

## **REPORT FOR VOLUNTEER WORK IN TOHOKU, JAPAN IN MARCH 2012**

Name: Mudan Hou  
Student ID: 11539705

I would say the volunteer trip to Tohoku, northeast area of Japan, where was damaged by earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 was a great opportunity for me to participate in this activity. I am thankful for the great support from FOLENS and RQ Volunteer Group for organizing the activity for us. From the trip, I can learn many knowledge about disaster from participated volunteers and local people.

First of all, by seeing current Tohoku after nearly one year after earthquake and tsunami in March 2011, I feel so sorry for people have to face with damages of the earthquake and tsunami disaster in this area. The scenery I saw was not exactly like images I had seen on the news about tsunami, but it was still too painful. Our first stop was at one small town, which was damaged by the earthquake and tsunami but has not been cleaned yet. As this town has been strongly hit by tsunami, it was fully broken. Houses, cars, and all offsets are destroyed, and no people remained in the town because they have lost or moved after tsunami. I feel so sorry for people who have lived or having relatives or friends have lived there, how can they accept the broken of this town as well as their relationship if the friends or relatives have left them forever. I am so sorry for all people who are damaged by this disaster.

In the second day of the trip, we worked in the monastery for rebuilding the ground for the monastery. We saw many people visit the shrine to pray for their relatives who have been lost or died by the tsunami. I am so sorry when seeing the tears falling down their faces.

Although after the tsunami, the government had started cleaning up and in most of the affected areas with high speed. However, it is observed that it would take them much more time and investments as this required huge amount of works. I feel respectful to Japanese for their quick recovery after the serious damages. I was thinking about the first period after the 11<sup>th</sup> March, with plenty of difficulties such as broken roads, the spread of radiation, fuel shortages, lack of accommodation and even lack of food, as well as emotional wounds, but until now they have done too much for a recovery of the regions. Japanese must be very strong and brave to pass over many difficulties of the situation for rebuild better life.

In the third day of the trip, we worked at an oyster farm to help the farmer to hang the oyster seed into the ropes for raising oyster in the sea. The activity was so interesting. We had chance to know about oyster farming. In a talk with the fishermen about their experiences when the tsunami come,

it is interesting to know that fishermen in this village are almost can escape from tsunami and can protect well most of the ships during it happens by running the ships back to the ocean. With that experience, they can save around 80% the ships of the village. And, survival hinges is finding higher ground because the sea walls was overrun and there is not much better can be done is to run to the higher places.

When facing with this thinking that earthquake and tsunami as well as other disasters have taken a lot of people's lives and offsets, we must accept it as it is actually a natural event. All we should do now is tell experiences to more people. And for me, I will tell what we did see when try to be helpful for people in Tohoku areas after being hit by big disasters.

I prayed for all people who passed away in earthquake and tsunami start their new life by reincarnated and the people in Tohoku are soon going back to the former happy life.