

## Tzu Chi Hands Over 22 Permanent Homes to Typhoon Survivors

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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On October 3, 2015, the Tzu Chi Foundation handed over 22 permanent homes in Pingtung County, Taiwan to members of the Laiyi tribe who were survivors of Typhoon Fanapi in September 2010. In total, 96 people were delighted to move into their new homes which offer them protection against earthquakes and typhoons.

### **Typhoon Fanapi devastates homes**

They lived in Laiyi village in Pingtung on the southern tip of Taiwan. It was first hit by Typhoon Morakot in August 2009. Then, 13 months later, came Typhoon Fanapi which brought heavy rain and caused rocks on the mountain to fall and damage their village. The Pingtung government made an assessment and declared that these natural disasters had greatly damaged the land and made it unstable. The villagers realized the situation and applied for permanent housing. However, it was already past the deadline set by the government when they applied.

Concerned for their safety, the Pingtung government decided to support the decision to relocate the Laiyi tribe to safe land. The government again asked the Tzu Chi Foundation to assist in building 22 permanent houses, the third phase of a construction project for the tribe. It had completed 58 units in the second phase of permanent housing project in January 2012. In this third phase, the handover was held at 10 a.m. on October 3 in New Laiyi Village. In attendance were Mr. Tseng Chih-Yung, director of Indigenous Peoples Department, Tzu Chi volunteers and over 200 residents of the new village. They joined together to witness this historic moment, a moment of Great Love.

### **Celebration for accomplishment of new homes**

Village head Dou Wang-Yi, County Council member Pan Cheng-I and other guests also took part, to celebrate the completion of the new homes. Mr. Dou expressed his gratitude to this Great Love from around the world that has enabled the villagers to have a safe home. "The Laiyi is a strong tribe and famous for its aboriginal handicrafts," he said. "They will work even harder to show everyone the beauty of their handicrafts." he said.

Mr. Tseng said that it was good to have a safe new home. "I believe that the 96 people will bring a new strength to the New Laiyi Village." he said. "I want to pay special thanks to the Tzu Chi volunteers for their selfless love and energy to work for everyone, regardless of their race or origin. Thanks to them, the third phase of construction has been completed."

The distinctive feature of the new homes is their safety, enabling them to resist high winds and earthquakes. There are three designs for families of different sizes. The largest has 119 square meters for six to ten people: then 106 square meters for three to five people and 46 square meters for one to two people. To celebrate the happy day, the Tzu Chi volunteers also prepared

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kitchenware and other items as gifts.



The handover ceremony began with a dance set to traditional music performed by elders of the village. Tzu Chi volunteer Hsu Tsai-Yun read a letter from Master Cheng Yen: "The true treasure of Taiwan is the love and kindness of its people. I am grateful that the government and the residents of Laiyi trusted Tzu Chi. Today we see that the residents can settle here and begin their new lives. I believe that, if they work hard and love their fellow villagers, a bright future is waiting for them."

Before the devastating typhoons, the Laiyi lived on the mountains; their village was a famous tourist site. They have brought their aboriginal culture and beliefs to their new home and hope to attract tourist with their handicrafts.

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