

Tzu Chi Delivers 20 Tons of Relief Goods to 7,000 in Northeast Japan

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Tuesday, 29 March 2011 10:21



[Tzu Chi Team Reaches Ofunato](#)

A team of Tzu Chi volunteers from Japan and Taiwan delivered 20 tons of relief goods to 7,000 people in northeast Japan who are living in shelters after their communities were devastated by the earthquake and tsunami on March 11. The national broadcaster NHK carried the distribution on its main nightly news, as a symbol of the love of countries across the world coming to Japan from Taiwan.

The volunteers carried out the distributions on March 25 and 26 in Ofunato and Rikuzentakata in Iwate prefecture. A city of 42,000 people on the coast, Ofunato was almost completely destroyed by the quake and tsunami, whose waves reached more than 20 metres and continued inland for nearly two miles. Initial estimates show more than 25 per cent of the buildings, including 3,500 houses, destroyed and more than 200 people dead. Rikuzentakata was similarly devastated, with few of its buildings left standing.



The first 10 tons of goods arrived in Ofunato on March 23. The next day the team of 19 volunteers reached the city and began the distribution on March 25. That same day, a second batch of 10 tons arrived and the volunteers distributed it at once. There was a total of 1,073 boxes, enough for about 7,000 people living in the shelters. The goods included instant rice that can be prepared with hot or cold water, nuts, eco-friendly blankets, cloaks and sweat shirts. When the volunteers entered the reception center in Ofunato, it was a moving moment. They bowed before the residents, warmly took their hands, embraced them and patted them on the back. They spoke warmly to them and expressed the concern of [Master Cheng Yen](#) for them. It moved the residents to tears.



The days since March 11 have been traumatic for them, who are living in the constant fear of aftershocks and tsunamis. One seven-year-old boy said: "I am terrified of another tsunami, which could take the lives of everyone. Our school has been destroyed and nobody knows the future." A lady of 71 with tears in her eyes, said that 16 years ago she had put all her savings into her home: "it vanished in an instant and I do not know how I will pass the rest of my days," she said. The volunteers embraced the old people warmly and gave them a warm cloak to encourage them. Other elderly people were huddled in the corners of the room with their knees drawn up.

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NHK filmed the distribution in Ofunato on March 25 and broadcast it on its main nightly news at 9 p.m. that evening.

※ [Letter From Dharma Master Cheng Yen to Global Volunteers Re. Japan Earthquake](#)