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Pool photo

The Emperor gives a speech as the Empress looks on during a banquet hosted by Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski and his wife at the presidential office in Warsaw.

Emperor hails 2 Poles with close ties to Japan

Yomiuri Shimbun Correspondent

WARSAW—The Emperor and Empress attended a dinner Tuesday evening hosted by Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski and his wife Jolanta at the presidential office in Warsaw.

The Emperor gave a speech at the dinner and referred to two Poles who had a close relationship with Japan: the Rev. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe, who engaged in missionary work in Nagasaki in 1930s, and his brother Zeno Zebrowski, who devoted his life to the relief of war orphans in Japan.

“Japanese people still recall them on occasions,” the Emperor said.

Referring to the philanthropy of Kolbe, who offered his own life in sacrifice for a person who was to be executed at Auschwitz concentration camp, the Emperor said, “A tragedy like that should never be repeated.”

Kwasniewski said that even though the two countries are geographically far apart, their relationship is not distant, adding it is growing ever closer.

The Imperial couple are in Poland on a two-week European tour.