

Tzu Chi to Seventh Japanese Aid Distribution

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Over a week-long period, Tzu Chi volunteers will distribute assistance funds to victims of the earthquake and tsunami in northeast Japan, its seventh and largest aid distribution in the country. A total of 208 volunteers from Taiwan and Japan will take part, helping nearly 40,000 families of Ishinomaki and Natori cities, Miyagi prefecture, and other places, between October 20 and 24. It will take the number of families who have received help from the foundation since the disaster struck in March close to 85,000.

The team includes 88 members from Taiwan and 120 from Japan. On the evening of October 17, the day before their departure, the Taiwan volunteers gathered in the Jing Si Hall of Luzhou to make their final preparations. They heard a presentation from Hsieh Ching-gui, director of the foundation's department of religious affairs, about its relief work in Japan since the earthquake on March 11. He said that, in making the distribution, they must adopt an attitude of respect and consideration, treating the recipients like members of their own family, so that they would feel the love flowing from Tzu Chi people. This would be the seventh distribution, to help the recipients on their way to recovery and a normal life.

On October 19, they arrived at Haneda airport in Tokyo, expecting a temperature of 12 degrees Celsius; they found a warm, sunny day. They went to the foundation's Japanese branch in the city where they put down their bags and began to prepare for the operation. Volunteers Chen Jin-fa and Chen Liang-da gave a detailed explanation of the principles and schedule and showed maps with details of the four groups and distribution points. That evening they had an opportunity to meet the volunteers from Japan and get to know them better. Chang Shiu-min, the CEO of the Japan branch, said that the disaster had brought Tzu Chi people to Japan and opened the hearts of local people. Out of tragedy had come something good, including the growth of the Japan branch, she said.



As the day of the distribution approached, the branch received an increasing number of telephone calls from the recipients. The announcement they were given sets out very clearly the procedures; but many people wanted to confirm what documents they need to bring. The volunteers told them to see their hearts at ease.

One of the volunteers from Japan is Liu Juan-ling, taking part in her second distribution after the earthquake. She was so moved by the disaster that she decided to give up her job as manager of a company and receive training as a Tzu Chi commissioner. She is very thankful to the volunteers who have come from Taiwan and happy to go with them to help those in the affected area. While their lives are gradually returning to normal, in some households there is only one person or there is no-one with a job: their hearts are suffering and are in need of light and hope,

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in need of people to accompany them and give them strength to carry on.

Another volunteer is Chuang Tzu-yu, who lost her husband Huang Sheng-bi five years ago. She is taking part in a foreign distribution for the first time. She often heard him describe such overseas missions and hoped to join him on one of them. In February this year, her husband's body was donated for medical research – 'Silent Mentor'. This gave her the strength to follow her husband's footsteps on an international relief mission.



Another volunteer, Ye Li-feng, has been doing parts and components business with Japan for 15 years; she had a client in the city of Rikuzentakata, who lost all his family in the disaster. Because of this connection, she wants to do her best to comfort him for his loss and enable him to recover from his wounds. Volunteer Chang Yi-cheng reminded everyone of the story of Dharma Master Jian Zhen, the Chinese monk who brought Buddhism to Japan; he failed on five journeys before finally arriving on the sixth. He can be a model for the volunteers, in bringing love, warm and a smile to the people hit by the tragedy of the earthquake and tsunami.

*The amount of money being given is determined by the size of the household. A family of one-two members receives 30,000 yen, one of three-four 50,000 yen and those over four 70,000 yen. The total to be distributed is 1.7 billion yen (NT\$680 million).

*The seventh distribution announcement (), please [click here](#) .