

Theme for the New Year's Poetry Reading (2022) :MADO (WINDOW)

His Majesty the Emperor

As our contacts with the world
Remain difficult,
I earnestly hope for a day
When the window opens to the world

(Background of the poem)

His Majesty the Emperor expresses, as he did last year, in the poem his hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will be contained.

Last year, His Majesty composed the poem, praying that the peoples' hopes and efforts to overcome difficulties and challenges would bear fruit and thus the COVID-19 pandemic would come to an end.

This year, His Majesty expresses in this poem his earnest hope that a day will come, once the pandemic is under control, when the comings and goings of people between Japan and the rest of the world will be revitalized.

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Her Majesty the Empress

Looking through the windows
Of the Fukiage Palace, our new residence,
We enjoy the greenery
Of the great trees around us

(Background of the poem)

In September of last year, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress and Her Imperial Highness Princess Aiko moved from their long time residence the Akasaka Palace to the Fukiage Palace, where Their Majesties the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita used to live for a long time until the year before last. Her Majesty the Empress composed this poem with renewed feelings of appreciation to Their Majesties the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita, as she views the lush green from her new residence.

His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akishino

Through the window
I see the children
running about,
and I sense a calmness
growing in my heart.

(Background of the poem)

There was a time when, due to the spread of COVID-19, many schools adopted staggered attendance and remote learning. And there was also a time when the students were unable to freely participate in extra-curricular activities.

At the university where His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akishino gives lectures every year, he looked out the window and saw, in the courtyards of the adjacent schools, the cheerful and energetic schoolchildren. As he recalled those times the sight of the children gave him, for a moment, a sense of reassurance.

Her Imperial Highness Princess Aiko

As I stand before
The House of learning where I shall study in Britain,
I feel the windows to the world
Are opening up to me

(Background of the poem)

Her Imperial Highness Princess Aiko participated in the Eton Summer School program during summer vacation when she was a second year student at Gakushuin Girls' Senior High School. During the program, participants stayed at the dormitory of Eton college, and learned various aspects of British culture through English lessons and visits to museums and historical and cultural sites.

This was the first time for Princess Aiko to visit schools overseas, and when she stood in front of the stately building with its long history, she felt that the world was opening up in front of her. In this poem she expresses her aspirations and expectations for the coming three weeks she was going to spend in the United Kingdom.