



The Thames and I

Crown Prince Naruhito

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In 1993 Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito published a memoir about his life and experiences during his two years at Merton College, Oxford, in the mid-1980s, where he studied the history of transport on the River Thames, hence the title of his book. The original Japanese edition (*Thames to tomo ni*) was published by Gakushuin Kyoyoshinsho to mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of Gakushuin University, Tokyo, which is the Crown Prince's own *Alma Mater*. Now in English translation by former British Ambassador to Japan, Sir Hugh Cortazzi, this sensitive, engaging and informative account of English university life, customs and mores as seen from the perspective of a young Japanese student, albeit Japan's heir to the imperial throne is a most welcome contribution to cross-cultural studies in the broader context; it is also a rare record of a life lived by one who normally experiences life above the clouds as a member of the Japanese imperial family. It is twenty years since I left Oxford, notes the Crown Prince in his Preface, but I recall fondly the days I spent there [1983-85] as if they took place yesterday. What I learned and experienced whilst I was studying in England during those brief two years have been of great benefit to me. "

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