

Tzu Chi Delivers Hot Meals to Japan Earthquake Victims

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Thursday, 17 March 2011 12:00



[Tzu Chi formally recognized](#)

On Wednesday, March 16, volunteers in Japan delivered their first food aid to the victims of the country's catastrophic earthquake, feeding nearly 1,000 people in a town on the east coast. It was devastated by the tsunami caused by the quake and many residents have been unable to return home.

Oarai is a town of 20,000 people in Ibaraki prefecture, 130 kilometers north of Tokyo, on the Pacific ocean. It felt the full force of the tsunami, which flooded fields, houses, shops and factories and left the town covered in mud. While power supplies have been restored and some people have been able to return home, they have no water or gas and are short of most goods. They cannot prepare three hot meals for themselves.

Before they set out from Tokyo, the volunteers prepared a meal of curried rice, one of the favorites dishes of Japanese. They also prepared other food items, condiments and gas heaters; in this way, they would be able to provide hot food as soon as they arrived. The water they took was provided by Japan's Self-Defense Forces. "In this way, we could reach there in the fastest possible time, complete the task in the simplest way and reduce the burden to local people," said volunteer Chen Jinfa.



Chen and his fellow volunteers set out at 7.00 a.m. in Tokyo for the drive of more than two hours to Oarai. They drove along the coast and saw for themselves the devastation caused by the tsunami. With the distribution set for 12.30 p.m., the residents began queuing up at 11.30 a.m. at the town's cultural center; despite the cold weather, they were calm and orderly. The venue was cold and windy, making it hard to understand what people were saying. Before the distribution, Chen spoke on behalf of the foundation; he expressed the concern of Master Cheng Yen and the blessings of Tzu Chi people around the world and then led everyone present in a song and a prayer. "You cannot understand the words of the songs," Chen said. "The content is a prayer for the good health, peace and blessing of everyone." The song warmed the hearts of everyone on a cold day. The distribution went smoothly, to nearly 1,000 people. They were very moved and some wept. In the future, the volunteers will continue to provide cooked food and comfort to the victims.

After the earthquake and tsunami, the people of Japan are short of many things, including petrol and food. The members of Tzu Chi will overcome all kinds of hurdles and deliver hot food into the hands of those in difficulty. We hope that, as each person swallows a mouthful of the food, it will warm his heart and ease his pain after the disaster.

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