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Topic: A Letter

Subject: Re: A Letter

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Japanese boy teaches lesson in sacrifice

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EDITOR'S note:

THIS letter, written by Vietnamese immigrant Ha Minh Thanh working in Fukushima as a policeman, and written to a friend in Vietnam, was posted on New America Media on March 19. It is a testimonial to the strength of the Japanese spirit, and an interesting slice of life near the epicenter of Japan's crisis at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. It was translated by NAM editor Andrew Lam, author of "East Eats West: Writing in Two Hemispheres." Shanghai Daily condensed it.

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Thanh(â¿—æ~Ž)ĩ¼Œç•Œä»—âœç!•â³Œæ""ä»»è-!â~ÿâ••¥ä½œæ™,ĩ¼Œä«çµ!ä,€â€(âœ"èŒŠâ••—æœ(â••çš,,ä¿¿ĩ¼Œä,!â"šç™)âœ"03æœ^19æ—¥çš,,æ-°ç¾Žâœ(âª'é«"ä,šã€€é€™æ™~ä,€â€(è-%æ~Žæ—¥æœ-ç²¾ç¥žçš,,â"lâ¾¼(ĩ¼Œä)¥â••šæ—¥æœ-éœ†âœ@ĩ¼Œç!•â³Œæ,é)»â»â••±æ©ÿé™,,è¿¿çš,,ä,€â€(é¥'é™,,æ,,ç¾ççš,,ç"ÿæ'»ç%œ†æ-

NAMç•"è¼Andrew Lamç¿»è-âœ"ä,šæµ.æ—¥â±çš,,ç°jè-æ-†

Brother, â...â¼ÿĩ¼Œ

How are you and your family? These last few days, everything was in chaos. When I close my eyes, I see dead bodies. When I open my eyes, I also see dead bodies.

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Each one of us must work 20 hours a day, yet I wish there were 48 hours in the day, so that we could continue helping and rescuing folks.

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We are without water and electricity, and food rations are near zero. We barely manage to move refugees before there are new orders to move them elsewhere.

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ã€,

The boy was shivering so I took off my police jacket and put it on him. That's when my bag of food ration fell out. I picked it up and gave it to him. "When it comes to your turn, they might run out of food. So here's my portion. I already ate. Why don't you eat it?"

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The boy took my food and bowed. I thought he would eat it right away, but he didn't. He took the bag of food, went up to where the line ended and put it where all the food was waiting to be distributed.

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I was shocked. I asked him why he didn't eat it and instead added it to the food pile. He answered: "Because I see a lot more people hungrier than I am. If I put it there, then they will distribute the food equally."

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When I heard that I turned away so that people wouldn't see me cry.

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A society that can produce a 9-year-old who understands the concept of sacrifice for the greater good must be a great society, a great people.

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Well, a few lines to send you and your family my warm wishes. The hours of my shift have begun again.

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Ha Minh Thanh