such change to the people of Japan. The new Emperor and Empress had both studied at Oxford University and were fluent in English, so would lead Japan to become even more international and play its part in the global community. With the Japan Society's own deep roots with the Imperial family, it also has a duty to help bring the Japan UK cultural relationship to an even higher level, and would doubtless rise to this challenge.

A number of major events would be taking place in Japan over the rest of this year, starting with the G20 summit in Osaka, and followed by a meeting of TICAD (The Tokyo International Conference of African Development), established nearly 30 years ago. This year would also see Japan hosting the Rugby World Cup, with strong representation from all the nations of the UK. He hoped that Japan Society members would support the Japanese national team alongside their own. As the first non traditional rugby playing country to host the World Cup, Japan's progress in the tournament would be influential in the worldwide development of the game. Ticket sales were already very high and the event was eagerly anticipated.

In conclusion, Ambassador Tsuruoka paid tribute to the late Sir Hugh Cortazzi who had been a great source of counsel since his arrival in London, and who was much missed. He had left a great legacy including his translation of the then Crown Prince's memoir of his time in Oxford, *The Thames and I*, which had just been republished, as well as *British Royal and Japanese Imperial Relations: 1868-2018*, being launched following the AGM. Their publication at the start of the new Reiwa era was very timely.

Bill Emmott

The Chairman thanked the Ambassador for his inspiring words and for the continued support he and the Embassy had given the Society and its activities. He noted that the Japan Society's Annual Dinner would have a rugby theme, being held at Twickenham Stadium with the England rugby coach, Eddie Jones, as guest of honour.

He thanked his predecessor Sir David Warren, who had left the Society in good heart and reflected on his first six months as chairman. He paid tribute to the staff and to the membership, who contributed so much to the Society, and had noted that since assuming the chairmanship he had become more aware of the many forms their support took. Financial support was, of course, critical; the Society could not survive and continue to offer the range of business, cultural and educational events without the support of individual and corporate donors. Members' support as volunteers, particularly at public facing events such as the recent Hammersmith Garden Party or as event hosts was also invaluable. Other volunteers also contributed, such as Ryan Keeble who had edited the Japan Society Proceedings with Alejandra Armendariz-Hernandez.

Bill went on to reflect on the wide range of activity of the Society and the importance of its education and outreach work, and noted amongst others the ongoing development of teaching materials being undertaken by Hannah Eastham and Rebecca Lee, for a new education resource portal on the planned redesigned website.

He then moved on to the formal business of the meeting.

Agenda Items

The Chairman gave a brief reminder of AGM vote and the board and trustee structure and tenure. Three board members were standing down at the meeting, or had done so during the year: Tetsuro Hama, Morihiko Okudaira, Sarah Parsons. He thanked them for their enthusiastic support of the Society's activities and contribution to the board.

Four candidates were standing for re-election/election as ordinary trustees: Tadaharu Iizuka, Neil Riley, Pernille Rudlin and Yoji Saito (re-election). Biographies for each candidate had been circulated in official AGM papers.

Election was taken by poll.

The following resolutions were passed:

1. To receive and adopt the audited annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2018 and the Trustees' report.
2. To reappoint Richard Place Dobson as auditors and to authorize the Board to approve their remuneration as thought fit.
3. To elect Tadaharu Iizuka as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
4. To elect Neil Riley as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
5. To elect Pernille Rudlin as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
6. To re-appoint Yoji Saito as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.