

# Fostering Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries

Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress have fostered friendly relationships with countries around the world through Their visits abroad and Their meetings with members of royal families and heads of state. During Their first overseas trip in 1991 after the enthronement, They visited Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Since then, Their Majesties have paid

many visits to countries in Asia, Europe, and North and South America. From His Majesty's accession to the throne in 1989 to 2018, Their Majesties have made official visits to twenty-eight countries.

Their Majesties have forged international bonds by learning about the cultures of the countries They visited. They have deepened Japan's bonds with



Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress during a visit to Indonesia's ancient capital of Yogyakarta in 1991, where They were presented with beautiful local textiles | Photo : Kyodo News



Their Majesties at a State Banquet in honor of His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg on November 27, 2017

those countries by speaking not only with the members of the royal families and government leaders but also with local residents during Their visits abroad. They also met with Japanese nationals living in those countries as well as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers working there and gave them words of encouragement.

In 2005, the sixtieth year since the end of World War II, Their Majesties started making overseas visits to pay tribute to those who lost their lives during the war by visiting Saipan. They also paid tribute to the war dead on Peleliu Island, Palau, in 2015, seventy years after the end of the war, as well as at Caliraya, Luzon Island, the Philippines, in 2016.

Their Majesties have also worked toward promoting international goodwill in Japan. At the Imperial Palace, They have hosted banquets for state guests, held meetings with foreign dignitaries, and invited foreign ambassadors in Tokyo for audiences and luncheons. In 2018, Their Majesties met with fifty-five state guests, including members of royal families and presidents, prime ministers, and chairpersons of national assemblies from around the world. They also met with foreign ambassadors in Japan from sixty-four countries whenever they assumed or left their post.



Dedicating flowers at the Monument of the War Dead in the Western Pacific on Peleliu Island, Republic of Palau, in 2015  
Photo : Kyodo News