

Tzu Chi Completes Secondary School in Myanmar

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Tzu Chi Foundation handed to the government of Myanmar a secondary school in Rangoon with places for nearly 1,000 children, the latest in a series of gifts to the people of that country since they were struck by Cyclone Nargis in May 2008.

The handover ceremony took place on March 6, at the No.4 Basic Education Middle School, Thingangyun Township, attended by representatives of the government, the foundation and teachers, parents and students of the school. Construction of the school, with 24 classrooms, began on November 2008 and part of it opened to students in June 2009.



Volunteer Wang Mingde said that the school buildings were very secure. “We are very happy to see the opening of the school and to hand it over successfully to the Myanmar Ministry of Education.” A lieutenant-general of the Myanmar Ministry of Defense said that, on seeing the three-story building, he was sure that the children would be able to study peacefully. “We owe a great debt of gratitude to Tzu Chi and Master Cheng Yen.”

Student Thet Aung Kant said that he was happiest in the courtyard on the third floor: “from there, I can see the beautiful scenery and I can see the golden pagoda in the city.” The site contains a primary and a secondary school. In the future, it may be upgraded to a senior high school.

The cyclone destroyed thousands of buildings, including many schools. As a result, students had to attend classes in makeshift shelters, such as tents or wooden shacks; sometimes, there were hundreds of children in a single room, listening to different teachers. The new school is spacious and well ventilated and has been built to withstand the typhoons and cyclones that regularly hit the country.



It was Cyclone Nargis that brought Tzu Chi to Myanmar. It was the worst natural disaster in Myanmar’s history. It landed on May 2, 2008, killed more than 138,000 people and caused widespread devastation in the Irrawaddy delta, the country’s rice bowl. Tzu Chi volunteers were among the first foreign NGOs to reach the disaster area. A team from Thailand, Malaysia and Taiwan arrived there on May 10 and set up a reception centre in Shwebaukan, on the outskirts of Rangoon, where they distributed relief goods to 250 families. The foundation has maintained a presence in the country ever since, staffed by volunteers from abroad as well as those recruited locally. They have distributed food, clothes and blankets and held free medical clinics.

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In one such clinic, from July 10-12, 2008, they provided free medical care to 2,142 people. They also aided the farmers of the affected region, with seeds and fertilizer. Last year, the harvest in the delta was good; as a gesture of thanks, some farmers donated rice to the foundation, for distribution to the poor. In November 2008, the foundation started work on a Great Love Village, which will be home to 744 families.

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