



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR  
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Buddhists and Christians:  
Together Building A Fraternal Society*

MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF HANAMATSURI IN JAPAN  
8 APRIL 2014

**Vatican City**

Dear Buddhist Friends in Japan,

1. In sincere friendship, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue extends to each and every one of you best wishes and cordial greetings as you commemorate the Buddha's Birthday, *Hana Matsuri* on the 8th of April. It is our prayerful wish that this annual religious feast may bring joy and peace to your families as well as to all the different Buddhist communities of Japan.

2. We have many reasons to rejoice with you, as we likewise have many convictions in common, as for example, the earnest desire to create a world where human beings relate to one another as brothers and sisters. Pope Francis notes that, "In the heart of every man and woman is the desire for a full life, including that irrepressible longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies or rivals, but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced." (*Message for World Day of Peace 2014*, n.1). We recall with appreciation the contribution made by you as Buddhists to the building of a more just and fraternal society. Your country is actively present in various initiatives towards peace, convinced that the dialogue of life and action between Buddhists and Christians is able to create an environment of peaceful coexistence and fraternity not only in your land but in the whole world as well.

3. We note the priority that you have always given to the path of interior liberation as a key solution to building a fraternal society. *Dhammapada* points out that, "Though one should conquer a million men on the battlefield, yet he, indeed, is the noblest victor who has conquered himself (n.103). Jesus teaches that, "If your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light." (Mt 6:22) Peace both begins and is lost in the human heart. Pope Francis mentions that, "If hearts are shattered in thousands of pieces, it is not easy to create authentic peace in society." (*Evangelii Gaudium* n. 229) We Christians and Buddhists, irrespective of our differences, believe that the purity of the human heart is the cornerstone for a fraternal society.

4. Therefore, we, as Buddhists and Christians, together with the followers of other religions and people of goodwill, need to work together to foster a harmonious society: "All the wars, all the strife, all the unsolved problems over which we clash are due to a lack of dialogue," as affirmed by Pope Francis. (*To Students and Teachers from the Seibu Gakuen Bunri Junior High School of Saitama, Tokyo, Japan, 21 August 2013*).

5. Dear Buddhist friends, it is in this spirit that we happily extend to you once again our best wishes for a joyful feast and a life of peace and serenity.

Happy *Hana Matsuri* to you all!

*Jean Louis Card. Tauran*

*Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran*  
President



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