

Cultural activities

Their Majesties' interests encompass broad areas of learning and culture. They attend annual award ceremonies of the Japan Academy and the Japan Academy of Arts. They often receive at the Imperial Palace scholars and artists including the members of the Academies as well as the recipients of the Order of Culture. They also attend many ceremonies for the awarding of scientific prizes, as well as international scientific conferences held in Japan.



Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko attend the award presentation ceremony of the Japan Academy.(June 2013)

Their Majesties compose *waka* (a classical form of poetry dating back to the 8th century Manyo-shu Anthology), an age-old tradition in the Imperial Family. Their Majesties first published a collection of Their *waka* when They were Crown Prince and Crown Princess, and in response to a strong request from people concerned, a collection of the Empress's *waka* of more recent years was published in 1997. In January, the Emperor hosts the traditional New Year's Poetry Reading at the Palace. In this ceremony, ten *waka* out of about 20,000 composed and submitted to the Emperor by ordinary citizens are chanted in the traditional way, together with *waka* composed by Their Majesties and other members of the Imperial Family.