

Visiting All Japan's 47 Prefectures



Their Majesties consoling survivors after the eruption of Mt. Unzen Fugen Peak in July, 1991 | Photo: Kyodo News

Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress have visited all Japan's forty-seven prefectures. Their frequent travels within Japan include annual appearances at three events—the National Sports Festival, the National Arbor Day Festival, and the National Convention for the Development of an Abundantly Productive Sea—in addition to appearances at international academic conferences and inspection visits to different regions to gain insights into local conditions. On these occasions, Their Majesties also visit the region's welfare, cultural, industrial and other facilities where They show appreciation to those participating in such work. In addition, every year around the Week for Disabled Persons, They pay visits to facilities for the disabled.

His Majesty the Emperor attended the opening and closing ceremonies of the Nagano Winter Olympics

in February 1998 as honorary president, accompanied by Her Majesty the Empress. In March, He visited Nagano again to watch the Paralympic Games.

In the event of major natural disasters, Their Majesties visit the affected regions to mourn the victims, console the survivors, and show appreciation to those participating in relief work. They visited the affected areas as soon as possible after the eruption of Mt. Unzen Fugen Peak in 1991, the Hokkaido-Nansei-Oki Earthquake in 1993, the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, the eruption of the volcano on Miyakejima island in 2000, the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake in 2004, the Niigata Chuetsu-oki Earthquake in 2007, the Great

East Japan Earthquake and the North Nagano Earthquake in 2011, the torrential rains in Hiroshima in August 2014 and in Kanto and Tohoku in September 2015, the Kumamoto Earthquake in 2016, the torrential rains in northern Kyushu in 2017, the heavy rains in July 2018, and the Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake in September 2018. In particular, after the Great East Japan Earthquake, Their Majesties visited the evacuation centers and the afflicted areas for seven consecutive weeks from March to May to comfort those affected by the disaster. Before visiting each area, They spoke with the local governors visiting Tokyo to fully understand the situation regarding the scope of the damage, the progress of the rescue operations and the state of reconstruction.

Prior to the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War Two, Their Majesties paid tribute to the war dead on Iwojima, Chichijima and Hahajima islands in 1994. In 1995, the fiftieth year, They visited Nagasaki, Hiroshima and Okinawa to pay Their respects as well as Tokyo Irei-do Memorial Hall. In 2015, the seventieth year since the end of World War Two, They visited Takao Mikoromo Rei-do, a temple dedicated to the commemoration of the victims of industrial accidents since 1945, Tokyo Irei-do Memorial Hall, and the Monument for the Seafarers Who Died on Duty in Kannonzaki Park in Kanagawa Prefecture, a monument dedicated to sailors killed during the war.



Their Majesties at the Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead in 2018



Photo: The Mainichi Newspapers/Pool photo

A tea reception at the Imperial Palace for prizewinners of the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games