

**Her Majesty The Queen of Denmark's Speech at the State Banquet  
at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Tuesday 16 November 2004**

Your Majesties,

The Prince Consort and I thank you for the warm words and good wishes which Your Majesty has just addressed to us and to our country.

Both of us have so many good memories of our previous visits to Japan and of the hospitality which Your Majesties have extended to us and to our family. We also recall with pleasure the number of visits which Your Majesties and the Imperial Family have paid to us in Denmark, most recently when His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito attended our elder son's wedding in May. Therefore, we have been looking forward to this State Visit, and the cordial welcome we have received has made a deep impression on us.

The ties between Denmark and Japan are characterized by an increasing diversity. The ties have grown strong, especially during the last half-century, and in each of our countries familiarity with the other country and its culture is steadily increasing. Our cultures are indeed different, but the mutual fascination is so much the greater.

No Dane is so well known in Japan as Hans Christian Andersen, and it may be said without exaggeration that, outside Denmark, there is no country where his fairytales are more widely read and cherished than here in Japan. That Hans Christian Andersen on the other hand was conscious of Japan appears from the fairytale "The Nightingale", where the author makes the Emperor of China state that he has read about the nightingale and its beautiful song in a book, which "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and so it cannot be untrue". The point of the bird being Nature's own singer calls attention to something that I believe to be typical of Japanese culture. It is evident to this very day on the larger as well as the smaller scale: In the fascination with nature in all its grandeur as in the dedication to detail; in the swift and masterly strokes of the ink brush on paper as in the universe encompassed by three flowers and an exquisite vase.

Both Japan and Denmark set great store by simplicity and elegance. In Denmark, Japan is well known for its impressive contributions in the fields of handicraft and applied art, design and architecture. In these areas there is much mutual inspiration and exchange between our two countries. As an example, I am happy to mention the Royal Copenhagen exhibition, which includes a series of early 20<sup>th</sup> century works produced in the "Japonesque" style. It affords me much pleasure that it has been possible to show this exhibition at the Imperial Museum here in Tokyo. We are also looking forward to presenting examples of modern Danish applied art and design as

well as other elements of Danish culture to a Japanese audience during this State Visit.

Denmark attaches great importance to our trade relations of many years. Next to the USA, Japan is the most important overseas trading partner for Denmark. Economic and commercial relations are developing continuously, and new areas such as high technology, protection of the environment, and energy present a constant succession of new challenges which will also involve science and research. I am convinced that the years ahead will offer further prospects of fruitful cooperation. In connection with this State Visit, a comprehensive Danish industrial campaign has been organized, which includes a number of prominent representatives of Danish business life. It is my hope that Danish and Japanese business executives will find inspiration in the events taking place, and will make use of the contacts established here, for the benefit of both our countries.

In a wider, international context, the relations between Denmark and Japan are likewise undergoing change. The increasingly active role assumed by Japan has revealed new areas where our views coincide and where it, therefore, has been natural for our countries to cooperate. In particular this is the case within the framework of the United Nations, and in Denmark we welcome that the relations between our

countries are now to include the Security Council, to which both Japan and Denmark have just been elected members.

Your Majesties,

No one who like the Prince Consort or myself has had the experience of attending the Imperial Enthronement will ever forget the impression of ancient culture which we witnessed on that occasion. So much more impressive as we know that behind the splendid costumes and grand ceremonies are two highly gifted and warm-hearted personalities. Throughout the years, Your Majesties have lived for and with your country and your people, not only out of a sense of duty, but with all your hearts; at the same time, however, Your Majesty has succeeded in remaining involved in the research which caught Your Majesty's interest at an early age; similarly, Her Majesty Empress Michiko has given much pleasure to adults as well as children through her beautiful poetry and charming stories - an artistic activity which is well known also outside Japan.

In the hope that the warm and enduring relations between Japan and Denmark will prosper and develop, and wishing Your Majesties and the Imperial Family as well as Japan and the Japanese people happiness and prosperity, I raise my glass together with the Prince Consort to propose a toast to Their Majesties The Emperor and The Empress of Japan.