

Queen Margrethe II's Birthday Special

Shared values and beliefs mark long-standing ties

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Today marks the 82nd birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. The celebration is not limited to Denmark, as Danes from all over the world gather to celebrate the head of state, and

Japan is no exception. This year is especially important, due to her majesty marking 50 years on the throne, serving as the head of Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, for half a century.

After more than two years with COVID-19, the Danish government decided to lift all pandemic restrictions on Feb. 1, no longer categorizing it as a socially critical disease. The restrictions caused official celebrations to either be canceled or hosted online. This year, however, her majesty will once again

have the chance to mark her birthday traditionally. She will host a parade in front of Marselisborg Castle in Aarhus and greet Danes from the castle's garden, accompanied by her two sons and their families.

During her annual New Year's Eve speech, she reminded the people of Denmark that there are moments worthy of appreciation despite the pandemic. She encouraged us to learn from the hard lessons the pandemic has taught us about the importance of standing as a community to overcome significant challenges, and as individuals to appreciate the close bonds we have to our loved ones. With a significantly high number of fully vaccinated people in Denmark, we can finally look forward — and once again gather — to celebrate her majesty.

Amid such a joyous event, war has tragically found its way to Europe once again. Both Danes and her majesty condemn the acts of aggression toward Ukraine and wish to support the Ukrainians in every way possible. Her majesty, his royal highness the crown prince and her royal highness the crown princess have announced through their

respective foundations, that they will donate 1 million Danish krone (¥18 million) to the victims of the war in Ukraine. Additionally, the royal family has inspired the citizens of Denmark and Danish companies to donate more than 1 billion Danish krone (¥18 billion) to Ukraine. It is encouraging that Japan is also expressing support for Ukraine.

Denmark and Japan also share fundamental values and characteristics. In addition to having two of the oldest monarchies globally, Denmark and Japan both honor democratic elections and respect human rights and the rule of law. Additionally, to ensure a better future, we both strive to achieve the U.N. sustainable development goals.

An example of the shared values is Denmark's initiatives toward becoming more digitalized. We are widely accepted as a digital front-runner, but it was not always like this. Today, Japan is facing many of the same challenges as Denmark, and we hope to share this experience and expertise with Japan and continue our collaboration. In November, Denmark's Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod visited Japan. Kofod and Min-

ister for Digital Karen Makishima signed a memorandum of cooperation, marking a big step toward closer cooperation in this field.

Japan and Denmark also share visions of a decarbonized future, where offshore wind energy is a main pillar for a safe, reliable and cost-efficient decarbonized energy sector. In March, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's Agency for Natural Resources and Energy and our Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities' Danish Energy Agency signed a memorandum of cooperation on offshore wind energy and the integration of wind and solar into the grid. Both countries aim to increase renewable energy and decrease dependence on foreign energy. We hope to share knowledge and experience that can accomplish these goals faster and more efficiently through mutual inspiration.

Amid the war in Ukraine, our two countries are now drawn even closer to each other. The shared values of a rules-based international order and retaining the status quo have strengthened our relations, and we look forward to continuing our fruitful cooperation.



Boats are moored in front of colorful building facades in Nyhavn, Copenhagen.
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