

THE CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE



Prime Minister delivering an address

PRIME Minister Shinzo Abe attended the Ceremony to Commemorate the Third Anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake held in Tokyo in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. Following the moment of silence, the Prime Minister delivered an address.

“Today, in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, on behalf of the Government of Japan I would like to offer a memorial address at this Ceremony to Commemorate the Third Anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Three years have passed since the day the Great East Japan Earthquake struck, with a tremendous number of irreplaceable lives lost and unprecedented damage wrought, centered on the Tohoku district.

When I think of the profound grief of the bereaved relatives who lost deeply beloved family members because of this earthquake disaster, I am moved even now by heart-

rending thoughts. I would like to express my heartfelt condolences once more to those people. I would also like to express my heartfelt sympathy to all those affected by the disaster, including the families of those who remain unaccounted for even today.

Every time I visit the disaster areas, I feel very keenly that reconstruction is moving forward one step at a time, with agriculture resuming, fishing ports overflowing with the joy of the day’s catches, and the sight of families that have moved into public housing for disaster victims, among many other signs of progress. However, many people are still living lives of great inconvenience even now. There are also a large number of people who are still unable to return to their hometowns because of the nuclear accident.

Accelerating reconstruction still further and enabling the people affected by the disaster to return to their regular lives as soon as possible is a way to repay the departed souls of the victims watching over us from

heaven. At the same time, I pledge firmly that we will etch firmly into our minds the valuable lessons that we gained through the trials of the great earthquake disaster, and that we will move forward tirelessly on creating a nation with a high degree of resilience to disasters in order fully to defend the lives, physical welfare, and assets of our nationals from various types of future disasters.

Progress in recovery and reconstruction has been supported of course through the hard work of the local people and the efforts of relevant organizations, and also through a great amount of support extended from every part of our nation. In the wake of this earthquake disaster, Japan also received a tremendous amount of cordial and encouraging assistance from various countries and regions around the world, from which we have dignitaries attending today. I would like to express our gratitude once again.

Our forebears overcame a myriad of challenges and each time, they arose even more robustly than before. We who live in the present day also pledge once more to follow that example, walking forward hand in hand.

I will close my remarks by offering my prayers once more for the eternal and tranquil repose of the departed souls and my heartfelt wish that the bereaved families may find peace.”

Photographs and text courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Cabinet Public Relations Office of the Government of Japan.