

April 13, 2006 (Thursday)

The Mysterious Power of Queen's  
English.

クイーンズ・イングリッシュの神秘的な  
パワー。



She is a living link with the British history. She is beautiful. She's warm, popular and accommodating, but not patronizing. She's traditional and hierarchical, but merciful and compassionate with airs and graces. She is risk-averse, unlike an American woman who loves to take risks. She doesn't come to others, but they come to her to be healed or for glory. She has a fantastic memory with a dry sense of humour, like early compilers of traditional dictionaries. She's comfortable with change, pragmatic enough to improve her own image and her family's image, without 'playing hard to get.' She gets little credit for the imperceptible change – staying popular. And everybody tolerates her. She has a helluva job to cope with multinational, multi-cultural problems. Again, she heals the world as an oasis of continuity and integrity in accelerating and fragmenting world. Stratford-upon Avon IS an oasis for an English-thirsty migratory bird like me.

What are you talking about, sensei? Aren't Queen Elizabeth approaching 80 come April 21? Wrong. I'm talking about Queen's English.

I can't forget the nine-hour private drive tour with Pauline yesterday. She's an English language teacher-turned-professional guide. She speaks impeccable English with a perfect British accent, received pronunciation.

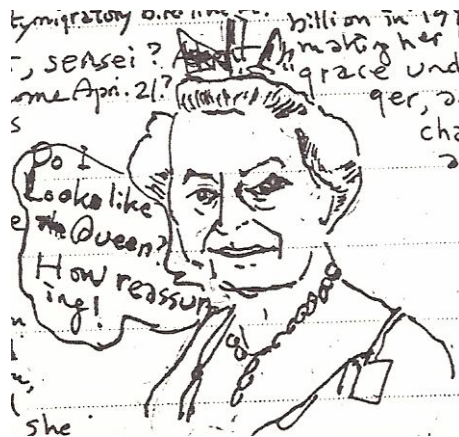
When I was first introduced to her, I said, "Nice to see you, devil woman – pause – I call any good-looking woman 'devil.'" She didn't laugh or smile. Was she a dead pan? No, the joke was simply not taken. The fortyish-looking woman WAS different, un-American. Queen's English IS different.

"Does this lift go down to the ground floor?" I asked an Englishman in the elevator. The answer: "Hopefully." It was rather funny.

"Get me to the airport" might sound offensive to a taxi driver who expects you to say, "Take me to the airport." "Relax!" is too American to a British woman used to a kind of remark, "Cool down" or "Please."

Queen's English is reserved, polite, traditional and far more defensive than rebellious and offensive American English, woops, American.

Queen's English, however, cannot afford to stay where she is. She knows it; Queen Elizabeth knows it. The author of 'The Story of English' knows it – Robert McCrum argues in its introduction: "Spoken and written, global English is now the natural medium of the phenomenon known as 'globalization.'" Following the author's observation, Krishnamurti might be the world best speaker of English in terms of healing influence, a quality of becoming a light to oneself and others.



Now, Elizabeth at 80, covered on the latest issue of TIME. The monarch has it all. She's as popular as Queen's English. Only 19% would like to switch to a republic – one more percentage point than in 1969. TIME also says, "Intelligent debate about what kind of monarchy Britain should have in the 21st century has disappeared into a kind of Bermuda Triangle (Katwala). (p. 27). What I was reading this column in flight by continental (economy), I smirked, thinking of the debate or non-debate in Japan over the future of 'tenno' debated in the bush (yabu-nonaka).

The Queen is a proud pragmatist. She doesn't want to be a parasite on people. She started to pay income tax in 1993. She's no longer Britain's richest person with a fortune estimated at \$7.6 billion in 1993, now down to \$507 million, making her 180th. But, believe me, she maintains "grace under pressure." She's a crisis manager, as well as an image manager or a change manager. Successful monarchs are great listeners. Queen's English also listens. It listened when an American version of English turned on mother English for independence. Eating humble pie? No, she just kept a stiff upper lip, "bearing the unbearable," like the Showa Emperor of Japan did, swallowing the pride of his nation. She's a staunch supporter of welfare, being a patron of 620 voluntary organizations. What a class act! No. Watch your mouth. That's an act of noblesse oblige without a patronizing air. Her sense of duty is like that of rock.

Typed by Takeharu Kikuchi (Kodokan)

Duty is its own reward, she might reign (Rock). She wants to be on show, (Fire), without playing to the crowds. She gets no credits (Water). Ceremony is meaningful only if it's relevant. How pragmatic! (Fire). She loves change and make-over to stay in touch with reality. (Wind). She's religious (Fire), psychological (Rock), compassionate (Water) and wise (Void). She doesn't want to, or need to change the future, but is just be there and now. Today is what we've got. If she's spiritual, she would be close to Krishnamurti. As void as it gets.

Rommie Choong (Malaysian-Chinese taxi driver) is absolutely right, when he said on our way to the airport this morning. "You're absolutely right. This is a monarchy economy. If you touch the monarch, everything works." Monarchy is behind everything. Soccer (Tudor sport), regatta, museums and you name it. It makes this society and economy stable. Out of royal eyes, nothing works. As long as monarchy remains, the envy of the world, Queen's English works.