

Warm memories of Ethiopia

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Former Prime Minister of Japan

On the occasion of this National Day, I should like to convey my sincere congratulations to Ethiopia and its people.

A little more than a year has passed since I made an official visit to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as prime minister of Japan.

I had excellent meetings with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi as well as the leaders of the African Union, and the visit proved most fruitful and enjoyable. I would like to reiterate my sincere gratitude to the government and the people of Ethiopia for their heart-warming welcome.

I learned that the name of the



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capital city, Addis Ababa, means "new flower." The city was indeed like a pretty flower that has bloomed in a scenic highland.

In the garden of the National

Palace that Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress visited during their official visit in 1960, I enjoyed coffee in the traditional Ethiopian manner, which has some similarities to the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. It was a great joy to savor the real taste of coffee in such an environment. Also within the palace, I saw the Ethiopian black lions and felt the strong symbol of dignity of Ethiopia, which has maintained independence throughout its long history.

In closing, I wish the people of Ethiopia long-lasting peace and prosperity for the Third Millennium according to the Ethiopian Coptic Calendar, which starts Sept. 12.