

## “March 11th”

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\*DMAT: Disaster Medical Assistance Team

(English Translation by Red Cross Nuclear Disaster Resource Center)

~~~ Indeed, I'm in the middle of disaster right now ~~~

I was at home when the earthquake occurred. After confirming my family was safe, I headed to the hospital. Then I was dispatched as a member of the Fukushima Red Cross Hospital DMAT to the Minamisoma City Hospital, and we transported a patient in emergency, who was drowned by the tsunami, to the Fukushima Medical University Hospital. After overcoming all sorts of accidents, we managed to save her life. It was the night I felt the longest in my life.

March 11th came right after I was working the night shift. Incidentally a welcome and farewell party for the ward staff was scheduled that day. After saying “See you later” to the folks in the parking lot, I went home and took a nap till around 2 o'clock in the afternoon. When I woke up I saw my mother, sister, niece and nephew in the living room. All of a sudden the emergency earthquake alert went off then the earthquake started. I thought it would calm down soon, but on the contrary the quake became bigger and bigger, and it lasted a long time. I felt danger being in the house so I went outside. I was frightened by the glass windows shaking and making loud noises, telephone poles shaking, power lines waving, and roof tiles falling down. I stayed outside till the quake calmed down. After confirming that my family was safe, I headed to the hospital. On my way, an e-mail arrived saying that “DMAT members were to gather at the Fukushima Medical University Hospital”. The roads were jammed and Route 4 was closed so it took an hour to get to the hospital. When I arrived at the emergency room, the dispatch of the DMAT had already been decided. I changed into my relief uniform in the dark Infection Ward with a flashlight. “Indeed, I'm in the middle of disaster right now,” I thought.

In the heavy traffic jam our ambulance managed to move through the gaps between the cars, with the siren wailing, and arrived at the Fukushima University Hospital. Per the request for support from the Minamisoma City Hospital, we headed there at around 10 o'clock in the evening after stopping by our hospital to get the necessary equipment. It was snowing on our way and the road was covered with the compacted snow. We drove through the mountain roads with the siren wailing and finally arrived at the Minamisoma City Hospital around the midnight.

After the meeting with the hospital staff we were to transport an unidentified, drowned patient to the Fukushima Medical University Hospital. In the ambulance I held the intravenous feeding stand with my feet while taking the blood pressure, doing suction treatment, and filling out the triage tag. On our way we overcame multiple problems including a nearly empty oxygen cylinder, adjusting the transfusion and the vasoconstrictor agent to recover the nearly dangerous blood pressure measurements, all the while taking a detour to escape a traffic jam. After two hours while using the resuscitation bag, we finally arrived at the Fukushima Medical University Hospital. When we got there, I was relieved to see the bright and well lit emergency room, the existence of the medical equipment and the medical staff. We managed to keep the patient alive and we were able to hand the patient over to them. After that we headed back to

the Minamisoma City Hospital.

Even today I can clearly remember what I had gone through and what happened on March 11th. I felt it was the longest night in my life.