

# Emperor's birthday

## With eyes on future, working to support people in need

THE JAPAN TIMES AGENCY

Emperor Naruhito, known as the first emperor to have studied abroad, will turn 64 on Friday. The eldest son of Emperor Emeritus Akihito and Empress Emerita Michiko, he began traveling abroad in his early teens. After completing his undergraduate degree at the Department of History in the Faculty of Letters of Gakushuin University, he traveled to the United Kingdom in 1983 where he experienced dormitory life while studying at Oxford University's Merton College for two years to research the history of transportation on the River Thames.

With his broad academic interests, he listened attentively to the achievements of the winners of the 2023 Japan Prize at the awards ceremony last April. In his congratulatory speech to the four winners in the fields of electronics, information, communications and life sciences, he expressed his wish that the people of the world will gather wisdom from diverse fields and cooperate with each other to build a hopeful future.

Last May, the emperor and Empress Masako hosted a garden party at the Aka-saka Imperial Gardens for the first time

since the emperor was enthroned on May 1, 2019. With ample consideration to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, the size of the event was reduced and the emperor, empress and other members of the imperial family engaged in friendly conversation with their guests.

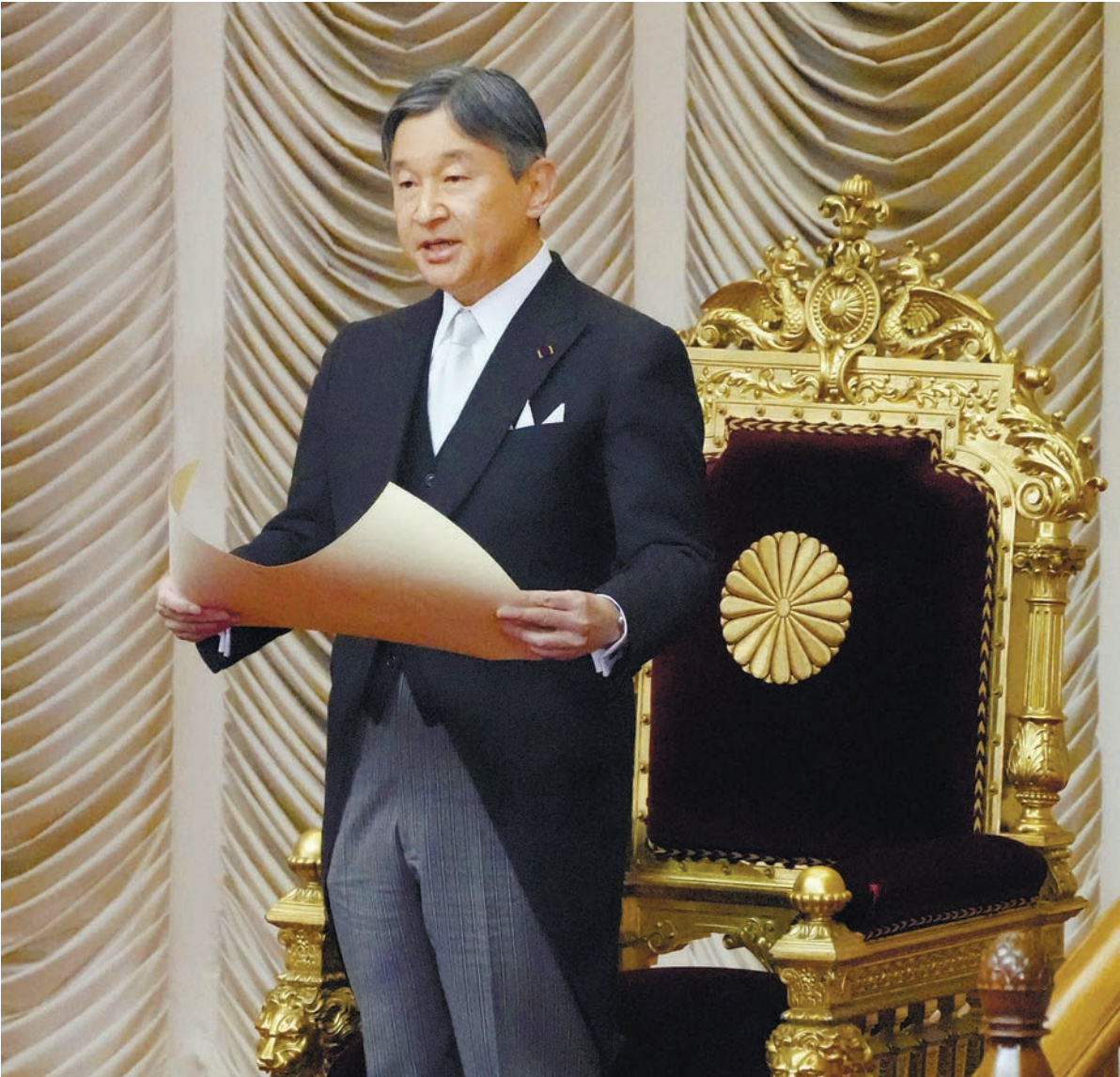
From June 17 to 23, the emperor and empress visited Indonesia upon an invitation from the Indonesian government. During the stay, the imperial couple received a warm welcome from Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his wife, Iriana. The emperor visited various places, including the rail yard of the Jakarta MRT, a rail project that Japan has supported financially and technically, and the remains of Borobudur. The empress joined him on some of the visits, such as those to the Bogor Botanical Gardens and Dharma Persada University.

In July, the emperor and empress attended the 22nd World Congress of the International Federation of Automatic Control at Pacifico Yokohama in Kanagawa Prefecture. In a speech the emperor gave in English during the opening ceremony, he touched on the importance of automatic control in the field of water issues, which

he has been engaging in, and expressed his hope for further contribution of technology for improved distribution of water resources. "Towards solving various societal challenges that our global community faces today, it is essential that we share the awareness and the goals and proceed through international collaboration," he said.

The emperor and empress visited Ishikawa Prefecture in October to attend Ishikawa Hyakumangoku Cultural Festival 2023, an event that featured various cultural presentations, including those by people with disabilities, and to visit several places in Kanazawa.

About 2½ months after the visit of the imperial couple, Ishikawa Prefecture and surrounding areas suffered a major earthquake on Jan. 1. A public New Year's greeting event planned for Jan. 2 that was to be attended by the emperor and his family was canceled out of consideration for the people affected. In the wake of the disaster, the emperor expressed sincere sorrow upon hearing about the casualties, as well as the many people missing or forced to evacuate in the affected areas, including Ishikawa, where he received a warm-hearted welcome during his last visit.



Emperor Naruhito speaks at the Diet's opening ceremony on Jan. 26. KYODO



Princess Kako, Crown Princess Kiko, Crown Prince Fumihito, Emperor Naruhito, Empress Masako and their daughter, Princess Aiko, wave to well-wishers during the emperor's 63rd birthday celebration at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Feb. 23, 2023. KYODO



Emperor Naruhito pays a visit to Borobudur temple in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on June 22, 2023. KYODO



### Congratulations on the Emperor's Birthday

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# Emperor's birthday



Members of the imperial family join Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako for a New Year's ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Jan. 1. POOL PHOTO / KYODO



The imperial couple attend a memorial ceremony to mark the 78th anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, at Nippon Budokan on Aug. 15, 2023. KYODO



Above: Emperor Naruhito addresses leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their spouses at the Imperial Palace on Dec. 18 as Crown Prince Fumihito and Empress Masako look on. POOL PHOTO / KYODO



The imperial couple pose with Kenyan President William Ruto and his wife, Rachel, at the Imperial Palace on Feb. 9. POOL PHOTO / KYODO



Emperor Naruhito greets participants in the Group of Seven speakers conference in Tokyo on Sept. 8. POOL PHOTO / KYODO



Above: Emperor Naruhito and his daughter, Princess Aiko, watch a traditional court music performance at the Imperial Palace on Oct. 22. POOL PHOTO / KYODO

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Angola**

H.E. Teodolinda Rosa Rodrigues Coelho  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Azerbaijan**

H.E. Gursel Ismayilzada  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Benin**

Joseph Houinsinon  
*Charge d'Affaires a.i.*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Gabonese Republic**

H.E. Joseph Giraud Effangone-Obaghe  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Kazakhstan**

H.E. Sabr Yessimbekov  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Kenya**

Arthur Andambi  
*Charge d'Affaires*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Madagascar**

Tsilavo M. Randrianjafy  
*Charge d'Affaires a.i.*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Royal Thai Embassy**

H.E. Witchu Vejajiva  
*Ambassador-Designate*

Best wishes to Emperor Naruhito on his majesty's birthday



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Zimbabwe**

H.E. Stewart Nyakotyo  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



**Embassy of  
the Republic of the Philippines**

On behalf of the Philippines,  
I extend heartfelt birthday wishes to his majesty.  
May peace and good health grace  
their majesties and the people of Japan.



H.E. Mylene J. Garcia-Albano  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



**Embassy of  
the State of Qatar**

Warmest congratulations to  
H.M. Emperor Naruhito on his 64th birthday.  
Best wishes for good health to  
their majesties and the imperial family, and  
wishing Japan peace and prosperity.



H.E. Jaber Jaralla Al-Marri  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



**Embassy of  
the United Republic of Tanzania**

On behalf of the Government and  
People of the United Republic of Tanzania,  
I have the honor to extend my heartfelt  
congratulations to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito  
on his birthday.



H.E. Baraka H. Luvanda  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Zambia**

On behalf of the government and  
people of the Republic of Zambia,  
I have the honor to extend my heartfelt  
congratulations to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito  
on his 64th birthday.



H.E. Tobias Mulimbika  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*