

# Queen Margrethe II's birthday

## Promoting Arctic, Danish design and celebrating same-sex marriage

Anders Carsten Damsgaard  
AMBASSADOR OF DENMARK

Today all Danes will celebrate the 75th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II. Her Majesty has been Denmark's head of state since 1972.



A few weeks ago, Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark visited Japan heading an ambitious promotion of Greenland in Japan. The royal couple was accompanied

by Kim Kielsen, premier of Greenland, and a Greenlandic business delegation. Greenland is an autonomous part of the Kingdom of Denmark that has enjoyed wide-ranging self-governance since 2009.

The crown prince has particularly strong personal connections to Greenland, and his love for Greenland was clearly felt by everyone who listened to his story about this unique and fascinating culture and its people.

The Greenlandic premier came to Japan with a strong message to Japan and the Japanese people: Greenland is a vast land with vast resources

and a very small population. Greenlanders live off of the Arctic waters that also provide a variety of high quality seafood for Japanese dinner tables.

Greenlandic nature is like nowhere else on earth — 85 percent of the land is covered by permanent ice, amazing aurora borealis displays illuminate the winter sky, and the marvelous Ilulissat Icefjord contains the biggest glacier in the Northern Hemisphere — just to mention a few of the natural wonders making Greenland so special. But this pristine nature is also very sensitive to climate change and in

the Arctic, global warming is felt more and before anywhere else.

In the Arctic Council, the Kingdom of Denmark and Japan now work together to address the many challenges and opportunities for the Arctic region that follow climate change.

Danish Design has appealed to people around the world for decades, but in few places has it been as popular as in Japan. The popularity of modern Danish Design in Japan is no coincidence. Japanese design and esthetics have influenced Danish designers in several ways during the past 150 years —

among the most notable names are Borge Mogensen, Finn Juhl and Poul Kjærholm.

Today a new generation of young Danish designers are designing their way to the hearts of the Japanese people. Though young — and sometimes rebellious — they have their roots in the Danish design tradition of the 20th century and adhere to the original principles of simplicity and functionality. They are standing on the shoulders of icons. It has been said about Danish Design that the ideal is that you cannot add or subtract anything without making the product worse. This in particu-

lar resonates very well with Japanese esthetics.

The Royal Danish Embassy in Tokyo has recently launched an online "Denmark Design Navi" ([www.denmarkdesign.jp/](http://www.denmarkdesign.jp/)). This aims to provide Japanese visitors with the latest design trends in Denmark and information about shops in Japan carrying Danish-designed brands.

A few months ago a Danish couple celebrated a very significant Silver Anniversary. They are not royal, nor rich or famous, yet many people in Denmark and across the world celebrated the anniversary with them. They happen to be the world's first same-sex couple who can celebrate 25 years of marriage.

In October 1989 Denmark was the first country in the world to legalize formal registered partnership for two people of the same sex with the same legal benefits and obligations as marriage. Today Denmark's marriage and family legislation is completely gender neutral.

Since 1989 many other countries around the world have followed suit and legalized same-sex marriage.

Leading up to and during the Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2015, the Royal Danish Embassy in Tokyo will celebrate this 25th anniversary milestone. Denmark will together with the four other Nordic countries be present with a booth at Tokyo Rainbow Pride on April 25 and 26 — please come and visit us.



Queen Margrethe II of Denmark celebrates her 75th birthday. EMBASSY OF DENMARK



The Greenlandic nature is like nowhere else on earth — huge icebergs break off from the Ilulissat Icefjord, home to the biggest glacier in the Northern Hemisphere. EMBASSY OF DENMARK



The Adelaide chairs created by BoConcept beautifully exemplify Danish design esthetics. BOCONCEPT, JAPAN



Ove Carlsen (left) and Ivan Larsen, who were the second same-sex couple in the world to get married, celebrate their silver anniversary on Oct. 1. EMBASSY OF DENMARK

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**H.M. Queen Margrethe II**

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In Alphabetical Order