

Typhoon Fanapi and Typhoon Megi Struck Taiwan

In September of 2010, Typhoon Fanapi, battering Taiwan with a record-breaking rainfall of over 600 millimeters within 6 hours, resulted in more than 8 thousand flood cases, affecting 23 townships. The typhoon led to urban floodings in the southern part of the island and caused some casualties. Following the destructive disaster was the even more devastating one--- Typhoon Megi. With torrential rain of 182 mm/ hr., Typhoon Megi triggered a severe landslide along the east coast, resulting in several people on the road buried alive.

The typhoons had disturbed the society and certainly drawn reflection over the disaster response system. The occurrence of Typhoon Fanapi brought up an important concept: there's always uncertainty in every predictive measure. Flooding took place in southern Taiwan in no time, so how people reacted to such extreme case was crucial. Taking Lai-yi Village in Ping-tung County as an example, zero casualty shall be attributed to early evacuation. Such disaster response could only be well carried out on two premises: when it's conducted during daytime and without obstacles in the traffic. In this case, emergency responders and evacuees had shown great collaboration when dealing with the triggered disaster as well as assuring the safety of everyone involved.

On approaching the island, Typhoon Megi, originally predicted as a torrential rain, underwent an unexpected change to a strong typhoon. Warnings sent out by the emergency responders didn't stop some eager tourists from heading towards the beautiful scenic spots along the east coast, and they didn't realize that it was a mistake to take the Suao-Hualian highway until it collapsed. The typhoon brought about torrential rain, which battered the slope land along the coast, and the tourist bus ended up buried in the mud.

Whether the commoners could well perceive the early warnings released by the emergency responders significantly influenced the efficiency of emergency responses. In the case of Typhoon Megi, people took the hazardous road with having been informed of the danger and eventually fell victims to the devastating disaster. This is a typical example over which we could reflect on the "knowledge gap" between emergency responders and the commoners when a disaster takes place. While the disaster resilience keeps on, people have been reexamining the communication between the two with a view to raising sensibility to emergencies among common citizens, which would hopefully enhance the efficiency of emergency responses.