

Queen Elizabeth II's birthday and diamond jubilee

Queen celebrates 60 years on the throne

Chiho Iuchi
STAFF WRITER

On the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's official birthday and the celebration of her 60th year on the British throne, her Diamond Jubilee, which culminates June 5, The Japan Times had the opportunity to interview British Ambassador to Japan David Warren to hear his thoughts on issues ranging from the monarchy and U.K.-Japan relationship to the Olympics.

Excerpts of the interview follow:

What do you think of the role of the Royal Family within the framework of the modern constitutional monarchy? And what are the keys that have kept Queen Elizabeth II in such high regard by people of the U.K. as well as other countries? I think that the Royal Family in the U.K. is always respected and there is a great affection as well as respect for the Queen and the public role that she and other members of the family play in the life of the U.K. One of the themes of the Diamond Jubilee is to enable Her Majesty to travel widely in the country to see the wealth of community life in our cities in the countryside, in the educational institutions and in the large industrial centers. Members of her family will travel within the Commonwealth to see the Queen's Realm.

I think there is a real understanding of the dedication and commitment she has shown over 60 years to her country and her people. And I think that is widely understood by people in the U.K. There is a sense of enormous respect.

Another theme of the Diamond Jubilee is the diversity of Britain. Britain is now a country with very diverse traditions and communities, which are increasingly of people of very different backgrounds. Britain is a country in which a lot of influences, different traditions, have come together to make a country of great diversity. The Queen, as the head of the state, embodies the principles and values of the country.

And the most important message of the Diamond Jubilee is that it is not simply a traditional event, but it is an event which symbolizes the vibrancy of modern Britain. Whenever I talk to audiences in Japan about Britain, I always emphasize how Britain has changed as a country. While being very proud of its traditions, it is now a profoundly diverse, forward-looking nation.

In Britain, we have of course a very lively and free press, and the tradition in Britain, really for the last hundred years as far as the written media is concerned, there is a very frank debate about all aspects of British society, and that includes traditional aspects of society. So the British tradition is one of challenge and open discussion. Of course, that discussion can be quite uncomfortable for people who are part of it. This is not new.

But that is a separate issue from the personal respect and affection which people feel to Her Majesty and the Royal Family.

I am very proud to be a British ambassador because I repre-



British Ambassador to Japan
David Warren YOSHIKI MIURA

sent a country that not only has a great sense of its traditions, but also represents a lively, changing, open society in which people can say what they think and argue about it. It seems to me a very healthy society.

What are the values that the U.K. and Japan share and how can we further cooperate?

We have very close relations with Japan for many years, since the first recorded contact of a British person with Japan in 1600, when William Adams was shipwrecked.

Four years ago when I arrived as ambassador, we were celebrating the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations after Lord Elgin's mission to sign the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858. And for 20 years we were allies in the Anglo-Japanese alliance treaty of 1902.

So, there are lots of examples going back in the history of closeness of the relationship between our countries.

We have very similar values: we are both democracies; we are constructive and progressive players in the international scenes; we think alike on many issues to do with foreign policy and that is proved by the fact that we vote the same way in the United Nations assemblies.

We have a great deal of trade and investment contact between our two countries.

We export to Japan over £8 billion every year, which is our largest export market. And we welcome from Japan a very high-level industrial investment. We have over 1,200 Japanese companies in the U.K. They employ 130,000 people directly and their business probably creates hundreds and thousands more jobs. And they make a major contribution to the British economy. Over half the cars built in Britain is by Japanese companies. Japanese electronics companies are major investors. Japanese pharmaceutical companies as well.

People sometimes forget that Britain is still a very substantial manufacturing economy, and one of the reasons that it is a strong manufacturing one is because of the investment of companies from Japan. Over the last 40 years, this has been a great success story.

So we have very good trade and investment links, and we have very strong cultural, educational and social links.

Delightedly, we are able to welcome so many Japanese students to Britain every year. And I would like us to have more because I think it's very impor-

tant that more young Japanese should study overseas and I would like them to come to the U.K. I would like to see more young English teachers come to Japan and teach English at schools around the country through the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program.

We have very exciting programs of cultural and educational exchanges here in the embassy and the British Council. We are sponsoring events to bring British and Japanese people closer together. Human exchange is the basis of the successful relationship between our two societies.

Emperor Akihito said during his recent visit to the United Kingdom that the Japanese are so grateful for the support from around the world in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Now over a year later, can you give some examples of ongoing reconstruction assistance from the U.K. for the devastated areas?

As British Prime Minister David Cameron said when he signed the condolence book at the Japanese Embassy in London in March 2011, there is enormous admiration and compassion in the United Kingdom for the people of Japan in the tremendous courage they have shown in the face of terrible disasters, of the earthquake and tsunami, and the nuclear incident. Cameron wrote in the condolence book, "You will recover; we know that and we will be with you all the way."

The British community in Japan and the friends of Japan in the U.K., have worked hard to provide support and assistance for the areas which were devastated by tsunami.

The British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, which is based in Tokyo, has over 300 member companies. British people doing business here have been very active both in supporting non-governmental organization activities in the region, raising funds, providing volunteers, opening a website called "We care Japan," through which supporting connections can be made, and in generating activity that helps to assist the process of recovery in the affected regions.

We had an event for the chamber here at this residence in the embassy in March, which both brought companies together with representatives from the Tohoku region, and had an auction, which raised ¥3.5 million for specific recovery and reconstruction activities. So there is a real outpouring of support for the people of Tohoku.

And in Britain, there has been a fundraising activity organized by the Japan Society in London, which has raised, I think, nearly £700,000, which is being dispersed through charitable foundations in Japan, particularly to non-profit organizations and NGOs in the Tohoku region, and which is designed to help support socioeconomic needs of the



Jubilee weekend: Queen Elizabeth II attends the Epsom Derby at Epsom Downs Racecourse in England on June 2 at the start of the main Diamond Jubilee celebrations through June 5. AP

communities that have suffered terribly in the disaster last year.

I've been to Tohoku four times since the earthquake and all of us in the embassy want to be of as much continuing help as we can.

How has Britain — and its commitments, including Overseas Development Aid abroad — been affected by the European debt crisis?

In Britain, the coalition government is committed to restoring the public finances by reducing the rise and the deficits. And at the same time, the government is committed to continuing with very active overseas development assistance policies. We do not cut the aid budget even though the coalition government cuts other budgets.

So you can do both. The developed, rich countries in the world still have the responsibility to help those who are in difficulties.

In Europe, of course, we are concerned, as all the European countries are concerned, that there should be a resolution of the problems of the eurozone. Cameron said recently, Europe needs to improve its productivity so that it becomes more internationally competitive. We are very keen to support the European Union's global economic links. And we hope very much that it will be possible shortly to open negotiations for an economic partnership agreement with Japan, as well as other countries around the world. Increasing trade, increasing the economic flows, we think are the route to return to prosperity.

In Britain, of course, we are active members of the EU even though we are not the part of the eurozone. It's a clear position that we are not part of the euro and the coalition government said that we will not enter the euro. So our policy is, as the foreign secretary has described, active and activist within Europe. And we are positive and energetic

members of Europe.

The Olympic Games provide wonderful opportunities on the one hand. On the other hand, the cost might be a heavy burden for the host country. What do you think about London hosting the Olympic Games for the third time? Has it been fully supported by the public?

It's very popular. Everybody in the U.K. is looking forward to the Olympics, and the Paralympics which will follow it. There is an enormous upsurge of interest in sports, many of which will take place outside London, and I know from my recent trips to the U.K. there is real anticipation across the country.

Of course, for the moment, everybody's attention is focused on the Olympic torch, which has just arrived in the U.K., and which is being carried around the country in a 70-day relay by over 8,000 torch bearers. That's a wonderful opportunity for thousands and thousands of people to see the Olympic torch for themselves.

As you say, this is the third time the Olympics will be held in London, but one of the particular pleasures for me in the British Embassy is that it is the first time the Japanese team has gone to London for the Olympic Games. In 1908, Japan was not yet a country that was competing in the Olympics. I think it became an Olympic country in 1912 at the Stockholm Olympics. And in 1948, just after the World War II, it was not possible for Japan to attend the Olympics.

Of course, the Olympics are an enormous administrative challenge but one that I think the organizers have met magnificently. There is great popular support for what would be a wonderful summer of sports in London and other venues.

I remember the day seven years ago when it was announced in London that it won the games. At that time, I was



Long-standing ties: Queen Elizabeth II greets Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko as they arrive at Windsor Castle on May 18 for a lunch for sovereign monarchs of the world, held in honor of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. AP

Olympic Games?

Environmental sustainability is a very important pillar of the British government's policies generally. Much of the work of this embassy is directed towards low-carbon activity, both in terms of industrial development and industrial investment, and also in terms of working together with the Japanese government to help contribute towards international processes to save the planet by controlling and reducing carbon emissions in the future.

I emphasize the Paralympics, too, because the Paralympics are very important. The last time London hosted the Olympics was in 1948, and it was the beginning of the Paralympics initiated by Dr. Ludwig Guttmann at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital, in games for the disabled and as part of the rehabilitation for people who had suffered serious injury.

So, the Paralympics is also celebrating the return to the U.K. this year. And I know that the Paralympics is going to secure as much attention worldwide as the Olympics. We are very excited in hosting both.

Can you explain more about the concept of the first green

Do you have a message for our readers?

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to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
on Her Official Birthday
and Diamond Jubilee**



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Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: http://www.jt.com

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