

# บันทึก การช่วยเหลือน้ำท่วมกรุงเทพมหานคร ของ Isaac Ahmad ( ชาวสิงคโปร์ ) ร่วมเดินทางไปกับโรงเรียน

## กววิชาชนวรรณ

The effort started after I completed the last work near Nonthaburi. I immediately shared my experience and pictures with friends and asked for donation for the next relief work which was scheduled to be sometime end of the week. I am glad I have friends who do care enough to donate cash to help the affected flood victims. Special thanks to all who donated and to Pauline Chung for being my coordinator in Singapore to collect the donations and deposited it to my account. I was pleased I could raised 21,000 Baht in less than a week. The amount may be small in SG dollars but it is a HUGE addition to help more people.

My trip started early this time. I met up with the group on Thursday evening so we can get to Ratchaburi, where Colonel Pong's school is located, and spent the night there. Along the way, it was an intensive immersion into Thai culture with my new found friends. I was also introduced to eating curded chicken blood which tasted no different than tofu.

The entourage reached the school past midnight and as it was already late of my usual bed time, I changed and headed to bed early. The next morning I asked the rest what time they went to bed; some slept at 3am and some at 4am. Yet, they could still woke up at 8 plus and 2 of them had to drive to Bangkok to pick up another batch of volunteers. I admired their dedication.

I stayed at the school and had breakfast with the rest. First time, I really had rice for breakfast (of course besides those time in SG when I ate nasi lemak in the morning). After that, I handed over the donations I received from my friends. It was just a simple handing over but Colonel Pong insisted we took photo and it was really something. I wish I could have collected more cash.

We got ready and boarded the 6-wheeler truck already filled 3/4 of its space with drinking water and food. However, the truck needed to be repaired so we waited and spent some time at the school. Once it was ready, we headed to Makro to buy medicines and more food for the flood victims.

Makro is probably like Carrefour where people buy things in bulk. The price I assumed was wholesale. We got two trolleys, filled it with medicines from paracetamol, calamine lotion and other food stuff to ensure we have things for every people from young to old. After we paid, the security guard verified the items on the trolleys with the receipts to ensure we didn't pocket anything. Totally new experience.

This time round we headed to Pet Kasem. The water from north has already flowed downwards. The roads were just crazy, one side was flooded while the others was not... The 6-wheeler truck treaded it's way slowly through the flood water. We stopped around Phutthamonthon Sai 4 under a flyover waiting for the group from Bangkok to join us. During this time, I see how lovely the people are despite the flood. Everyone was merely helping one another. Someone was controlling the traffic, asking the vehicles if they could take the people to the place they want to head to. Everything was just in peace and order. I wonder if such thing happened in Singapore, would people ever be so nice to one another or do they just care for themselves? You cannot explained the experience as it is all beyond words. Once the group arrived, we continued our journey, along the way, stopped by to pass drinking water and food to people who requested from us.

We unloaded majority of the supplies at a Thai Army who was based in South East Asia University, I think it was located along Pet Kasem Road. Though the plan differed from last week, I am sure, all these supplies will be put to good use and not be misappropriated. Even after unloading majority of the supplies, we still have plenty of drinking water and food left. So here was where the experience began. Along the road, we became a vehicle not only providing drinking water and food but also a shuttle vehicle for people who were headed to destinations along our path.

We found a soi which was seemed impassable by normal vehicle. The 6-wheeler truck was filled with strangers who needed a lift to their houses along that soi and I felt that these people are just ordinary happy people despite the disaster that struck them.

We stopped somewhere along that soi where there was no water on the road and started our distribution of drinking water, food and other stuff. Despite all the distribution, we still have more supplies left. And we treaded back to the main road, and along the way, ferried more people. By the road, we handed out more food and drinks. We made a U-turn and continued to gave out the food and drinks to whoever needed it. We even passed the food and drinks to people on board buses, trucks and lorries. The last batch of drinking water was loaded on a boat where it was sent to those who lived along that soi and where the houses were flooded.

The latter group from Bangkok departed when we reached the same meeting point earlier while the rest of us continued on our relief effort which was now merely providing shuttle service. At one point, there was this guy who boarded the truck which his dog and duck. He was saving his pets. How noble his thoughts.

It got very crazy as the sky turned dark. The road got flooded with more water and vehicles were finding ways and means to escape from that hazard. The rest of us on the truck became victims to mosquitoes who attacked us like as if we were enemies. It was obvious when everyone started twitching and scratching. Somehow, we managed to get out of the mess, and continue to provide shuttle service to people. The last group on board the truck was a family of 3, a pregnant lady, a young girl and a boy. I think they were figuring out where is the best place for them to take refuge from the flood. I think they managed to decide where they wanted to dropped off.

Once that is all done, the rest of the volunteers are treated to a dinner by Colonel Pong. It was nothing exaggerated, just a simple hotpot dinner but I can see that all of them enjoyed themselves despite the simplicity.

We headed back to the school and realised that we had to spend another night there. I did not have any issue. I washed up and scrubbed my legs as I have stepped into the murky flood water earlier. I guess I was just paranoid. Then, I applied Dettol antiseptic lotion and headed to bed. Tried to sleep but was thinking about the entire experience. I felt so humbled about the day experience.

The next day, I was woken up early. We left the school and made our way back to Bangkok. Along the way, we stopped somewhere for breakfast. I am deeply grateful to the group for paying close attention to my dietary requirement, NO PORK. It showed how much they appreciate my company though most of the time I could not really comprehend their conversation.

They went to watch a movie together to keep the bond going and headed to Chiangmai that Saturday night. I was invited to join but I had to decline as I had other things I needed to do, one of which is to write this note.

As I am about to end this note, I am happy for what I have done so far. Last Friday, marked my one month i was in this country after I left the tiny island called Singapore. I do not have any regrets for making this move and I sure my purpose here was all planned by GOD. If HE really wanted me to leave and head back to SG, I am sure he would have his ways but instead he has showed me the way to help others.

I wish I could do more but for now, school has opened today and I wish I could just pick up the language faster so that I can be a useful human being.

Even though nobody has yet granted me an interview or given my resume a close review, I am sure GOD has his ways. I believe I am destined to be here and I will stay put until I am no longer wanted.

Until then, one last word to all my friends, "***SEEK HAPPINESS COS THAT IS ALL YOU NEED TO STAY ALIVE. EVERYTHING AND NOTHING ELSE MATTER COS MONEY COULD NEVER BUY YOU THE HAPPINESS YOU WANT.***"

Take care everyone and may you be protected by your GOD.





















