

Let me kiss it better

People often react with surprise when I mention that I am a shy person. Perhaps my behavior leads them to imagine me as a social butterfly, a role I don't identify with. However, when I share that I was quite the *Kolohe* in my youth (and still am), they nod in agreement and chuckle. I find it puzzling that they accept the term “Kolohe” but not “shy.” Well, it is up to them. As a Kolohe boy — or in Japanese, *warubōzu* — I was like the wind, doing whatever I wanted. One thing that never left me alone was injury — I played so much that I always ended up falling and hurting my knees.

That was the moment of “let me kiss it better.” For me, it was *itai no itai no tondekē* — “pain, pain, go away!” When I fell and cried, and couldn't bear the pain, my mother appeared and said those words. The pain didn't disappear, but somehow I felt comfort... because someone knew my pain, someone understood it, someone held it with me. This reflects wisdom and compassion — wisdom that does not see oneself as separate from others, and compassion that pours itself out as “let me kiss it better.”

Now we face the reality before our eyes: a transformed town, the houses we live in, the scene of a lantern lighting a room and casting a shadow, beloved stores damaged, workplaces filled with memories now broken, concerns about family and friends, and the loss of loved ones. We live through nights of wondering “why,” with no answer, yet morning still comes — even when the familiar beauty of everyday life has changed completely, or when we have had to leave a loving place for safety, even though it is never a light decision.

This is the moment when someone offers “let me kiss it better.” The act of a kiss acknowledges the pain and emptiness we are experiencing, and the harsh truth that everything with a beginning will come to an end when causes and conditions arise, even when we desperately do not want it — including the loss of someone we have loved. In that unbearable, bleeding hurt of life, the kiss reminds us that someone understands, takes our pain as their own, and accepts all our emotions without judgment. In the darkness of life, a warm guiding light sustains us, calling: “I'm here with you. You are never left alone or behind.” That is Great Compassion — understanding and caring. It is the insight that understands and embraces the feeling behind the words, “You don't know what I am going through,” and gently invites: *I've got you. I stand by you. I walk with you.*

“Let me kiss it better” will not change the situation right away, nor blow away the pain magically. But the presence of the one who kisses — and the kiss itself — is an invitation into the surrounding love of those who think of us. The kiss is found in the driver who brings supplies, in volunteers, in food, in greetings, in the pain behind smiles, in the nights we wonder what awaits us, in each breath and sigh. “Let me kiss it better” whispers and spreads: “I am here with you. You never walk alone.” A shoulder to lean on is here, a gentle warm breeze for shivering hands.

In this time of difficulty, let us feel the presence of “let me kiss it better,” and care for ourselves and for one another. Life is hard, and the “why” never ends. Life unfolds the truth of life — yet we are standing together.



“Let me kiss it better”

It is loving-kindness that pours itself into the pains and difficulties you’ve been through, calling: *I’m here with you. I will never let you go alone.*