

PRIME MINISTER WILLOCH'S SPEECH AT THE LUNCHEON AT
AKERSHUS CASTLE, TUESDAY 11 JUNE 1985

Your Majesty,
Your Imperial Highnesses,
Your Royal Highnesses,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great privilege and pleasure for the Royal Norwegian Government to host this luncheon in honour of their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess of Japan.

We find it particularly pleasant to be able to receive you here at Akershus Castle, which is dating back to the year 1299 - a time which we consider a period of medieval greatness in Norwegian history. We do hope that this historic site will be considered a suitable setting for this historic event, as we have the honour, for the very first time in history, to receive a state visit from Japan.

Your Imperial Highnesses' visit is in return for the visit His Majesty King Olav V made to Japan in October 1983. This exchange of visits has a special significance. It marks a consolidation of the strong bonds of friendship which have developed between our two countries,

and a willingness and desire to further strengthen the ties between us.

The sea unites Japan and Norway, and the shipping links between our two countries have a long tradition. In fact, Norway has been engaged in shipping to and from Japan ever since your country was opened to Western visitors in 1853. As His Majesty described in his speech at the Royal Castle yesterday, shipping and ship-building are also keys to today's pattern of trade between Japan and Norway. In fact: The two first vessels which were exported from the rebuilt Japanese yards after the war, were built for Norwegian owners. We are happy, however, that trade between us has developed in other important fields as well.

Hand in hand with the development of our economic relations, we have witnessed a strengthening and broadening of contacts in the political and cultural fields. We are particularly pleased to see the growing number of Japanese making the long journey to Norway - where they have become very popular visitors. We greet them as representatives of a strong cultural tradition, going thousands of years back in history, a culture which has given the world some of its most exquisite treasures of art. We note with admiration that you have managed to preserve this tradition as a fundamental pillar of social life, even in a modern Japanese society undergoing rapid changes.

Our countries are both dedicated to the preservation of democracy and the promotion of peace and prosperity in the world. Japan's emergence through peaceful means as one of the world's leading nations has added a new dimension to the foreign influence and role of your country. This is especially true of your development into one of the world's leading industrial and economic powers, with an impressive technological development which brings Japan to the forefront of modern research and innovation. In Norway we have watched with admiration and fascination the seemingly unending achievements of Japan in the realm of high-technology.

We appreciate Japan's efforts to shoulder international political responsibility in accordance with your real significance and influence. It is of the greatest importance that all countries participating in our open world economy, and sharing the democratic form of government, assume part of the burden for maintaining international peace and security. The important role you play in international organizations and at the summit meetings of the leading industrial nations, and your constructive approach to world problems have been noted with great satisfaction and respect by the Norwegian people.

The success of multilateral cooperation will, however, largely depend upon personal and bilateral contacts and the mutual understanding which results from them. Your Imperial Highness, in your speech yesterday you mentioned the recent visit to Norway of Your Foreign

Minister, Mr. Abe. I would like to stress that we greatly appreciated the opportunity to exchange views on a wide range of issues with him. I personally found our conversation most useful and very pleasant.

Your Imperial Highnesses, You have seen some of what we consider our most beautiful scenery on your tour of western Norway. Even though it was partly overcast and the colours sometimes a little subdued, I understand that you were able to get a real impression of the ruggedness and character of the Norwegian landscape. I do, indeed, hope your journey was a pleasant one. Perhaps you have even noted certain similarities between the coastline of Japan and the coastline of Norway.

Your Majesty, Your Imperial Highnesses, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in closing I would like to propose a toast to the health of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan and Their Imperial Highnesses, to the welfare and prosperity of Japan and the Japanese people, and to a further strengthening of the bonds and relations between our two nations.
