



On Emperor's Birthday, A Prayer for Japan's Unity, Security, and Prosperity

Emperor Naruhito turned 60 on February 23, a birthday considered a landmark age in the Japanese zodiac calendar. We would like to offer our heartiest congratulations on the occasion of the Emperor's birthday.

We sincerely hope to see the nation moving forward in unison, under the Emperor, to build up our prosperity in the era of Reiwa. As stipulated by the Constitution, he is a symbol of Japan and the unity of its people.

Sunday's birthday was a special one for His Highness, his first since his enthronement as emperor in May 2019.

Unfortunately, the traditional congratulatory visit by tens of thousands of people to the Imperial Palace scheduled for the Emperor's birthday was canceled as a preventive measure against the spread of the respiratory ailment caused by the novel coronavirus, which originated in Wuhan, China. Nevertheless, there has been no change at all in the sentiments of the people of Japan to celebrate the Emperor's birthday.

In a news conference ahead of his birthday, the Emperor offered his sympathy to the patients of the coronavirus and their families, expressing his wishes to see the virus contained as quickly as possible. We should act cool-headedly and scrupulously carry out his wishes in response to the coronavirus crisis.

About 10 months have passed since the Emperor's enthronement. Underscoring the resolve to fulfill his duties, the Emperor told those at the news conference ahead of his birthday, "My role on the path as the nation's symbol has only just commenced."

In late December, the Emperor, together with Empress Masako, paid a visit to the town of Marumori in Miyagi Prefecture, and the city of Motomiya in Fukushima Prefecture. Both were subjected to severe damage and loss due to the deadly typhoon Hagibis in mid-October. They gave the sufferers words of encouragement while shaking their hands.

During the news conference, the Emperor expressed his sympathy anew to those who suffered from the typhoon, who have been living uncomfortably in temporary housing units. He said, "I feel a pain in my chest" due to their suffering.

At the news conference, the Emperor also made reference to such problems as the abuse of children, noting, "I remain strongly hopeful that children, who will shoulder responsibility for the future, can be brought up soundly."

The way the Emperor commits himself to the people, for the benefit of the public, has been engraved in the hearts of many Japanese. It is a tradition of the royal family that the current Emperor himself witnessed being handed down to the Emperor Emeritus from the Emperor Showa.

The Emperor and the Empress will make a visit to Britain later in 2020. The Emperor will serve as honorary president of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics this coming summer. The roles played by the royal couple in promoting Japan's goodwill and friendship with other countries are immensely significant, and we believe they are of great encouragement to the people.

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The Emperor's comment during the news conference that — “I feel I am still as young as 60” instead of “I feel as old as 60” — has truly been a powerful message. While we can see that every day the Emperor must be filled with the challenge of hard work, we also see that he is fully prepared for the task.

In addition to the state of affairs that is known to the general public, the Emperor has been praying for the people's security and the prosperity of Japan through a large number of court rituals. Public understanding should be deepened about key rituals and ceremonies over which the Emperor presides.

With a sense of gratitude, the people, for their part, have paid deep respects to the Emperor for his assiduousness for the people's well-being.

It is Japan's national characteristic that the Emperor and the public are tied by long-cherished bonds. Continuance of the Chrysanthemum Throne's long line of rule, which by law allows only males in the paternal line to ascend the throne, is obviously in accordance with the wishes and delight of the people.

Source: **EDITORIAL | On Emperor's Birthday, A Prayer for Japan's Unity, Security, and Prosperity**
<https://japan-forward.com/editorial-on-emperors-birthday-a-prayer-for-japans-unity-security-and-prosperity/>

天皇誕生日 国民も心一つに歩みたい

天皇陛下は60歳、還暦の誕生日を迎えられた。心からお祝いを申し上げたい。

日本国および国民統合の象徴でいらっしゃる陛下のもとで国民は心を合わせ、令和の時代を築いていきたい。

ご即位後初めての誕生日である。中国・武漢発の新型コロナウイルスによる肺炎の拡大防止のため、一般参賀は残念ながら中止となったが、国民の慶賀の気持ちは変わらない。

陛下は、誕生日に先立つ記者会見で、新型肺炎の患者と家族らへお見舞いの言葉を述べ、早期収束を願われた。国民は、冷静かつ万全の対応をしたい。

ご即位からおよそ10カ月が過ぎた。陛下は「象徴としての私の道は始まってまだ間もない」と、決意を述べられた。

昨年12月には、皇后陛下とともに台風の人的被害が大きかった宮城県丸森町と福島県本宮市を訪れ、被災者の手を握りながら、励ましの言葉をかけられた。会見では、不自由な避難生活を続ける被災者らを「今なお胸が痛みます」と気遣われた。

子供をめぐる虐待の問題などにも触れ、「次世代を担う子供たちが健やかに育っていくことを願ってやみません」と話された。

広く国民のことを思い、寄り添われる姿は、すでに多くの国民の胸に刻まれている。昭和天皇から上皇陛下へと引き継がれ、今上（きんじょう）陛下が間近で学ばれてきた皇室の伝統である。

今年は英国ご訪問が予定されている。夏には東京五輪・パラリンピック両大会で、天皇陛下は名誉総裁を務められる。諸外国との親善交流で果たされる役割はとて大きく、国民は勇気づけられるだろう。

「もう還暦ではなく、まだ還暦という思い」と語られたのは心強い。天皇としての日々は、激務の連続と拝察する。

国民が知るご動静以外にも、数多くの宮中祭祀（さいし）で、日本と国民の安寧や豊穰（ほうじょう）を祈られている。陛下が宮まれる大切な祭祀、儀式への理解を深めたい。

国民は、日本のために精励される陛下に深い敬意と感謝の念を抱いている。天皇と国民が温かい絆で結ばれているのが、日本の国柄だ。男系継承の大原則を守り、皇位が永く続いていくことが国民の願いであり、喜びである。

出典:【主張】天皇誕生日 国民も心一つに歩みたい

<http://japan-forward.com/japanese/> 【主張】天皇誕生日 国民も心一つに歩みたい