

Volunteers Give Relief Goods After Myanmar Earthquake

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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[Tzu Chi holds distribution after Myanmar earthquake](#)

On April 4, volunteers distributed relief goods at two Buddhist temples in northeast Myanmar to survivors of a powerful earthquake that struck the area two weeks before. It was an emotional experience for both volunteers and recipients.

The quake, measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale, struck an area of northeast Myanmar at 8.25 p.m. on March 24. Its epicenter was an area close to the border with China, about 80 miles from the northern Thai city of Chiang Rai. It was very powerful, killed 75 people, injuring over 100 and causing the collapse of many buildings, including Buddhist monasteries and government offices. On March 30, after obtaining the permission of the Myanmar government, a group of six volunteers from Malaysia and Myanmar entered the stricken area of Tachilek to conduct a survey. Tzu Chi was the first foreign NGO to be allowed in. Escorted by a military officer, the volunteers went from village to village, noting the details of each household. They found the residents huddled in tents, after their homes had been reduced to rubble or had become too dangerous to stay in. Too afraid to go back to home, whole families were sleeping in temporary shelters. Through an interpreter, the volunteers visited each family to understand their most pressing needs. Knowing that somebody cared for them, one woman was moved to tears and was comforted by a hug from the volunteers. The volunteers drew up a name list for the distribution. Communications were down in the disaster area, but the volunteers worked hard to overcome every obstacle to provide the supplies badly needed by the survivors.



During the daytime, they have enough to eat but need additional items. As a result of the earthquake, there is nowhere to buy supplies. So the volunteers decided to cross the Thai border to the nearby town of Mae Sai, to buy mosquito nets, buckets, clothes and other items. It was not easy to obtain all the approvals necessary from the military and civilian authorities for the entry of the volunteers and the goods they bought. But patience won the day and they were finally able to deliver the items.

They carried out the distribution in two Buddhist temples in Dar Lay city. They divided the recipients into three categories. The first were those who had lost family members, the second those who had lost their homes and had nowhere to live and the third whose homes were damaged but still habitable. All three groups received the same goods, including straw mats, oil, table salt, mosquito nets, water buckets, soap and sarees. In addition, those in the first category received 100,000 Myanmar kyats, canvas and eco blankets and those in the second category received 50,000 kyats and eco blankets, Those in the third category received 20,000 kyats.

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[http://www.tzuchi.org/eng/2011/04/18/11041801.htm](#)