

Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday

A lifetime spent in public service

Tim Hitchens
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

On the occasion of Her Majesty's official 90th birthday in June, it gives me great pleasure to have been asked to send a message to the readers of The Japan Times.

Her life is a truly extraordinary record of public service. In 1940, at just 14 years old, the then Princess Elizabeth made her first BBC radio broadcast to bring comfort and hope to the children who had been evacuated from Britain's cities during World War II.

At 18 she became the first female member of the Royal family to join the armed forces, joining the women's Auxiliary Territorial Service, training as a driver and a mechanic.

And at just 21 she made a defining broadcast from Cape Town in which she said, "My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service."

British Prime Minister David

Cameron said, as he led tributes in Parliament: "This was an extraordinary promise profoundly fulfilled. In this modern Elizabethan era, in which so much around her has changed, Her Majesty has been steadfast, a rock of strength for our nation, for our Commonwealth and, on so many occasions, for the whole world."

Since ascending to the throne in 1952, Her Majesty has worked with 12 different British prime ministers, starting with Sir Winston Churchill, well over 150 prime ministers in her other realms and met a quarter of all U.S. presidents since Independence.

This year, we have the honor of celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's 90th birthday. Events in the U.K. and Japan are being held to celebrate Her Majesty's dedication, service and commitment to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. These celebrations are important for everyone who is British, and everyone who cares about the relationship between Japan and Britain. Japan is not only a highly valued partner for the U.K. as our second largest source of foreign direct investment, but a firm and loyal

friend; we've received kind messages from friends all over the country, showing the affection in which the Japanese people hold the British Royal family.

One of the key defining features of Britain and Japan are our Royal and Imperial families. Both are very important to who we are as nations, and the relationship between the Royal family and the Imperial family is strong and vibrant. Her Majesty has powerful relationships with Emperor Akihito and it was a great pleasure to see Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, on his first ever visit to Japan last year.

Her Majesty has always been a great model of duty and hard work. As a member of her Britannic Majesty's diplomatic service, as a former private secretary to The Queen, and above all as a British subject, I hope readers will join me in saying, "Happy Birthday Your Majesty; long may you reign over us."

Follow Ambassador Hitchens on Twitter at @UKAmbTim and stay up to date with the latest news from the British Embassy Tokyo at @UKinJapan



Queen Elizabeth II meets well-wishers on April 21 during a stroll close to Windsor Castle near London as she celebrates her 90th birthday. AP/KYODO



Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, waves from an open Range Rover on her 90th birthday on April 21 in Windsor, England. GETTY IMAGES/KYODO

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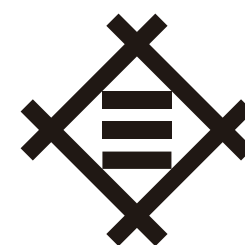
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