

**E-mail from Ms. Beniko Suzuki, Byakko member in Sendai, sent March 24.**

I experienced the Tohoku earthquake at my home in Sendai. When the quake began, I was on the second floor of my house. As the shaking continued and grew stronger, I ran down the stairs barefoot with our dog, and we got out of the house.

The earth was shaking hard. Even on my hands and knees, I was unable to hold myself up. When the earthquake was over, I went back inside. My house is up on a hill, and from my living room window, I could see that the sea was pitch black. Dark clouds began covering the city of Sendai.

I immediately tried to contact my parents, who live near the port of Sendai, but the call would not go through. My mother is also a Byakko member, and prays regularly. So, I was convinced that she would absolutely be all right. I was pretty sure that a tsunami was coming, and I figured that my parents were heading away from home by that time. Fortunately, my parents were safe and unharmed.

However, many of my relatives live near the coast, and some of them lost their lives. I later heard that four of them were rescued from the sea after the tsunami washed away their homes.

A few days later, we found out that our house was possibly collapsing, so we took refuge at my parents' house. Their house was not washed away, but in the yard a couple of cars had washed up, with deceased bodies still inside.

I saw homes and rescue helicopters that had been swallowed up by the tsunami. It was an unbelievably awful scene. Walking just a short ways from the house, I could see many dead bodies left on the ground. Thick oil from the port of Sendai covered the ground, making it difficult even to walk.

And yet, somehow, it seemed as if the earth had been purified, and the atmosphere was that of a newborn baby sleeping soundly. It was filled with feelings of sadness and sorrow, but I felt that those who had passed away had wonderfully accomplished their heavenly missions. I had a feeling that everything had been cleansed and purified.

Almost every day, I walk around the area, praying with strong feelings in my heart. Even though their situation is unfortunate, I have found that people in the damaged areas and those living in shelters are filled with words of compassion and encouragement, such as, "Are you all right?" and "We are doing our best!" These are people who have lost their homes and family members, and yet I hear only positive, caring words from them.

I realized that in recent times, Japanese people seldom express such love and concern for one another. I feel as though everything has been reset and is starting anew.

I have the sense that this disaster may be reminding people that they have taken their health and their life for granted, and that it is helping to elevate the consciousness of Japanese people and of all humanity.

My 80-year-old uncle, who lost everything to the tsunami, lives with us at my parents' house. We talk every day, and with a smile, he tells me that he is a good cook and he will make me another of his specialties. He is still hopeful—it is so wonderful, and it makes me happy. We have been given life, and there is much meaning in it. We need to live earnestly, making every effort we can.

I am determined to live my life to the utmost, with gratitude, so that we will once again receive blessings from the earth. I believe that now is the time for people in Japan and around the world to elevate our consciousness and pray together, that we may live in peace, with a spirit of gratitude.

The situation in the damaged coastal areas is horrible. Yet, people are working together to go on living. They are making the most of the life they have been given.

I am truly grateful to everyone. Even for those I cannot see, I can feel what is in their hearts, and I can sense their determination. From here on, everything will only get better. Without fail, everything will marvelously improve.

From Japan to the world, I am living with heartfelt gratitude, so that the town where I was born and raised may be restored.

I deeply feel the kindness of so many people, and I am so grateful. I will continue to pray for those who are awaiting rescue, and for their families.

*May peace prevail on Earth.*

Beniko Suzuki  
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