

# NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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## SPECIAL ISSUE: Gazing at the natural disasters in the South-East Asian Countries

**Being a member of the Christian churches in the Asian countries, NSKK is gazing at people in Asian countries who have been suffering from the consecutive natural disasters, and are seriously considering what we should do for the restoration.**

Standing on the great tsunami-stricken area in Sri Lanka -What is the basic attitude of "Aid"?

Rev. Francis H. Akiba    Kita-Kantoh Diocese

In July 2005, we made an inspection tour to Batticaloa, Eastern Region of Sri Lanka, six months after the great tsunami attack on 26th December 2004. A number of residents have returned to their home place by the seashore where they used to live.

In front of a house, there were a several people getting together. The house itself seemed to have been partially damaged. However, one of the people told me " Here lived a family, father, mother and their 3 children. Although the parents narrowly escaped death, their three children could not escape the tsunami. The parents could hardly endure the loss of their three children, and killed themselves by taking poison; one died and the other was sent to hospital. This happened eight days ago."

Those who gathered were relatives of the tragic parents. Everyone of them has lost someone in his/her family members. A man sitting beside the well said "I want to die. All my family members died, I am the only one survived."

A number of NGOs were building temporary houses. It is understood that clothing, food, and housing are considerably well supported. However, mental care for the bereaved who are overwhelmed with grief have not been fully given. We deeply considered how to do with those people in grief.

Batticaloa is the place where lengthy civil conflict has been continued between two races, Sinhalese and the Tamils, and for the last 20 years, the conflict has become more

and more severe. The hatred between the two races is so deep that there will be almost no possibility of reconciliation. One of the male Tamils told me that he met the current Tsunami attack just after the conflict has become severe. He was attacked by the Sinhali policemen in the midnight as he helped a woman who was about to be violated by Sinhali policemen. Children were killed by hand-grenades; all the survivors have their arms amputated at the upper arms; they did have no compensations at all for these losses. It is reported that a number of such cases have happened every day in this area on both sides.

Presently, Batticaloa is governed by the Sinhalis, and supportive goods from all over the world are kept back by the government, so that the goods have scarcely been distributed to the Tamils. Once we stepped in the area where the Tamils are living, the scenery has suddenly appeared to be dilapidated. A number of refugees from the civil conflicts used to live in small huts covered by palm leaves, but now because of the tsunami attack, these huts were abandoned here and there. Thus, in Sri Lanka, people have already experienced hardships, and there has been a long history of hatred, if not attacked by the Tsunami.

Sri Lanka was once known as a country of tourism, and they basked in the benefit of foreign currency. Sea shores are attractive and there is a treasure of wild animals in the high-land area. Smart hotels for foreign tourists have reconstructed and already commenced business. On the other hand, I heard from a local newspaper staff about pedophilia, that some tourists buy local boys and girls for sexual relation. Poverty makes young children scape-goats. It was reported shockingly that the youngest one was only 5-years old. Sri Lanka as well as Thailand and Cambodia is said to be famous for pedophilic industry. Tourism accompanied with pedophilia has caused destruction of families and community in this country.

It is needless to say that emergency aid for the tsunami damage is imperative. However, I must say that a long-term sustainable financial support as well as reconstruction project are the immediate needs for this country. The important thing is that the project would require not only financial support but also personal resources. We would send proper personnel to the place in trouble, who should live there with the villagers, and discuss with them what are the immediate necessity. Listening carefully to their real voices, we, as a donor, will decide the best way to support them.

I would like to suggest that church-to-church or diocese-to-diocese financial aids, which we have so far practiced, are not appropriate. We have to establish a new means of aids, that is, the emergency aids must be organized in a face-to-face relationship. In such countries as Sri Lanka where a number of problems exist in layers and tangled, new way and form of aid are imperative. Otherwise, we cannot establish a true relationship with this country.

In order to make our church activated, we have to reach out a helping hand to Sri Lanka through face-to-face relationship and seek for a new way how to live together with them on the same face of the earth.

## Sri (Shining) Lanka (Island) Now

### Visiting the site of the Tsunami and an internal warfare

Michiko Kikawada, Layperson of Tanabe Anglican Church

In July of 2005, 6 months after the Indian Ocean Tsunami I had An opportunity to visit Sri Lanka as a member sent from NSKK. The purpose was a factfinding mission to determine the damage of the Tsunami. The trip was sponsored by CCA. It takes about 8 hours by airplane to Sri Lanka from Japan.

We visited about halfway around the coast of the country of Sri Lanka within 9 days. In Telwatta, a town located in the southern part, 2000 people were swept away by the Tsunami as well as whole trains. While we were near the railroad, local women came to us. One of these women showed us a stack of pictures and albums. She pointed to them and started talking /€ This is my husband, this is his daughter just after she was married. € ✕ This is our son who just got back from the work away from home.€ ✕ This is our neighbor //€ She spoke English and looked to be a leader of the community. She talked and talked in an accusing tone and I felt her anger in her talk. The sympathy money which should be payed monthly from the government has ceased and those who beg has been increasing.

When we visited the eastern area, we heard the Tamil tribe, a minority in this country, complaining, ✕ The government does nothing for us.€

There were enormous NGO groups helping Tsunami casualties, but they did not build a closer connection with local people. Also the connection among NGO groups was unsatisfactory. This we heard from local people.

In southern community near Tangalla, a temple was the center of all functions for the community. But most of the temple had been flooded and precious Buddhistic sutras even priests 1 vestments, were lost. It was being rebuilt when we visited there.

I learned that the area had been very active concerning human rights. It has an ecumenical organization with all Christians, as well as Muslims and sisters of Anglican Communion. They had started before the Tsunami attack and continue to cooperate to restore the community. ✕ They are our future.€ One of the tour members told me. I really agreed.

We passed through many check points. As we came closer to the base of LTTE (Separation and Independence Movement of Tamil tribe) located in the northern part, the check point was on a grand scale like a fort. Even in the downtown of Colombo, all soldiers with guns were patrolling in the dark and that made us so nervous.

During the tour, we met a trading company employee from Japan. He was checking the damaged roads and bridges to get a business opportunity sponsored by the Official Development Assistance of the Japanese Government. After we met him we moved to the western part of the country where a shrimp farming place was located. We realized that more greedy businesses existed there.

People had changed the huge mangrove forest into the shrimp farming pond for the purpose of paying back the national debts. But because of shrimp diseases, the effect of chemical substances and salt damages, shrimp farming was ended unsuccessfully. Only barren land that grew no grass and a ghost town were left. If the mangrove forest could remain, it would contain good fishing spots, but now it has become a huge barren land where the people cannot even get their drinking water.

It takes enormous cost and time to restore the lost nature to its original form. The cost is higher than destroying it. Those who wanted the shrimp were Japanese, ourselves. We had nothing to do with these changes of farming ponds directly. However, the people of this country already had the debts and they were further burdened with negative assets. I couldn't contain myself for thinking about it.

The economy of this country has been supported by assistance from foreign countries, migrant workers, plantation farmers, the clothing industry and the cheap workforce. The development of tourism brought many problems including sex business with even children. The Tsunami created additional causes for these circumstances. Are we standing on the people's side of Sri Lanka or are we on the exploited class side? The response is obvious. The Tsunami was a real disaster. If the so-called developed countries including Japan (Japan has been partly a bearer of the world riches) do not change their way of thinking and their structures for assistance, the severe circumstances of Sri Lanka will never fundamentally change.

Sri (shining) Lanka (island) is literally a beautiful and fascinating country. By helping this country become self-sufficient, we have to learn so many realities. All that I experienced through this tour.

## Medical Activity by St. Luke's International Hospital in Northern Pakistan

Secretary of PIM, in NSKK     Shinya Samuel Yawata

I accompanied medical teams of St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo to offer a medical assistance in a tent village which is located near Balakot of northern Pakistan between November 18, 2005 through December 5. The area was hit by earthquake on October 8, 2005 and its damage is very severe. Balakot is located about 150 Km north of Pakistan's Capital, Islamabad and it is a beautiful town in mountain area. Temperature difference between night and day is very large because of high altitude of about 1300m. During day time it was comfortable with just wearing T-shirt but there was a frost in night time.

The place where the teams engaged in medical activity is a temporary shelter of a tent village which is located 10 Km south of Balakot. The village has 180 tents and its population is roughly 1300. It is one of the larger tent villages in the area.

Refugees of the quake in the area have come to the village after losing their homes. They are given all necessary items for daily life such as sleeping mats and blankets, clothes, foods (flour, rice, cooking oil, etc), and cooking utensils upon arrival. Pakistan Army is in charge of security and management of the village. Bread-like things are given at each meal, so necessity for their daily life is basically available free of charge. In each tent there are 5 to 10 people of the same family.

Right after the quake needs for emergency medical treatment were plentiful. But when our teams arrived at the scene 6 weeks after the quake the situation had settled and we had about 30 patients daily on an average. Most symptoms are normal cold and problems with respiratory organs, and some people needed aftercare for wounds and broken bones.

We visited the town of Balakot which has been severely damaged. There might have been lots of multi-level buildings before the quake but almost all buildings have been

destroyed. Positive side is that people have already started shops and stores right next to damaged structures; grocery store, fruits stands, souvenir shops, etc. I was amazed and pleased with these signs of strong desire for survival.

We went to visit a mountain village as well. We rode a battered old four wheel driven jeep through very narrow mountain terrain to get there. There are about 60 families in the village. All structures have been completely destroyed, and all families were living in a temporary shelter. This village has been supported by the diocese of Pashawar immediately after the quake, and the person in charge of this operation was worrying about how they could survive through the cold winter.

In addition to medical support these people need support for daily needs such as secured water supply, security for health and hygiene, education for children. In order to materialize these requirements human resources such as specialist for well drilling, medical staffs ( both doctors and nurses), and monetary resources are needed. This means that we need to look into a longer term support.

I was very impressed with highly motivated and dedicated young professionals of St. Luke 1 s International Hospital. It was very fortunate for me to work with these professionals and it was very worthy experience.

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Members of the English Version of NSKK Newsletter, Spring 2006 are: as follows:

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