



Dialogue
Creating the Next 60 Years

Project Report

June 22th-24th, 2014

ICU 60th Anniversary Project – Fukushima Prefecture Field Trip



60th Anniversary Project
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



Dialogue

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The ICU 60th Anniversary Project – Fukushima Prefecture Field Trip took place June 22-24, 2014. There were a total of nine participants, including two undergraduate students, one graduate student, four international students, one faculty member, and one assistant. We visited Iwaki City on June 22 and Fukushima City on June 23 and June 24.

On June 22, thanks to the kindness of local volunteer Mr. Koichi Yaginuma, we received the opportunity to visit Iwaki City, with a focus on coastal areas such as Onahama Port. Onahama Port was heavily damaged by the tsunami, and there were places undergoing construction.

Afterwards, we passed through the Toyoma section and proceeded to the Usuiso section, where we listened to Mr. Keiichi Ootani, a storyteller in Usuiso, speak about the tsunami. At the time of the earthquake, the Usuiso section was hit by a tsunami eight to nine meters tall, and this area had the greatest tsunami damage within Iwaki City. Mr. Ootani not only shared his personal experiences on March 11, but also pointed out difficulties confronting settlements in Japan, such as a dwindling population and lack of employment in the region, difficulties that the Usuiso section had been confronting even before the tsunami.

After the talk, we toured areas damaged by the tsunami, such as the Yotsukura section and the Hisanohama section. In the Hisanohama section, those whose shops had been damaged by the tsunami were doing business in the makeshift shopping area consisting of prefabricated structures adjoining Hisanohama Elementary School. The Hisanohama section is an area where damages were magnified due to fires that erupted following the earthquake. We were able to view photos of that time and listen to the tales of the shop owners.

Next, we proceeded to Futaba County and mainly visited sites affected by radioactive leaks resulting from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. Hirono Town in Futaba County, to which we first went, is an area where all of the residents evacuated after the nuclear accident. Though the Emergency Evacuation Preparation Area designation was lifted in September 2013, residents still have not returned. Then we headed toward J-Village in Naraha Town, also in Futaba County. J-Village was a national training center for soccer, but after the nuclear accident, it became Tokyo

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Electric Power Company' s local administrative office and is on the front line of efforts to de-escalate the accident. Security guards were deployed, and it was not possible to look inside.

After passing through J-Village, we toured Naraha Town. Since this region is still designated as an Area Preparing to Lift Evacuation Restrictions, the evacuation of all residents is ongoing. Within its boundaries is Fukushima Daini Nuclear Power Station, which is currently not in operation. We also toured the Namikura section, which has become a temporary site for collecting trash generated following decontamination. There was a huge amount of trash in black bags, likely numbering over several hundred.

Going further north, we headed toward Tomioka Town in Futaba County. Since all of the residents of this region are still unable to return, damage caused the tsunami at the time of the earthquake remained untouched. Houses and shops were smashed, and the station building of the nearby JR Jōban Line Iwaki Tomioka Station was also completely destroyed by the tsunami. While returning to Iwaki City and heading toward the place of accommodation, we passed through an area near the temporary housing inhabited by evacuees from Hirono Town and Naraha Town, located in the Chūōdai section of Iwaki City.

On June 23, we left Iwaki City and headed to Fukushima City. First, we paid a courtesy call on Center Director Kuboki of the Mikawadai Learning Center. Mikawadai Learning Center is one of sixteen learning centers operated by Fukushima City and serves as a center of intraregional exchange, for example by holding various courses. We heard from Center Director Kuboki about Fukushima City' s current reality, including the evacuee situation and decontamination. Students asked questions such as the role of the learning center at the time of the earthquake and what conditions can be said to be the goal of de-escalation of the nuclear accident.

In the afternoon, we went to Shin Fukushima Agricultural Cooperative (JA Shin Fukushima) and heard a lecture by Mr. Fumiharu Konno of the Crisis Management Center. JA Shin Fukushima is an agricultural cooperative covering Fukushima City and Kawamata Town. Mr. Konno mainly spoke about efforts to ensure food safety following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. For each producer and for each item (231 items), JA Shin Fukushima monitors radiation levels. Specifically, it measures the amount of gamma radiation using two types of equipment, a simple

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analyzer and a precise analyzer. Following the lecture, we were also permitted to view the site where gamma radiation is actually measured, and we received explanations of more detailed monitoring methods and monitoring equipment at the JA monitoring center.

Afterwards, we listened to the story of Mr. Momiyama, a farmer who manages a fruit farm. Mr. Momiyama not only sells agricultural products through the JA, but also sells to individuals. While seeing the actual apple orchards, we were able to hear an account given from the producers' standpoint, which mentioned additional costs that must be borne due to radiation monitoring, etc. and consumers who drew away after the accident, among others. On the 23rd, we stayed at Fukushima City' s Social Education Building Kobushisō.

During the morning of June 24, we observed the decontamination of Kawamata Town and the Yamakiya section under the guidance of Mr. Konno. In this section, 3,000 workers (including relief squad members and drivers) are working towards decontamination every day, and it was possible to see many workers in action. We learned that in Kawamata Town and the Yamakiya section, all agricultural products other than persimmons are subject to shipping restrictions. After viewing the decontamination activities, we disbanded at Fukushima Station, and the program concluded.

In order to learn about the current reality three years after the earthquake and to think about what we can do together with the devastated areas, this field trip was conducted with food safety, an issue that can be said to most closely affect our lives, as the theme. Though the tour of inspection was limited to two nights and three days, we, particularly the students from abroad, were able to receive many learning opportunities from Fukushima' s current reality, to which it would have been difficult to be exposed without such a program as this. Similarly, it can be said that the trip proved to an opportunity for much thought, learning, and dialogue for ICU students living in Tokyo. While listening to various talks, the problem of lack of interest in the devastated areas on the part of those living in the Tokyo metropolitan area, which has become more obvious with the passage of time, was pointed out several times. By actually seeing with their own eyes, walking, and listening to stories, the students were able to consider the current reality of the devastated areas as their own problem. Given ICU' s course format, which emphasizes dialogue, this field trip can be said to have provided a meaningful learning opportunity, not only

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to the students who participated, but also to other ICU students who will likely share the experiences of the participants, and even to those beyond ICU in view of the large number of international students who participated. As was understood this time, reconstruction following an unprecedented earthquake and nuclear accident is not completed in several years. Similarly, it can be said that the issue going forward is how to continue activities such as this field trip and not let them become one-time events.

Students Report

http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/anniv60/en/events/2014/0622students_report.pdf