

*Anglo-Japanese  
Cultural Relations*

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SPEECH AT  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
FELLOWS' DINNER

BY

PROFESSOR JOJI SAKURAI, P.C., D.Sc., LL.D.

1937

University of London, University College

FELLOWS'  
DINNER

FRIDAY, 30th APRIL, 1937

*Chairman :*

THE PROVOST

REPLY

TO THE TOAST OF

THE NEW HONORARY FELLOW

BY

PROFESSOR JOJI SAKURAI, D.Sc., LL.D.

*Privy Councillor,*

*President of the Imperial Academy,*

*President of the National Research Council of Japan.*

MR. PROVOST,

MY LORDS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

In rising to respond to the toast I wish to express, first of all, my heart-felt gratitude to the Professorial Board of University College for the great goodwill with which it has passed the resolution concerning my election to Honorary Fellowship and to the Senate of the University of London for electing me formally to that great distinction.

The honour that has been conferred upon me is one which is most unexpected as it is most undeserved, and I assure both the Professorial Board of University College and the Senate of the University of London that I value this honour most highly, more particularly so, as I understand that it has hitherto been conferred only upon a selected few of most distinguished persons, including H.R.H. Prince Arthur of Connaught and, further, that this is the first occasion upon which this great honour has ever been conferred upon a foreigner.

In proposing the toast Professor Donnan has, in extremely kind words, spoken of my work in Japan, but if what I have been able to do is at all creditable the credit must be traced back to my education in England and, first and most of all, to the scientific training I received in University College during the five years, extending from 1876 to 1881. Dr. Alex. W. Williamson, renowned throughout the whole world for his

classical investigation on the formation of ethers and renowned also for his remarkably keen insight into the atomic constitution of matter, was then Professor of Chemistry, and it is needless for me to say how highly I value the scientific training I received from him. I was taught Physics by Professor Carey Foster and Dr. Oliver Lodge, and the knowledge of Physics thus acquired was a great help to me in following the remarkably rapid development of Physical Chemistry which was soon to come.

It was, however, not the scientific training alone that I received in England. The five years of my student life in England were in the latter half of Queen Victoria's reign, a period which is one of the most glorious in the whole history of England. It was a period in which some of the greatest and most illustrious of men and, also, of women were to be met with in almost every field of human activity. As statesmen and orators, Lord Beaconsfield and the grand old man—Mr. Gladstone—were shining like stars of first magnitude; Tennyson was being adored as Poet Laureate, Ruskin as a writer and critic and George Eliot as a feminine novelist of unusual talent; Charles Darwin was enjoying to see his life-long labours bearing fruit, Herbert Spencer was laying a scientific foundation of Sociology, whilst Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were, night after night, drawing crowds of enthusiastic audiences to the Lyceum.

It was in this period, too, that the question of war with Russia, or peace, was hotly debated in Parliament and that

at the famous Berlin Congress, with Bismarck as Chairman, Lord Beaconsfield succeeded in realizing the policy of the British Government to its fullest extent, the policy, namely, of peace with honour.

Having had the rare fortune of being in England at such a glorious time, I could not and would not confine myself to scientific studies alone, but wishing to look upon England with more widely opened eyes I studied something of English History, of English Literature, of English Art and, even, of English drama. At the same time, I had the great good fortune of making some very dear and life-long friends and, through them, of knowing something of English homes and of mixing more or less in English society, all of which combined in enabling me to get a fairly accurate idea of English culture, and it was this—the knowledge of English culture—which has proved to me to be of inestimable value throughout the whole of my later life. If, therefore, my work in Japan is worth mentioning, it is to be wholly attributed to the scientific and cultural training I was able to receive during the five years of my student life in England.

I must not detain you much longer, but with your permission I should like to make a short reference to an important fact in the recent history of Japan, concerning Anglo-Japanese cultural relations. A few years before the Restoration, that is about 75 years ago, a group of five young men from Choshu came over to London in one of the sailing vessels owned by Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co. of Yokohama, whose

correspondents in London were Messrs. Matheson & Co. The object of these young men was to make a general study and observation of Western civilization and when, after a long voyage round the Cape of Good Hope, they arrived in London they were introduced to an elderly gentleman who took every care of them and helped them in every way in their study and observation. This elderly gentleman was no other than Dr. Williamson of University College under whom, as I said before, I was a student for five years. As to what made him particularly interested in these young men and in Japan I can say nothing, but I remember him often telling me that Japan was England of the East by which, as it appeared to me, he meant something more than the mere geographical likeness of the two Island Empires.

Returning to the five young men, two of them went back to Japan in the following year in consequence of important developments at home, and plunged themselves in the great political turmoil which soon led to the Restoration. One of these two men was Shunsuke Ito—later, Prince Hirobumi Ito—who was generally regarded as the Founder of modern Japan, and the other was Bunta Inoue—later, Marquis Kaoru Inoue—who was Cabinet Minister in the Meiji Government on several occasions. The other three also greatly distinguished themselves and occupied important positions in the new Government. Of these, Yakichi Nomura—later, Viscount Masaru Inoue—who, by the way, was living with Dr. Williamson's family for several years, laid and ran the first

railways in Japan, Yozo Yamao—later, Viscount Yozo Yamao—greatly contributed towards laying the foundation of technical education, and Kinsuke Endo was, if I remember rightly, the first Master of the Mint.

Now, the most important item in the policy of the Meiji Government was the transplantation of Western sciences, the elements of which were taught by missionaries. But as time came for higher scientific education, need was felt for teachers properly equipped with the necessary knowledge and ability and the Government naturally decided to call these teachers from England. Strange as it may appear to-day, these calls were made through the Firm of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co. in Yokohama, which transmitted them to their correspondents in London, and the latter invariably consulted with Dr. Williamson or somebody else named by him. The fact that Dr. Williamson intervened in the transaction of this important business was most fortunate for Japan, for the young scientific men recommended by him, either directly or indirectly, for the Japanese posts all proved themselves to be most capable teachers of science, among whom the names of William Ayrton, Edward Divers, Alfred Ewing, John Milne and John Perry may especially be mentioned as those who, later, all became Fellows of the Royal Society of London. These pioneers of science in Japan taught their students to study science for its own sake, themselves setting examples by numerous brilliant researches and thereby greatly stimulating the spirit of original scientific work. I am particularly happy

to have been given an opportunity this evening of making reference to this little piece of history, which is almost completely unknown but which shows how much Japan owes to Dr. Williamson and, through him, University College and England for the valuable help given in the earlier and most important stages of development of modern sciences in Japan.

(I am afraid I have already overtaxed your patience, but I should like to be allowed to add just a word more. Ever since the foundation of Ramsay Fellowships in 1920, Japanese Ramsay Fellows have, if I remember rightly, without a single exception come to work under Professor Donnan, with whom the cultural obligations Japan owes University College and England have thus been happily revived, and I cannot let this opportunity slip away without thanking you, Professor Donnan, for the kind and untiring attention with which you have constantly directed the work of our Ramsay Fellows and of other Japanese students also, who have come in large numbers to work in your laboratory.)

In now resuming my seat, I wish to thank the Professorial Board of University College once more for the great and rare honour it has been pleased to confer upon me. I wish to thank Professor Donnan for the very kind words with which he has introduced the toast and you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the enthusiasm with which you have received the toast and the patience with which you have listened to me.

*University of London, University College*

APRIL 30th, 1937

*Honorary Fellows :*

H.R.H. PRINCE ARTHUR OF CONNAUGHT, K.G., K.T., G.C.M.G.,  
G.C.V.O., C.B.

COLLIE, PROFESSOR J. NORMAN, LL.D., D.Sc., PH.D., F.R.S.

GARDNER, PROFESSOR ERNEST A., LITT.D.

KENNET, COMMANDER THE RT. HON. LORD, G.B.E., D.S.O.,  
D.S.C., M.A.

MESTON, THE RT. HON. LORD, K.C.S.I., LL.D.

PETRIE, SIR W. M. FLINDERS, D.Sc., F.B.A., F.R.S.

SAKURAI, PROFESSOR JOJI, P.C., D.Sc., LL.D.

TAYLOR, SIR ANDREW T., J.P., R.C.A., F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

FELLOWS' DINNER, 30th April, 1937

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PROFESSOR SAKURAI,  
LORD SANKEY,  
LORD MESTON.

ANDRADE, PROFESSOR E. N. DA C.	INGOLD, PROFESSOR C. K.
BALY, PROFESSOR E. C. C.	JEFFERY, PROFESSOR G. B.
BARRINGTON, MR. F. J. F.	JOHNSON, MR. RAYMOND.
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BAYNES, PROFESSOR NORMAN.	
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BROWN, MR. S. G.	
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DAVIS, MISS E. JEFFRIES.	
DONNAN, PROFESSOR F. G.	NABARRO, DR. D. N.
	NEALE, PROFESSOR J. E.
EDGUMBE, LT. COL. KENELM.	NORMAN, MR. F.
EGERTON, PROFESSOR A. C. G.	
ELDERTON, DR. ETHEL.	PARIS, DR. E. TALBOT.
EVANS, PROFESSOR B. IFOR.	PARSONS, SIR JOHN H.
EVANS, PROF. C. LOVATT.	PAUL, MISS AGNES.
EVANS, DR. MUIR.	PEARSON, PROF. EGON.
	PLIMMER, PROF. R. H. A.
FILON, PROFESSOR L. N. G.	
	RAISIN, DR. CATHERINE.
GASKELL, SURGEON VICE-ADMIRAL SIR ARTHUR.	RANKINE, PROFESSOR A. O.
	REID, DR. RACHEL.
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GRAY, DR. A. M. H.	
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HAAS, DR. RAUL.	SUMPNER, DR. W. E.
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HILL, PROFESSOR G. T. R.	WHEELER, DR. R. E. MORTIMER.
HIMSWORTH, DR. H.	WILLIAMS, MR. GWYNNE.
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