

# Qing Hai Earthquake

*A sharing from Xin Mei --- a Taiwan volunteer*

Caritas Taiwan has a few programs in the Qing Hai area since 2005, several local volunteers joined our services. There are also volunteers from outside of China, one from Malaysia and two from Taiwan.

Our volunteers were on the spot since the on-set of the Yu Shu earthquake on April 14, 2010.

By April 17 our relief goods were prepared by our volunteers and ready to be sent to Yu Shu. We received reports from them periodically.



*Our long term volunteers from Xining*

A touching story experienced by one of our volunteers, might interest us.

Three of our volunteers left Yu Shu two days before the earthquake happened. They came to Xining in an emergency to help out a poor girl patient who was left by her family in the Gi-Gu hospital. Kon Chen, a Lama, is our volunteer in Yu Shu. Because of his religion, he felt obliged to take care with great compassion of this poor and very sickly girl whose life depended on immediate surgery!

Kon Chen received a telephone call from his sister informing him that their house had been destroyed totally by this strong earthquake in the morning at 6:30 am. By 8:00 am survivors were brought to Sai-Ma-Zhung, Why did it happen in Gi-Gu town

which is Chen's home town!

Accompanied by us Kon Chen immediately hurried to Gi-Gu town.

Fire trucks and Kun An cars were all passing by our car with extra speed! We then realized it must have been a very serious earthquake! We finally arrived Gi-Gu town around 9 pm. It was unbelievable what was in front of our eyes even in the dark night! Houses all flat, people crying and digging to rescue their family members. We got near the house of Kon Chen. I kept asking Kon Chen if he could recognize his house, he kept saying Yes, Yes.....the location was found but all had collapsed! Kon Chen at last found the dog that was waiting for his master's return! Then there was a long long silence, as Kon Chen was praying.

One can't imagine! Two days before kon Chen had left his house in good shape and now all had vanished! My own little work-house also was gone.



*Children washing their salvaged things after the earthquake*

We tried to comfort the victims we met in the dark! Many were wounded and bleeding. We saw a family that had set up a fire and was drinking tea, we went over to ask them why they were not going to a safe place. They replied there were two dead relatives buried under the collapsed house. I had no word to comfort them, it was too sad!

Another family opened their truck, there were two dead sons lying there, another family...another six dead bodies that had scattered and were found!



*Volunteers loading relief goods to be delivered to the disaster area.*

I suddenly realized that the Tibetans are very strong in facing a disaster!

Kon Chen, accompanied by us went to Sai-Ma-Chang where thousands of victims had taken refuge. Kon Chen shouted aloud his relative's names while comforting others, words were useless but having their shoulders touched by a Lama was a blessing.

Kon Chen still did not find his relatives and I could not find my students, we were too tired, and the victims just lied down anywhere on the ground.

Kon Chen found another Lama, Kon Dao. We all went to his house (half collapsed) for a rest! Kon Dao was under this house for more than two hours then he crawled out with nothing, he was still in a state of shock and would not talk. Our water and dry food really helped 10 of his relatives. Kon Chen returned to Sai-Ma-Chong calling and calling .....his relatives name but only some friends were found. It was almost 3 am when we stopped searching, crawling to the car, We were too tired, and went to a sound sleep! Early in the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> Kon Chen and I jumped out of the car and saw the town that was really totally destroyed!

Rescuers arrived. We two continued our journey, we met a school teacher and some students. They were saved.

We met two little brothers holding a quilt, and wrapped with their little sister, they were quiet with sad eyes. At the door of the high school, we heard last night that at least 20 students were buried, and the numbers are increasing. At San-Yuan elementary school a surviving teacher brought us in to a classroom. To my greatest shock, so many little kids were all squizzed together on the ground, a teacher's dead body at their side. Hope their parents would come to claim the bodies, but maybe never!

Kon Chen and I continued our searching, we walked and walked, I really wanted to quit, but I just could not leave Kon Chen alone, we visited nonstop almost all the shelters. I finally asked to rest at the road side.

It came to my mind that Kon Chen's relatives might have gone to his other relatives' house. He looked up and pointed the mountain on the

opposite side; he has a cousin living there! Let's go and find out! I tried my best to stand up and walk



*Our volunteer and Lama Kon Chen.*

to that mountain. We entered the house of his cousin. He told Kon Chen that his whole family was fine with only slight wounds, I was so happy to see Kon Chen's smiling!

The Tibetans, believe that when one is doing merciful work, great fortune should follow. Lama Kon Chen compassionate with his people and with that poor sick girl, he took great care of her with his friend in Xining. He has been blessed.

He is saved and so is his family. I went on to search for my students.....