

One Year After March 11th: Memorial at the Seattle Kobe Bell

Good afternoon, friends of Japan.

Thank you very much for gathering here today. This is a special meeting place for Japanese and Americans to reaffirm our friendship. This afternoon, we are paying tribute to nearly 20,000 people who lost their lives one year ago. We will ring the bell. The echoes will carry our prayers on the wind for everlasting peace.



Over the last 12 months, we have received many messages, donations and other support for the people of Tohoku. The Japanese people will never ever forget this kindness. I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Seattleites, Washingtonians and Americans. *Arigato gozaimashita.*

The triple disaster hit us hard. We will be taking up challenge after challenge for years to come. But I am optimistic for three reasons. First, we are like *daruma*. When we are knocked down by difficulty, we stand back up again. Second, we are more united than ever; men and women, young and old alike. Third, and perhaps most important, we are not alone. Looking out at all of your caring faces today, I can feel your strong bond of friendship.

We are making our reconstruction process open to the world. So please visit Japan, invest in Japan and do business with Japan. The world will bear witness to our incredible comeback. We will show the world how much Japanese determination and your friendship can accomplish.

