

Queen Margrethe II's Birthday Special

New areas of cooperation deepen ties

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AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK



On the occasion of April 16, we celebrate the 79th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of the Kingdom of Denmark. This day is special to all Danes and it gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to

our head of state, as well as a chance to reflect on the relationship between Denmark and Japan — a relationship in which the Queen herself has engaged.

In 2017, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Denmark and Japan, at which occasion two of the biggest events were the royal and imperial visits that crowned the cordial bonds between our two countries. However, these 150 years are only the beginning, as we have already taken steps toward strengthening our already strong relationship for the next 150 years and beyond. Although our countries have more



Queen Margrethe II of Denmark at a ceremony in Nymindegab on March 31. REUTERS

than 8,000 kilometers of distance between us, we are not far apart — quite the contrary.

Denmark and Japan share a lot of similarities. Geographically, both countries are surrounded by the sea, while our friendship derives from a mutual appreciation and understanding of democracy as being the most important basis for political legitimacy and stability. We also share the same values in regards to respecting human rights, the importance of a strong and fair judicial system, and the close bond between the royal and imperial families with the public. A bond, which we now clearly see, is getting

stronger within Japan, with the new era of Reiwa approaching fast and Heisei ending.

Denmark and Japan are entering a new chapter of cooperation, with the conclusion of the free trade agreement between the EU and Japan; free trade sets the stage for our strategic partnership to reach a level of unprecedented potential. With new commercial opportunities, we get the chance to take full advantage of each of our distinctive strengths through our commercial cooperation. Economic exchanges are vital to a better world; in creating enhanced opportunities for all and now, we are beginning to feel the full effects of it. Denmark is looking forward to a greater collaboration on high-tech research and innovation, as well as the expansion of our already thriving academic networks.

The aging society we live in offers challenges as well as opportunities, and our countries are cooperating closely to develop joint and innovative solutions to shape a better future for all. Innovation is not just about inventing new technologies, but much more about social and human-centric innovation.

Not only are we moving forward in terms of economic exchange, but also in the area of cultural exchange where we have great times

ahead of us. With the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo next year, more Danish people than ever will be visiting Japan. Cultural exchanges will lead to increasing awareness of our great countries and will therefore make our friendship and personal connections progressively more active. The visions and ambitions have always been our driving force, and now we face greater prospects than ever in taking our cooperation to the next level.

As the ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to Japan and as a Dane, I am proud and honored to see that the relationship between Denmark and Japan is growing and, thus, becoming stronger than ever. I would like to thank our partners in promoting our unique relationship, especially the Japan-Denmark Parliamentary Friendship League. With your resilient support, we have made great progress and reached new milestones.

With the new era of Reiwa ahead of us, I trust, and believe, that the collaboration between our two countries will rise to the name, in "beautiful harmony." In a world full of uncertainties, I know that our friendship and partnership will prevail. We stand ready to move our relationship to the next level and into the new era.



Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen was built in the 18th century and serves as the prime residence of Queen Margrethe II and other Danish Royal Family members.

KIM WYON

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