

COPY

THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE AT THE UNVEILING CEREMONY OF
THE EDISON MONUMENT AT THE IWASHIMIZU HACHIMAN SHRINE, KYOTO

May 23, 1934

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Read by Mr. Howard Donovan, American Consul at Kobe

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with the keenest regret that I am unable to be present here today with you on this occasion; an occasion which is important as another milestone in the life of a great American, Thomas Alva Edison,--for he surely lives today in the many contributions to civilization which he left behind him--and in the life of Japanese-American relations, which, though young as international relations go, have been outstandingly fruitful and of lasting benefit to both nations and indirectly to the whole world. This graceful act of recognition, this translation into concrete shape of the sentiments of appreciation and admiration which the Japanese people hold for the memory of one of my countrymen, forms yet another stone in the broad, firm base upon which these relations are being built.

The spirit of progress is perhaps the one most closely identified with our two countries; in the world of modern civilization both our countries are young; they are virile; they are seekers of truth. Truth is light; progress cannot be made in darkness. Edison, the creator of that form of artificial light most generally used today in the civilized world, may well be regarded as the apostle of truth. Your shaft erected here today is not a tombstone to his memory but a finger pointing heavenward, to the realm of light. It is, in a sense, a shrine before whom those imbued with the spirit of progress will be content to seek inspiration.

Edison conceived the idea of causing the carbon filament to glow in a partial vacuum; Japan contributed that thread, a fibre of bamboo, which produced the filament and made the incandescent electric lamp a useful and marketable reality. We gladly acknowledge the debt; we express our deep sense of appreciation to the people of Japan for this monument erected and unveiled here today to the memory of a true exponent of the spirit of American, a simple American, a man of the people, a great American--Thomas Edison.

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