

# Queen Margrethe II's birthday

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AMBASSADOR OF DENMARK

During the past year, in the aftermath of the terrible Great East Japan Earthquake, the warm and close bonds between the peoples of Denmark and Japan were further strengthened. Including the close ties between our Royal Family and the Imperial family. Both sons of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II visited Japan in 2011.



Soon after the earthquake last spring, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark visited Tokyo and the disaster area in order to convey the sympathy of the Danish people and the Royal Family especially to those affected by the disaster. During the visit, the Crown Prince presented donations from Danish companies to the city of Higashimatsushima. The visit gave the Crown Prince an opportunity to play soccer against some of the kids from the disaster area. The kids won, and all shared a wonderful day. The aim was to show the people of the disaster area that we care and to give them hope for the future.

Later in the year Their Royal Highnesses Prince Joachim and Princess Marie of Denmark visited Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima. The Royal Couple opened an exhibition in Tokyo with art works of Her Majesty The Queen, and on that occasion they participated in an art workshop together with chil-

dren from Higashimatsushima. A unique art work, especially created by Her Majesty for the exhibition in Tokyo, was sold, and all the proceeds went to helping the children of Higashimatsushima.

The government of Denmark, individuals from Denmark as well as Danish companies have also supported Japan during the difficult past year. We all have admired the strength and the resilience of the Japanese people. Commemorating the one year anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt expressed her deepest and most heartfelt sympathy on behalf of the Danish government. She also expressed admiration for the impressive efforts undertaken to rebuild Japan. As a small symbol of our continued sympathy, Crown Prince Frederik lit a candle for the victims of the disaster at a ceremony at the Japanese Embassy in Copenhagen, and I lit candles and turned off all electrical lights at the Danish Embassy in Tokyo on the evening of March 11, 2012.

## Continuing support

The friendship between Denmark and Japan is strong and close. It should therefore be no surprise that Denmark has pledged to stay engaged in the reconstruction effort. Denmark and Danish companies will continue to support Tohoku and Japan. Together with a group of Danish companies, the Danish Embassy has created a consor-



Queen Margrethe II of Denmark TINE HARDEN

tium to provide assistance and inspiration for the reconstruction of Higashimatsushima.

In December 2011 the city of Higashimatsushima was selected for the Cabinet Office Future City Initiative, and city officials, including Mayor Hideo Abe, have visited Denmark on several occasions to get inspirations from Danish green technologies and energy policies. The aim of the consortium is to provide a forum for advice and ideas for sustain-

able reconstruction that should help to make a greener and more prosperous Tohoku.

## New energy policies

In light of last year's triple disaster, the government of Japan is contemplating a new energy policy. It is a monumental task to rethink how Japan produces and spends energy. The energy decisions of the world's third largest economy will have global effects, and we are therefore all watching

closely what will be decided.

On a slightly smaller scale, but no less ambitious, the Danish parliament last month agreed to an energy plan that aims to create a bright, green future and a society free of coal, oil and gas. It is our aim to continue to be world leaders in energy saving and green technologies.

In 2020, 35 percent of Denmark's energy supply will come from renewable energy sources, and half of our electricity consumption will be from wind power. In 2050, Denmark's entire energy supply (electricity, heating, industry and transport) will be covered by renewable energy. The goal for 2050 is thus a totally carbon-free society, i.e., a society where oil, coal and gas are not used for energy production. We aim to do that with existing technologies and at zero extra cost.

A carbon-free society is important in the fight against global warming and for creating a better environment. But the Danes, like the Japanese, are businessmen and traders, and we would not embark on this journey unless it made economic sense. We believe strongly that creating a green nation is not only good for the environment, it is also good for the economy.

I hope that we in the coming years can continue to deepen our cooperation with Japan on making a greener, more sustainable planet, and on creating green growth together.

## Passion for design.

Denmark is well-known in Japan

for its green policies. Another area where Denmark is well-known is in design and architecture.

Danes and Japanese share a passion for good design and simple aesthetics. It is therefore no coincidence that the best Danish designers are immensely popular in Japan — and vice versa. Love of delicate handicraft, attention to detail, and a sense of quality and materials are some of the characteristics that both Danish and Japanese design lovers have in common. Some of the best Danish designers have been strongly inspired by Japan and especially the clean lines of Zen Buddhism.

In January this year, one of our common designers and archi-

tects, Finn Juhl, would have been 100 years old. Juhl is Danish, but was hugely inspired by Japan, and has today been adopted by Japan. Today many pieces of furniture he designed are made only in Japan.

Juhl's centennial of course had to be marked in Japan. An exhibition of "The Universe of Finn Juhl" took place in Tokyo. His birthday was also celebrated in Takayama, Gifu Prefecture, where the Japanese nonprofit organization The Finn Juhl Art Museum Club has constructed an exact scale copy of Juhl's private home in Denmark. The house is constructed right next to the Kitani furniture company, and it will serve as a unique place to

experience Danish architectural history and Juhl's furniture.

In 1951, Juhl designed the Trusteeship Council Chamber at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This chamber is currently undergoing a large-scale renovation financed by Denmark. The renovated chamber — which is scheduled to open in January 2013 — will be a unique showcase of some of the best of Danish design, featuring both new design as well as original Juhl furniture, some of which is being made in Yamagata.

On this note, I do hope that we Danes and Japanese in the coming years can also deepen our friendship, and continue to serve as each other's inspirations. Kindly visit our renewed home page at [www.japan.um.dk](http://www.japan.um.dk) for updated news from Denmark and the Danish Embassy.



Uplifting: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark prepares to control the ball during a soccer game with children at Hamaichi Elementary School in Higashimatsushima, Miyagi Prefecture, in June, during his visit to Japan. EMBASSY OF DENMARK

# Happy Birthday to H.M. Queen Margrethe II

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In Alphabetical Order