

12 March, 2011

Interim News on Japanese Disaster

A report and responses



Several of the Images at Chuson-ji in Iwate, Japan

Dear Sangha and Friends,

Everyone is aware a devastating earthquake, tsunami, severe aftershocks and nuclear emergency have overwhelmed Northeastern Honshu (Tohoku region) and the Kanto plain. Live images on CNN, NHK and TBS have given us a heartbreakingly, powerful, sense of the disaster. I have included a number of links that you might find of interest.

Many people have contacted us asking if our family and friends are OK and wondering if there is anything that they can do to assist. This message is to provide sangha and friends with an interim report on what we know and what we are doing in response to this unfathomable natural disaster in Japan.

Our family in the Kanto region thankfully escaped the devastation. There are many harrowing stories, but they are safe and sound. The situation with our friends, teachers and colleagues is largely unknown.

Communications within, to and from Japan, are challenging. Telephone service comes and goes and we have been informed that the Japanese government has requested that people not tie up the telephone lines. The few calls we have tried were into areas that are severely affected and we could not get through. E-mail works in areas where there is electricity. That is why we know about Tamami's family. But, that can be hit and miss. There are electricity outages even in areas where the electricity is otherwise available.

The East Asia listserv, of which I am a member, has been extraordinarily helpful in providing information. The Japan Information Center at the Consulate General of Japan in New York and the Consulate General of Japan in Boston have been very gracious in their responses.

Shumon (Tamami) and I have sent e-mail to the Tendai-shu Shomucho's office (administration for Hiei-zan), Ichishima-sensei, Yamada-sensei (Abbot of Chusonji temple), a Yahoo Jigyodan group site and others. We have not heard from them as of yet. The Shomucho's office is no doubt working around the clock trying to find out information in the heavily affected areas. Yamada-sensei's temple is in Iwate province, close to Sendai, and Ichishima-sensei's temple is in northern Chiba Province, also seriously affected.

There are literally dozens of Tendai temples in the immediate earthquake and Tsunami zones, including cities that are completely obliterated. Many other temples are

in the mountains where the earthquake damage will be great, but they will have been safe from the tsunamis.

As difficult as it may seem we must wait to determine how best to assist our Japanese friends. They are still appraising the disaster and will contact us as soon as they have some answers. At this time we are considering sending donations to *Ichigu-o Terasukai*. The Tendai-shu New York Betsuin is a member of this Tendai-shu charitable organization. However, we will evaluate how we might best assist Japan once we have more complete information. Keep in mind that this is not a crises that will be over in a month or even a year. There will be plenty of opportunity to help as the real need is made clear. In the meantime we can double our efforts to prayer for Ichishima-sensei, Yamada-sensei, and all those people, Tendai, Buddhist, and non-Buddhist alike who have been profoundly affected by this tragedy.

We will send another e-mail to you soon to keep you posted.

The Yakushi Nyorai Mantra might be employed as part of your thoughts and prayers.

***On biseizei biseizei biseija sanbouri gyatei
sowaka***

Gassho . . .

Monshin and Shumon Naamon

518-392-7963