

Congratulatory Address for Vesak Day

By His Holiness Most Venerable Kojun Handa
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Japan

It is a great pleasure to offer my heartfelt congratulation to you for Vesak Day, the celebration of Shakyamuni Buddha's three sacred days, ceremonies at Ayutthaya and Bangkok in your country.

Because of the huge magnitude 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami, which struck eastern Japan on March 11th, the number of people dead and those we have yet to find approaches 30,000. We are truly hurting and suffering from this devastation. Moreover, 100,000s of people have lost their homes and are forced to live in temporary shelters without sufficient necessary supplies. We have to do our very best to assist the relief efforts and bring about reconstruction and a sense of normality to people's lives as soon as possible.

Everyone in Japan has endeavored to the utmost and our nation has united to respond courageously to this unprecedented disaster. The foundation of this attitude is the Buddhist Path, which has sustained the Japanese mind and spirit from ancient times.

"The greatest compassion is to forget oneself and do goods for others." This is a teaching of our founder, Dengyo Daishi (Saicho). I especially believe this teaching provides the strength for us to overcome these difficulties and the driving force to reconstruct the Japanese economy.

Would you please pray for the repose of victims' spirits and for the restoration of Japan together with us? Your prayers of compassion will provide the illumination for Japan to rise again.

As I pray for the successful gathering of Vesak Day, I, as one who follow the Buddhist teachings, sincerely request your prayers for Japan.