

Myanmar Farmer Uses Prayer, No Pesticide for Bumper Harvest

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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A farmer in central Myanmar who received seeds from the foundation prayed each day to his crop and abstained from pesticide -- and achieved a bumper harvest. He also decided to give a portion of the crop to help poorer people, even though he has barely enough for his own family.

U Thein Tun is a farmer in a village in Thanlyin township, in Yangon province. He was one of the recipients of 22,898 sacks of rice seeds which volunteers distributed in 13 villages in the area in May, before the start of the rainy season. As he planted the seeds, U Thein Tun took to heart the principles of Tzu Chi and decided not to use pesticide, because this would involve the taking of life. Every day he went to his field and prayed for a good harvest and for hungry people in the world to be fed. "According to the principles of the Master, I constantly spoke with kindness to the seeds. My neighbours advised me to use pesticide but this would kill pests, which is against the principle of benevolence. After this, I did not see any pests and the rice stems got back a deep green colour. This year I had a bumper harvest. Each mu produced 60 bamboo baskets of rice, more than double that of last year."



On November 24, five volunteers went to the village and called on U Thein Tun. He told them he was very satisfied with this year's harvest and that he wished to donate six bags of rice to feed people poorer than himself. The volunteers asked him if this would leave him with enough to feed himself and his family. "That is no problem," he said. "My harvest this year was much larger than last year. Even though I have barely a surplus, I am determined to donate to those poorer than I." Each day, before he cooks a meal, he takes a handful of rice and stores the rice in a container. The container will later be donated to more needy people.

The volunteers brought with them tarpaulins printed with the foundation's logo; they can be used to dry rice in the sun or as a protection against the rain. U Thein Tun said that he would only use his tarpaulin on the roof of the house: "I cannot put it on the ground where people would trample on it. That would be disrespectful to the foundation." Volunteers explained that Master Cheng Yen would want the sheet to be put into good use. U Thein Tun also said: "I hope that the seeds you gave me will produce more crops to help other Burmese farmers out of poverty."

Let us hope that other farmers will follow his example – in speaking kind words and doing good deeds, they will create a strength that will lead to a bumper harvest!