

TZU CHI USA JOURNAL

Compassion on the Streets p. 08

Responding with Love after the Taiwan Earthquake p. 23

Looking Back on Tzu Chi's First Fifty Years p. 28

Filmmaker Babeth VanLoo on Broadcasting Buddhism p. 35





DHARMA MASTER CHENG YEN
FOUNDER OF
TZU CHI FOUNDATION

CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

thoughts for meditation, contemplation, and reflection from Master Cheng Yen

Being Calm and Collected

Life is filled with troubles; truth and illusions are all mixed up.
The more we take issue over things, the more afflictions we have;
the more attached we are to things, the more anxious we become.
If we see everything calmly and aim ourselves in the proper direction,
we will feel settled and collected with a great sense of peace.

Translated by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team



Volunteers provide compassionate care to the homeless with hot meals, winter clothing, and more.

Photo: Garry Knight, CC BY 2.0

PUBLISHER

Han Huang

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Colin Legerton

ART DIRECTOR

Lily Chen

EDITORS

Yungli Tseng | Terry Lin | Nicole Chen

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Tenshang Joh

VOLUNTEER TRANSLATORS

Estella Fung | Mei-li Hamilton

Yijia Wang

VOLUNTEER EDITORS

Richard Hamilton | Emma Ong

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Harriet Luc | Huiping Wang | Jack Yang

Jing Si Publishing | Dharma as Water Team

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Nourishing the Seed of Goodness

In the heart of each and every one of us lies a seed of goodness. However, this seed will need water to grow. Spiritual teachings are this water. These teachings could come from Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or other religions. So long as the teaching nourishes the seed of goodness in us and guides us to live in a wholesome way through which we benefit the world and grow spiritually, it is a good teaching. Such a teaching guides us in life, and that is why having a faith is so important.

In Tzu Chi, our spiritual faith is nurtured by the Sutra of Infinite Meanings. This sutra teaches us to strive not only for our own enlightenment but the enlightenment of all living beings. As we practice the sutra's teachings, we learn to be like a farmer who tends to the seeds of goodness in the hearts of everyone, so that these seeds may

sprout. Then, we continue to care for the seedlings, helping them grow into big trees. This is the work of a bodhisattva and the meaning of "walking on the Bodhisattva Path." As we do this, we also nourish our own seed of goodness and gradually draw closer to the heart of a Buddha.

The Buddha's heart is one of great compassion, and so the sutra teaches us to nurture compassion. In fact, such compassion is inherent in every one of us; we need only to bring it forth. Because of this compassion, we can feel the pain and suffering of others just as if we were experiencing the pain and suffering ourselves. This deep feeling for others will inspire us to take action to relieve their suffering. Compassion is therefore the driving force in our work of helping people in need.



Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

The sutra also describes the spirit of a bodhisattva and the way he or she engages in the work of relieving suffering. The bodhisattva not only provides aid in times of need, but does so actively on his or her own initiative, without needing to wait for people's call for help. Thus, the sutra describes the bodhisattva as "going without needing to be asked." In giving help, the bodhisattva does so in a way that gives people a sense of security, peace, and happiness. He or she is also like a spiritual friend, guiding people away from wrong paths in life, by leading them to gradually understand life's meaning and purpose.

Of course, all this is no easy work by any means. At times, it can be very taxing and difficult. But when we get

very tired from the work, what keeps us going is the power of gratitude, for it is a blessing to have the opportunity to help people and create a better life for others. This gives us spiritual joy, and we can continue to do the work happily and willingly.

The principles of the Sutra of Infinite Meanings serve as a guide for us in Tzu Chi. They teach us to nurture compassion and love, and to take concrete actions to help people and better our world. In so doing, we nourish the seeds of goodness within ourselves and others. If we wish to change the world, we need to begin by transforming the hearts and minds of humanity. The sutra shows us how we can do this. 🌱

TZU CHI'S BAMBOO BANK SPIRIT

When Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded Tzu Chi in 1966, she fashioned coin banks from bamboo and asked her lay followers—thirty housewives—to save NT\$0.50 (about US\$0.02) from their grocery money every day to help the poor.

One follower asked, “Can’t I just donate NT\$15 each month?” But Master refused. She explained that though the amount was the same, it was important to give rise to a kind thought each and every day.

From these humble beginnings fifty years ago, Tzu Chi has grown into a global NGO with ten million volunteers and donors in over fifty countries, because it collects not only donations, but also kind hearts.



Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
佛教慈濟基金會美國總會
909.447.7799 | www.tzuchi.us

Showing Someone Cares

When I was in Hawaii recently, I joined the local volunteer team on a visit to IHS (Institute for Human Services), an organization that helps the homeless. They told me that among Honolulu's one million people, five thousand are homeless. When I heard this number I was shocked; it's quite significant! But this same issue is everywhere. Here in Los Angeles, we face the same problem downtown.

What Tzu Chi has been doing for many years is working with other institutions, groups, and churches to help out with simple, fundamental things, like hot meals. Hopefully when we do that, the homeless are able to feel that somebody out there actually cares about them. Even though they may not know them personally, people do care about them. People do love them. Hopefully they will feel that.

More than a decade ago, when I was still volunteering in San Diego, one of the other volunteers told us that one of his friend's friends was suddenly laid off, and something had happened to his wife's career too, so both of them were out of a job. If my memory's right, they sent their kids to a relative in the Midwest to take care of them, and the couple eventually wound up homeless, wandering around on the streets.

This couple was referred to us as a family services case, so a few of our volunteers went to find them to talk to them and better understand their situation. They told us that once you become homeless, it's very difficult to go back. Even if you get a job interview, your hands or your body will give your secret away, because you cannot wash or take a shower as often as most people do. So the whole environment makes it more and more difficult, and the longer you stay on the streets the more difficult it becomes to go back.

This couple told us that they wanted to go to the Midwest to reunite with their children and look for another job, while hopefully living with their relative for a short time. They hoped that a change of environment might help too. But they didn't have money for the transportation. They were trying to make a change and they needed our help, so we decided to support them with two bus tickets to their destination.

Unfortunately, we later lost contact. I really hope that they were able to stand on their own feet again. I remember they were really trying to improve their situation, and I know we made the right decision to help them. But not everyone has an opportunity like that, and many people face much more complex issues that are not easy to solve.

Even though this issue is so vast, and what we can do so minor in comparison, we can still make a positive impact in people's lives. I truly appreciate so many volunteers nationwide who dedicate their time and their effort to services for the homeless. When they hold distributions, they not only do it in a very humane, respectful way, they also try to promote vegetarian meals and introduce environmental concepts, so that we can all join together to protect Mother Earth.

Most importantly, I hope that by reminding them that someone out there really cares, we can help encourage them to stand up again. I think that's the best hope. 🌱

Han Huang



Compassion

on the *Streets*

As more and more Americans are left out in the cold, struggling to find food and shelter, Tzu Chi volunteers respond in the way they always do: with compassion and warmth. For more than two decades, volunteers from Honolulu to New York, Seattle to Miami, and everywhere in between, have been providing hot meals, warm clothes, tutoring, companionship, and more with gratitude, respect, and love. Here are a few of their stories.





Reaching Out with Love Nationwide

Tzu Chi volunteers reach out to the homeless with gratitude, respect, and love.

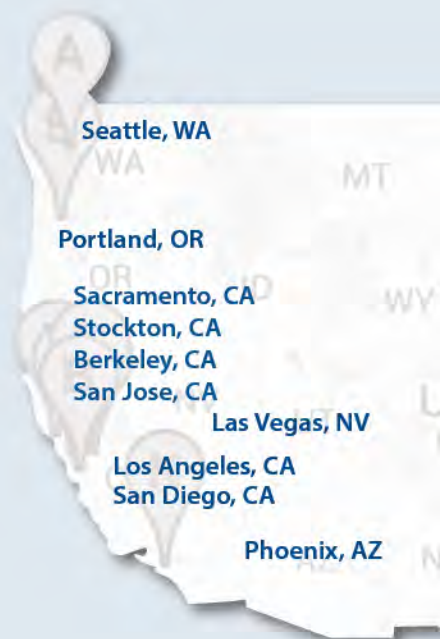
Editorial Team

On September 22, 2015, the mayor and city council of Los Angeles, California, announced that they were declaring a state of emergency. It wasn't for El Niño—that was yet to come. Nor was it for the drought, as that statewide declaration had already been made in January 2014, nor for wildfires, though Governor Brown had called one for that very reason just one week prior.

This particular state of emergency was not meant for a natural disaster at all. It was for a manmade one—homelessness. As the homeless population in Los Angeles—already the largest in the country—had risen by twelve percent in just two years, clearly they felt they had no choice. With forecasts calling for the torrential downpours of a potentially historic El Niño on the horizon, it was time to finally find a solution for the more than twenty-five thousand people stuck out on the streets.

While the homeless situation is particularly dire in Los Angeles, the city does not face this issue alone. In New York, use of shelters tripled between 2000 and 2015. In Honolulu, five hundred of every hundred thousand people are living on the streets. According to the National Law Center on Homelessness (NLCH), approximately 3.5 million people are likely to experience homelessness in any given year.

Causes are myriad, and solutions so far elusive, but Tzu Chi volunteers respond in the same way they do to any challenge: with compassion and warmth. For more than two decades, volunteers from Honolulu to New York, Seattle to Miami, and everywhere in between, have been providing hot meals, warm clothes, tutoring, companionship, and more with gratitude, respect, and love. And they will continue to do so. 🌱

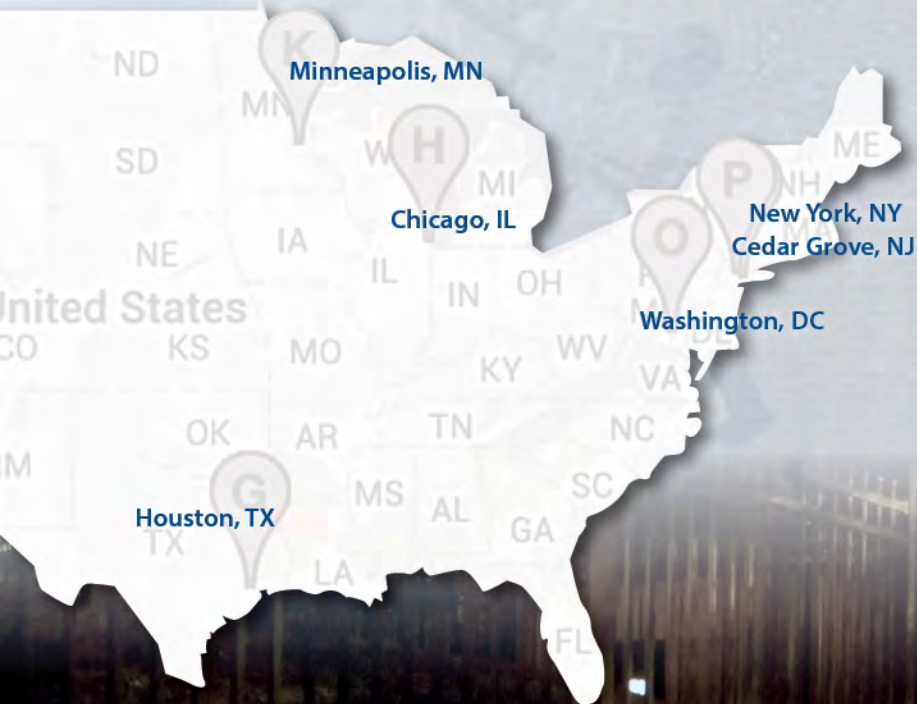


Carry love in the heart and express it through actions.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Please visit issuu.com/tzuchiusa/stacks for video news reports of Tzu Chi's homeless services all around the country!



In Atlanta, Georgia, Tzu Chi volunteers and the United Way distribute blankets and invite homeless people to move into shelters in November 2011. Photo: Peter Yeh

According to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2.5 million children—one in every 30—were homeless in 2013, an increase of 64% since 2007.



Tzu Chi volunteers distribute food, clothing, and daily necessities in Portland, Oregon, in June 2014. Photo: Wei Wu



Volunteers deliver warm clothes while participating in the annual Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count in January 2016. Photo: Lily Chang



Volunteers in Miami, Florida, prepare for a distribution at a local shelter in August 2015. Photo: Judy Su



Hot meals in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in February 2014. Photo: Shuhua Zhan



Winter distribution in San Jose in November 2014. Photo: Amy Young



Volunteers serve hot meals to the homeless in Honolulu, Hawaii, in September 2014. Photo: Alex Ma



Volunteers provide their weekly hot meal service in Downtown Los Angeles's Skid Row in August 2007. Photo provided by Tzu Chi National Headquarters



Tzu Chi volunteers in Long Island, New York, hold their annual winter clothing drive in November 2011. Photo: Jiaxin Zhang



Volunteers serve breakfast on the streets of Washington, DC, in October 2014. Photo: Mark Tsai



Volunteers in Phoenix, Arizona, provide a warm meal in 2006. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Phoenix Service Center



Volunteers serve hot meals at a shelter in Oakland, California, on Christmas 2011. Photo: Zherong Xu



In December 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers distribute hot food and winter clothing in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Photo: Wei Tang



In December 2013, volunteers deliver eco-friendly blankets on the streets of Oakland, California. Photo: Qiwen Bo



Volunteers serve at the Salvation Army Shelter in Cleveland, Ohio, in November 2011. Photo: Mingxun Hong



Volunteers in Sunnyvale, California, serve hot meals at a homeless shelter to fill stomachs and warm hearts. Photo: Shaoping Huang



Each year, Tzu Chi volunteers in New York distribute winter clothing to individuals in need. Here, they deliver toys and clothes to Brooklyn in December 2013. Photo: Peter Chu

Seeds of Charity *Sown Grow into* *Boundless Blessings*

Aik Thye and Hua Yan Wee have been serving homeless youths in Northern California for over two decades.

Ivy Hsu | Translated by Estella Fung



Volunteers teach the Chinese fan dance to students. Photo: Tsai-Lin Lai



Volunteers teach the serene, respectful tradition of tea ceremony to the students. Photo: Tsai-Lin Lai

Some years ago, Tzu Chi volunteer couple Aik Thye and Hua Yan Wee took five teenagers out to celebrate their high school graduation with dinner and a movie. It would have been a regular activity for most teens, but for those five who lived in shelters, the experience was rather special. As Aik Thye Wee was dropping them off at their respective shelters after dinner, one seventeen-year-old stopped him along the way: "Just drop me off at the side of the road."

Hot meal distributions might provide a temporary solution to hunger, but education is the only way to empower homeless teens to get off the streets and improve their own future.

As the young girl disappeared into a small tent on a deserted field, the scene etched itself deeply in his memory.

Around the time when Tzu Chi volunteers in Northern California's Silicon Valley began regular winter distributions and Sunday morning breakfast distributions in 1992, Aik Thye spotted countless homeless individuals in sleeping bags or cardboard boxes along his daily commute. Many were just teenagers. It got him thinking: hot meal distributions might provide a temporary solution



Tzu Chi volunteers recognize students for perfect attendance at school.
Photo: Tsai-Lin Lai

turned to Tzu Chi for help. Knowing how much the girl yearned for love and family, Hua Yan Wee asked her fellow volunteers to gather the wedding basics—a dress, accessories, and other necessities. Hua Yan helped the girl put together a cozy wedding, with twenty of the bride's homeless friends as guests. She also raised two hundred dollars as a wedding gift and something to keep at hand in case of emergency. Sadly, the girl lost her child during pregnancy, and her marriage fell apart. After a few years the girl said that she planned to leave San Jose to continue her studies in Washington D.C. The volunteers ultimately lost contact with the girl, but their thoughts remain with her.

The Community Youth Outreach program has always focused on counseling teens between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, but Aik Thye Wee found that those who were lacking companionship after high school also had a very tough time moving on from their difficult living conditions and joining society. Hence he launched the Youth Bright program for those in need between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. As long as participants continue their studies and can provide documentation to prove school enrollment, employment, and lodgings within six months, Tzu Chi will pay part of their tuition and living expenses.

Silicon Valley may be best known for its high-tech sector, but after several waves of economic booms and recessions, wealth disparity

has become a major problem. The local homeless population is estimated at five thousand, including one thousand youths. Homelessness is also on the rise among the elderly and disabled. In

addition to economic factors, Aik Thye Wee's twenty years of volunteer experience have led him to understand that broken families are also a major cause that leads to homelessness. Many homeless youths end up on the streets because they do not get along with their parents, and they end up in a rotation of shelters or pulled into crime.

In addition to their ongoing care for homeless youths, the volunteers of Tzu Chi Northwest Region have never ceased to distribute meals to the homeless every Sunday for the past twenty years. For many local homeless, these weekly meal distributions are the only times that someone goes out of their way to approach or speak to them. Aik Thye Wee hopes that more volunteers will step forward to volunteer, whether helping homeless adults or youths. He hopes that more will take up one-on-one counseling cases. Whatever the challenges they face, youths still have hope for the future. Wee feels that if enough people are willing to give up just an hour a week to accompany and care for street teens, these youths can start to feel the warmth and love of the community; with help, they can open up and end the downward spiral. 🌿

Great Love makes no distinction between rich or poor, sees everyone as equals, and engenders kindness and harmony.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Reaching Out to the Homeless

Any of us can make a difference, if we just take the initiative.

April Goddard

I am a serial volunteer who has volunteered almost all my life as a way of giving back to my community and to a universe that has always been good to me. So when I got sick and had to stop working, I started volunteering for Care Harbor LA, the largest free clinic for the underserved and at-risk people in our Los Angeles community. What better way to channel my energy than to serve?

The first time I volunteered, I was assigned to the Tzu Chi dental area to help with patient flow. I met several Tzu Chi volunteers from Northern California, and they shared with me the beauty of Tzu Chi, its meaning, mission, and purpose. When I got home each day, I read up on Tzu Chi. I was very impressed and promised to keep in touch. Then, of course, life got busy, and I never really kept in touch.

For the next two years, I went back to Care Harbor LA each year, asked to be assigned to the Tzu Chi dental area, and the same things happened. I felt good to be around these people who seemed very kind, patient, and peaceful. In the third year, I was introduced to the Bamboo Bank, and I got so excited that I gathered all my loose change at home, filled up my Bamboo Bank, and brought it to the Tzu Chi booth the next day! My donation was accepted gratefully and humbly.

As I sat comfortably warm and dry in my home, I could not help but think of my homeless neighbors a few meters away.

The information that Tzu Chi volunteers shared resonated deeply this time. I was introduced to



volunteers from the West Los Angeles office, and they started inviting me to other Tzu Chi events. I guess this is the part where I should say that the rest is history, but instead, I'll say that this was just the beginning of my volunteering with Tzu

Chi. And what a beautiful thing happened to me! Through volunteer training, I was fortunate to learn more about Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings and the generosity, gratitude, and love attached to everything that Tzu Chi does.

As a Tzu Chi volunteer, I have helped prepare winter care packs for the poor, cooked at Ronald McDonald House and Turning Point homeless transition center, tutored with Happy Campus UCLA Tzu Ching volunteers, interviewed applicants and reviewed applications as part of the scholarship team, and joined the quarterly medical outreach in Bakersfield, which provides free medical, dental, and vision care to the underserved and uninsured.

In addition, I continue to carry on my own personal charity work with the homeless in Venice Beach. You may have heard some things about Venice Beach: some good, some bad, and

some strange. They're all correct. But something of particular significance is the local homeless population.

I moved to Venice Beach just before Christmas five years ago. As I drove around my new neighborhood, I noticed a lot of homeless people sleeping outside the library not far from my new apartment. At that time, we were having a significant winter storm. The rain was relentless. As I sat comfortably warm and dry in my home, I could not help but think of my homeless neighbors a few meters away.

No longer able to dismiss the disturbing thought that they were wet and cold out in the rain, I put on my raincoat at 11:30 PM and walked to the library with two bags of old bedsheets, blankets, and sweaters. I stood in front of eight or so mostly older men and asked if they were cold. They just stared at me as I continued talking. I told them that I had brought blankets and sweaters to keep them warm and dry; I left the bags there as they continued to stare. As I walked back home in the rain, I prayed that none of them would harm me. None did, and I returned home safely. That was my first interaction with my Venice homeless friends.

In the weeks that followed, I started preparing meals—some from leftovers and some freshly made—to distribute to them. I made sure that the meals were presented nicely, with bottled water, dessert, plastic utensils, and napkins. I wanted them to feel that I was concerned with their welfare and not just disposing of unwanted leftovers.

Since I started feeding my homeless friends in Venice, I have found that a lot of other people have opened their hearts to these destitute people in their own ways.

One time, I did not have enough food to share, so I went to the local market to buy some cooked food. The lady at the deli joked about the quantity of food, so I shared what it was for. When she learned it was for the homeless, she added some condiments, paper plates, plastic utensils, and napkins. She told me that she had been homeless until she got the job at the supermarket. She said to come see her anytime I needed to buy food, and if she had any day-old bread, she would give it to me for free.

Then there was the parking attendant who at first wouldn't let me park without paying the ten-dollar parking fee. I told him that I only needed a few minutes to deliver two grocery bags of food to the homeless. Mind you, this is Venice Beach where parking is *prime!* When he learned that I was feeding the homeless, he did not charge me.

So you see, when we do good, people want to share and do good as well. Some of them just don't know how to start. Seeing such community altruism is truly heartwarming.

After I started volunteering for Tzu Chi, I began purchasing copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* to share with my homeless friends. I give them the books and sometimes we read them and share our thoughts together. When I see them, I ask if they are still reading the books. I've even gone to the ninety-nine-cent store to buy flashlights and reading glasses for those who complain that it's too dark or their eyesight is too bad to read, because I truly believe that the aphorisms will help them through their struggles so they can find the goodness in their hearts.

When Johan, another Tzu Chi volunteer, joined me on a visit to my homeless friends in Venice Beach, we shared with them a little more about Tzu Chi and the Bamboo Bank. My favorite homeless friend, Frank, was the first to reach into his pocket and put a dime in the



Bamboo Bank! Can you believe that? The same man who asks for alms and handouts to eat was so generous of heart that he was willing to share whatever little change he had. Johan was so inspired by this experience that he has come back several times to visit and share food, *Jing Si Aphorisms*, and most importantly time with my friends.

When I am short on funds and only have a couple of apples or bananas to share, I sometimes apologize for not having more. My homeless friends respond by saying, "April, the food is always nice and appreciated, but what's more important to us is that you come and spend time, talk to us, and care. It lets us know that we exist and that someone really cares." These words truly warm my heart.

I also want to let everyone know that homeless people have stories to share too. One example is my friend Paul. Paul was once a chef at a high-end restaurant here in Venice Beach. He was married to a beautiful wife, who unfortunately had a very long, hard, and stressful battle with cancer. When she finally succumbed to her illness, Paul became so depressed that he turned to alcohol, lost his job and his home, and became homeless. He started living by the skate park in Venice with his dog Peanut. When I stopped during my bike rides to visit with him, we regularly

read *Jing Si Aphorisms*. He is now sober and has his own apartment. Unfortunately, I have not seen him of late and don't know how to get in touch. But this accomplishment on his part fills my heart with joy. And I'd like to believe that Master's aphorisms have given him hope, some enlightenment, and a clear path to his new life.





Kashiwagi the Homeless

Even without a roof over his head, he found a way to serve society.

Shirley Tseng

Photos provided by Tzu Chi global headquarters

Kashiwagi Fuyuki worked for a high tech company before he got laid off. As an unemployed middle-aged man in Japan, Kashiwagi could not find steady employment, so on a Sunday morning in 2009, he stood in line with dozens of homeless people in Yoyogi Park, waiting to receive a hot meal from a charity organization. That day changed his life.

After caring for local homeless for more than a decade, Tzu Chi volunteers in Tokyo, Japan, had started a new project in 2009: providing hot meals once a month in Yoyogi Park. They bowed to every homeless man coming to them and handed hot meals with both hands, as is the Tzu Chi way.

Kashiwagi was touched by the respect and smiles shown by the volunteers. He later learned that they were from a Buddhist organization, and this made him feel even closer to them as he had read the Lotus Sutra with his family as

a child. On subsequent visits, he began to help the volunteers unload the food. He also stayed after distributions to help clean up, so that the volunteers could go home a little bit earlier.

When the volunteers invited him to join their monthly street cleaning, he gladly accepted. He enjoyed working as part of the group and having a simple lunch with the volunteers in the Tzu Chi office afterwards. That's where he first encountered Master Cheng Yen—on the television. He listened to her teaching and was awed by the seemingly fragile Buddhist nun who founded the organization. "If only I could see her in person! Humble as I am, I would be content with standing at the back of a crowd and listening to her voice from afar," he thought to himself.

He was disappointed when he learned later from volunteers that Master Cheng Yen had never left Taiwan and never would. Yet he was not



Kashiwagi traveled to northeastern Japan to visit survivors of the 2011 tsunami with fellow Tzu Chi volunteers.



In March 2014, Kashiwagi visited Jing Si Abode in Hualien, the birthplace of Tzu Chi, and met Master Cheng Yen in person. He also visited a local homeless shelter, where he encouraged the less fortunate with his own story. He told them, “There is still hope!” As he walked through Jing Si Hall and explored the exhibitions, he saw how Tzu Chi volunteers were serving their communities all around the world. He

deterred. Though he had never before traveled abroad, he decided to take a trip to Taiwan.

International travel expenses were an enormous burden for someone without steady work or a home. The only job Kashiwagi could find was standing in line for people who wanted to buy popular promotional products. When a store offered limited-edition or bargain-price products on a certain date, eager consumers would hire Kashiwagi to stand in line in front of the store early on that date to get what they wanted. Kashiwagi often had to arrive before daybreak, or if the products were extremely popular, even the night before. Sometimes there was no place to sit down and rest. Rainy or wintry days were even more trying.

This work was unsteady, and his earnings were far below minimum wage, but Kashiwagi managed to save little by little for two years. In 2014, he finally had enough money to buy a plane ticket to Taiwan. Hearing the good news, more than twenty local Tzu Chi volunteers pooled their money together to buy Kashiwagi a Tzu Chi volunteer uniform as their gift for his trip.

was determined to become one of them.

When Kashiwagi returned from his trip to Taiwan, he began to donate to Tzu Chi on a monthly basis from his very limited income. He also joined the volunteer training program in order to become a certified Tzu Cheng member and willingly took on any volunteer work that needed an extra hand.

Kashiwagi still went to Yoyogi Park on the monthly meal distribution day, but he was no

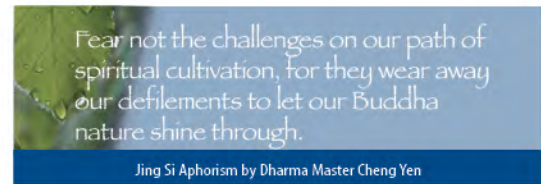
Kashiwagi serves tea in his Tzu Chi volunteer uniform.



longer there to receive a hot meal. Instead, he served the homeless as a Tzu Chi volunteer. At the same time, he also actively sought job opportunities. He cleaned parks and squares for the city from time to time, and with the volunteers' help, he found data entry work in a nursing facility.

From September 13 to 17, 2014, Kashiwagi traveled to northeastern Japan with his fellow Tzu Chi volunteers to visit survivors of the 2011 tsunami. He paid his own travel expenses, as is the Tzu Chi way, and shared his own story that touched many hearts. After he shared, a tsunami survivor came over, held his hand, and said, "You and I both face difficult situations. Thank you for your encouragement. We will be strong!"

Never forgetting the warmth and encouragement he received during his trip to Taiwan, Kashiwagi again saved money for another trip to Taiwan. In November 2015, equipped with a plane ticket, Tzu Chi uniform, and some basic phrases in Taiwanese, Kashiwagi traveled to Taiwan for the second time to volunteer his time in a recycling station. He wanted to give back, and now he was. 🌿



During his 2015 visit to Taiwan, Kashiwagi (standing, far right) joined a performance of The Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents.



Sending Love to Southern Taiwan

Whenever disaster strikes, Tzu Chi volunteers lovingly extend a helping hand.

SENDING **LOVE** TO SOUTHERN TAIWAN



15,462 Volunteer shifts
(174 by medical personnel)



23,247 Hot meals



560 Scarves
660 Foldable beds
1,839 Eco-blankets

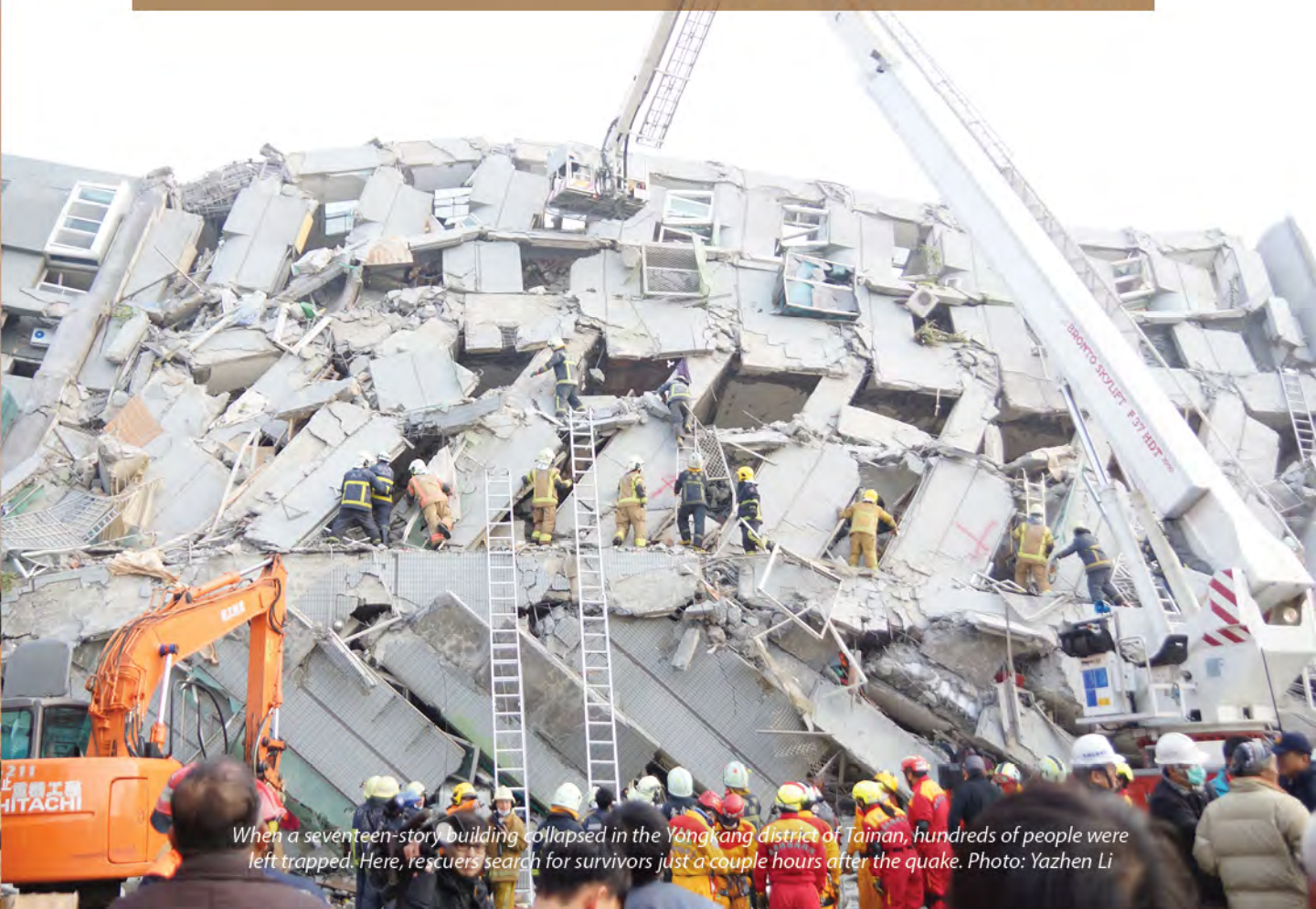


Visited 248 patients
Gave emergency cash to 78
totaling more than \$1.4M NTD



Cared for 2,189 families
Gave more than \$3M NTD
in emergency cash

Source: Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, February 6 to 18, 2016



When a seventeen-story building collapsed in the Yongkang district of Tainan, hundreds of people were left trapped. Here, rescuers search for survivors just a couple hours after the quake. Photo: Yazhen Li



The rescue attempt continues into the second day on February 7. Photo: Yuemei Wu

Early February 2016 was meant to be a joyful time in southern Taiwan. With Chinese New Year coming up on February 8, families were gathering to ring in the Year of the Monkey together. But before dawn on February 6, tragedy struck. A 6.4-magnitude earthquake near Pingtung City caused widespread damage and at least 116 deaths, bringing horror, anxiety, and grief to a time that was meant to be filled with warmth and love.

In the immediate aftermath of the quake, tense moments transpired in the city of Tainan. As the earthquake toppled a seventeen-story residential building, hundreds of people were trapped inside. Though more than one hundred died, rescue crews worked tirelessly throughout



the holiday and managed to save hundreds of lives.

As the rescue crews toiled, Tzu Chi volunteers were there providing support from beginning to end. From the early hours after the quake through the biggest holiday on the Taiwanese calendar, volunteers mobilized to help in any way they could: they served tens of thousands of hot meals to rescue crews in the cold winter air; they visited patients in hospitals, distributed emergency cash to families in need, and provided hundreds of foldable beds, scarves, and blankets; and they did it all with a smile, a hug, and a bow of respect.

While the emergency phase has now passed, volunteers will continue to stand beside all those impacted by this natural disaster. They will continue to offer their support with gratitude, respect, and love. 🌿



Tzu Chi volunteers quickly set up service centers in the disaster area. Photo: Mingdian Cai



Sending Love to Southern Taiwan



Tzu Chi provided support to affected families and first responders in a number of ways, including hot meals, medical care, prayers, multipurpose foldable beds, emergency cash, and more. All photos provided by Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



Join us!



Tzu Chi 50th Anniversary

In May, Tzu Chi volunteers and friends all around the world hold annual 3-in-1 celebrations to recognize Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Tzu Chi Day. This year will be extra special, as we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Tzu Chi's founding in Taiwan!

All community members are welcome to join our celebration. Please visit tzuchi.us/events or contact your local office for the date, time, and location of your local event. We look forward to seeing you then!

2016 Tzu Chi Family Festival

Celebrate with us on Buddha Day, Mother's Day, and Tzu Chi Day
Please visit tzuchi.us/events or contact your local office for details.



BUDDHIST TZU CHI FOUNDATION 佛教慈濟基金會美國總會

1100 S. Valley Center Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773 Tel. 909-447-7799 www.tzuchi.us

Half Century of Compassion (1966-2016)

Marking a few of the major milestones along Tzu Chi's Bodhisattva Path



1966. Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded Tzu Chi Foundation in Hualien, Taiwan.

1969. First winter distribution was held at Pu Ming Temple.

Construction completed on Jing Si Abode in May.

1972. Tzu Chi started holding twice-weekly free medical clinics for people in need.

1975. A group of students at Hualien Normal School, following the teachings of Dharma Master Cheng Yen, began helping elderly and disabled people on weekends and holidays. This became the model for Tzu Chi home visits.

1986. The first Tzu Chi hospital—Hualien Tzu Chi General Hospital—opened in August.

1990. Male volunteers formed the Tzu Cheng Faith Corps in July.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen launched Tzu Chi's environmental protection activities.

1966~1969

1966

1967

1969

1970

1972

1973

1975

1979

1986

1989

1990

1966~1969

1967. Tzu Chi built a home for a person in need for the first time: a blind senior who had been living in a grass hut was given a brick home.

1970. Annual winter distribution was moved to Jing Si Abode, where it continues today.

1973. After Typhoon Nora devastated eastern Taiwan, Dharma Master Cheng Yen formed a disaster relief team. This team established the model which all Tzu Chi disaster relief teams have since followed: evaluation, fundraising, collection of materials, identification of people in need, and distribution.

1979. Tzu Chi began fundraising for its first hospital, a 600-bed facility in Hualien.

1989. Tzu Chi Nursing College opened. First volume of *Jing Si Aphorisms* published.

1970~1979 / Half Century of Compassion

1970~1979 / Tzu Chi's First Fifty

1986~1989

1986~1989

1991. Tzu Chi held its first international disaster relief fundraising efforts to support Gulf War orphans and flood victims in Bangladesh.

After severe flooding in central and eastern China, Dharma Master Cheng Yen initiated relief efforts, instructing volunteers to act directly on the most urgent needs, focus on the task at hand, act with respect, and refrain from discussing business, politics, and religion. These have remained Tzu Chi's disaster relief principles ever since.

1995. On December 1, Da Ai TV broadcast its first program on another station.

1998. Tzu Chi's Da Ai TV station began broadcasting full-time.

Rhythms Monthly magazine published its first issue.

2000. In August, the third Tzu Chi General Hospital opened in Dalin.

Tzu Chi Middle School and Elementary School opened. Since this milestone, Tzu Chi has offered education from kindergarten through university in Taiwan.

1990~1999 / Tzu Chi's First Fifty

1991

1993

1994

1995

1996

1998

1999

2000

2001

1990~1999 / Half Century of Compassion

1993. Tzu Chi started a bone marrow donor database to help patients with blood and bone diseases. Today it is one of the largest in the world.

1994. Tzu Chi Medical College opened in Hualien.

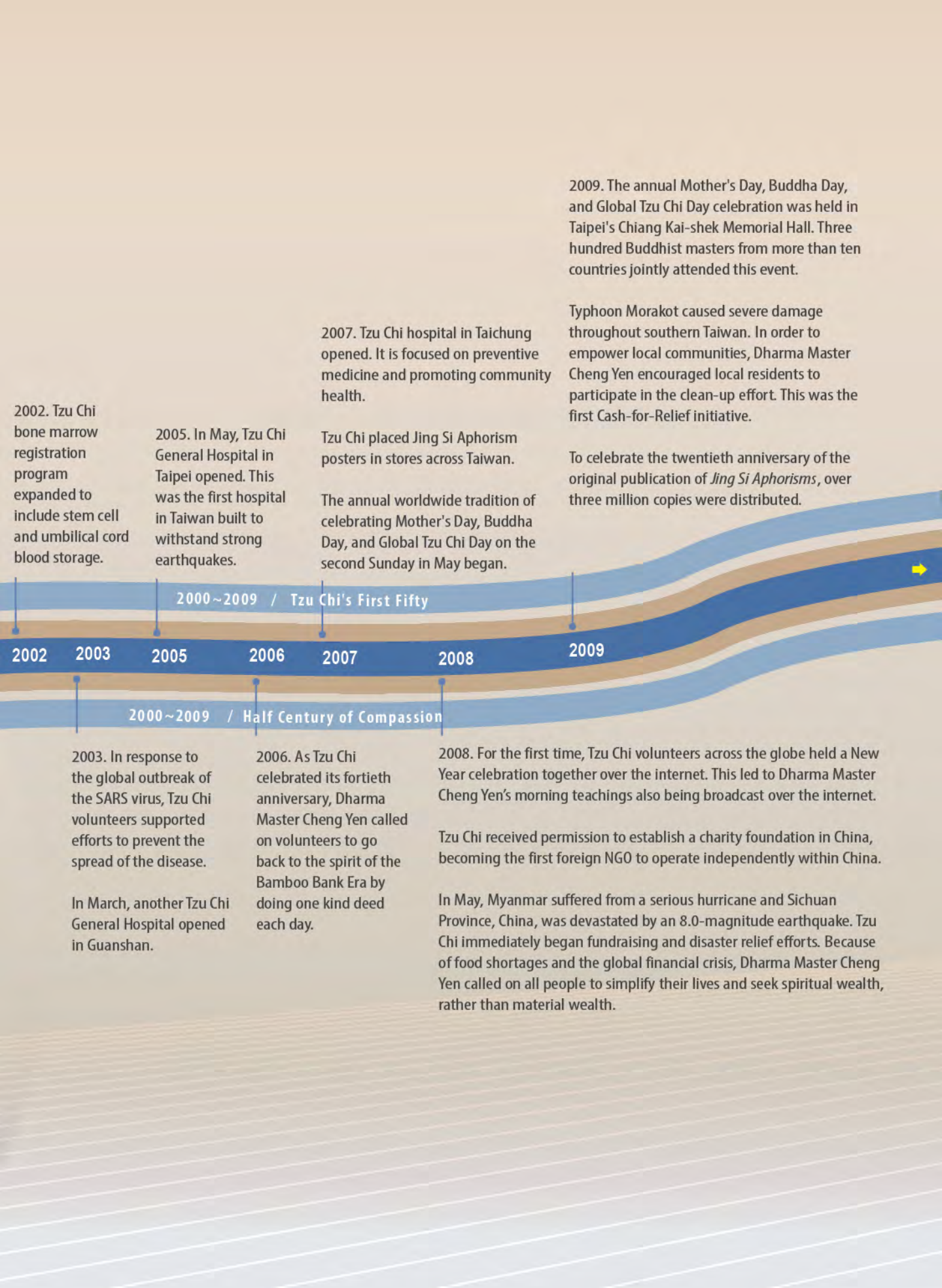
Tzu Chi's "Silent Mentor" body donation program for medical students began. To show respect for donors and their families, donors are honored with a ceremony at the time of donation.

1996. Typhoon Herbert struck Taiwan as the biggest typhoon in thirty years. Dharma Master Cheng Yen encouraged local volunteers from all areas of Taiwan to respond.

1999. In March, another branch of Tzu Chi General Hospital opened in Yuli.

After the major 921 Earthquake struck Taiwan on September 21, Tzu Chi volunteers from all over Taiwan joined the disaster relief effort.

2001. After the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., Dharma Master Cheng Yen said, "An Earth-shattering disaster should bring about a world-awakening realization." She encouraged all her followers to do one good deed each day to sow the seeds of love in place of disaster.



2002. Tzu Chi bone marrow registration program expanded to include stem cell and umbilical cord blood storage.

2005. In May, Tzu Chi General Hospital in Taipei opened. This was the first hospital in Taiwan built to withstand strong earthquakes.

2007. Tzu Chi hospital in Taichung opened. It is focused on preventive medicine and promoting community health.

Tzu Chi placed Jing Si Aphorism posters in stores across Taiwan.

The annual worldwide tradition of celebrating Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Global Tzu Chi Day on the second Sunday in May began.

2009. The annual Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Global Tzu Chi Day celebration was held in Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. Three hundred Buddhist masters from more than ten countries jointly attended this event.

Typhoon Morakot caused severe damage throughout southern Taiwan. In order to empower local communities, Dharma Master Cheng Yen encouraged local residents to participate in the clean-up effort. This was the first Cash-for-Relief initiative.

To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the original publication of *Jing Si Aphorisms*, over three million copies were distributed.

2000~2009 / Tzu Chi's First Fifty

2002 2003 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009

2000~2009 / Half Century of Compassion

2003. In response to the global outbreak of the SARS virus, Tzu Chi volunteers supported efforts to prevent the spread of the disease.

In March, another Tzu Chi General Hospital opened in Guanshan.

2006. As Tzu Chi celebrated its fortieth anniversary, Dharma Master Cheng Yen called on volunteers to go back to the spirit of the Bamboo Bank Era by doing one kind deed each day.

2008. For the first time, Tzu Chi volunteers across the globe held a New Year celebration together over the internet. This led to Dharma Master Cheng Yen's morning teachings also being broadcast over the internet.

Tzu Chi received permission to establish a charity foundation in China, becoming the first foreign NGO to operate independently within China.

In May, Myanmar suffered from a serious hurricane and Sichuan Province, China, was devastated by an 8.0-magnitude earthquake. Tzu Chi immediately began fundraising and disaster relief efforts. Because of food shortages and the global financial crisis, Dharma Master Cheng Yen called on all people to simplify their lives and seek spiritual wealth, rather than material wealth.



2010. Tzu Chi's environmental protection initiative and recycling program celebrated its twentieth anniversary.

Tzu Chi was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC).

In January, Haiti was struck by a major earthquake. Tzu Chi volunteers in the USA and abroad immediately began relief efforts that continue to the present day.

2012. Tzu Chi began widely promoting the 80/20 Lifestyle, which encourages people to use fewer resources and donate the funds saved to the poor.

Volunteers in Jordan began relief efforts for Syrian refugees.

2014. In September, volunteers in Turkey began helping the children of Syrian refugees attend school.

2016. After a 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck southern Taiwan in February, volunteers immediately rushed out to provide support.



*For a timeline of major events in Tzu Chi USA's twenty-five-year history, please see **Issue 42 (Winter 2014)**.*



Helping Hands Circle the Globe



Volunteers in **NEW YORK** and **NEW JERSEY** supported their neighbors after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. After providing bottled water to emergency responders, they also set up assistance centers to help affected families for the next several months.



As West Africa suffered a lengthy Ebola outbreak beginning in 2013, Tzu Chi sent multi-purpose foldable beds, blankets, and rice to hospitals, orphanages, and Ebola centers in hard-hit **SIERRA LEONE**.



After two earthquakes devastated **EL SALVADOR** in 2001, Tzu Chi provided immediate relief distributions and medical care, and then stayed on to rebuild two Great Love Villages.



When an 8.8-magnitude earthquake rocked **CHILE** in 2010, Tzu Chi volunteers rushed to the disaster site to provide daily necessities and much-needed medical care.



Having witnessed the terrible living conditions in La Romana, **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**, during hurricane relief in 1998, Tzu Chi rebuilt a school to provide hope to local children.

Since its founding in Hualien, Taiwan, in 1966, Tzu Chi has stretched across the globe, thanks to the dedication of countless volunteers willing to go the extra mile to compassionately serve people in need. By the end of 2015, volunteers had provided relief in ninety-two countries and regions worldwide.



Following years of natural disasters and widespread famine, Tzu Chi volunteers were allowed in to NORTH KOREA beginning in 1998 to provide massive food distributions to help the hungry.



Tzu Chi now operates six hospitals in TAIWAN to ensure that all people have access to medical care, regardless of ability to pay.



As Syrians have fled the violence in their homeland since 2011, volunteers in JORDAN, TURKEY, and GERMANY have been supporting them with relief goods, medical care, educational opportunities, and warm companionship.



The spirit of Tzu Chi has spread throughout Southern Africa over the past two decades. In SOUTH AFRICA, thousands of local volunteers care for AIDS orphans and patients every day.



Tzu Chi has long been active in INDONESIA, even rebuilding entire communities after devastating fires and the 2004 South Asian tsunami.



Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

www.tzuchi.us

The 80/20 Lifestyle

Be healthy: Reduce your meal portions to 80%

Be generous: Use your 20% savings to help the poor

Improve your health by reducing meal portions to 80% of your normal consumption. With the 20% you save on food, you can help the needy.





Talking With...

Babeth M. VanLoo on Broadcasting Buddhism



Dutch filmmaker, producer and media-artist Babeth M. VanLoo has directed and produced dozens of documentary films and television programs that focus on art, social engagement, and spirituality. From 2000 to 2014 she co-founded and was the programming director of the Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation (BOS), the Western world's first Public Buddhist television station. In January 2016, Tzu Chi USA Journal talked to her about her latest film: Tzu Chi—Doing Good in the World.

Colin Legerton: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. To start with, could you tell me a little bit about your own background in Buddhism and filmmaking?

Babeth VanLoo: I studied with the great artist Joseph Beuys in Germany in the sixties, who came up with the idea of the enlightened, engaged art concept, meaning that art and creativity should be working in all parts of society, not just on an aesthetic level. He saw art as a healing method for society. He taught us that we as artists should create things that are needed on the planet and are beneficial in the time that we are living. For example, he would plant seven thousand oaks as an artwork, or he would clean a river, but at the same time he made beautiful drawings and

We as artists should create things that are most needed in the time that we are living.

sculptures. I learned from him to expand the territories of making my art in places that crossed borders, where I felt it was needed.

So when I left Germany on a scholarship to study filmmaking in America, this whole notion of making art and creativity work in all parts of society stayed with me all my life. In 1976, I met the Tibetan teacher Dilgo Khyentse

Rinpoche in New York. After I received my Masters in Art and Filmmaking I became a teacher at the San Francisco Art Institute, and met Dudjom

Rinpoche in California. Ever since the eighties, I have studied and practiced within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

When I moved back to Amsterdam, which is where I'm from, I worked for television here doing cultural and human interest programs for years, but I really longed to integrate my



The director (third from right), cameraman Ashley James (center), and soundwoman Ginny Huey (third from left) film with Tzu Chi in Taiwan.

belief system of Buddhism with my job. This need to make a Buddhist television station was in the center of what my art was all about: making art work as a healing tool in society. The right circumstances manifested because the Buddhist Union of the Netherlands shared the same need. It took seven years and two lawsuits against the governmental body that decides on public broadcasting to start a Buddhist TV station but finally, in the third go, we won and started in 2000. I was one of the few people left after seven years that was still committed, and I believed through my own practice that it wasn't really that important anymore if we could materialize it in Holland. I actually anticipated that Americans would love this idea and would do it there. I was so strongly convinced that Buddhism could contribute a lot of good on television. And when I gave up this kind of attachment to the idea that we would realize it, and accepted that planting the seed as an immaterial artwork was good enough, within a year it happened.

CL: That's an incredible lesson. You really see

how important it is to let go of the attachment.

BV: When you are a long-term practitioner, you learn more and more to kind of surrender, so that it is not like a struggle anymore. But you don't give up. That was my slogan for the Buddhist TV station: surrender, but never give up. Surrender and work with circumstances.

But now all religious stations, including our Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation, just closed down on January 1 of this year.

CL: I'm so sorry to hear that.

BV: Yes, it's very sad. It's too bad for our audience and for the country. Before we started, I interviewed Buddhist teachers who would say things like, "When all the circumstances are right, then it will materialize. Otherwise just let it cook. The time has to be right and the country has to deserve it. The people have to deserve it." And since as Buddhists we don't try to win souls—our intention is not to convert people, but to help them through Buddhist insight to



have better lives—we didn't make programs to make people Buddhist. We just wanted them to become better human beings and offer help with peacekeeping and nonviolence.

I feel it was a blessing to be able to promote altruism that way and it made people see that Buddhism could contribute in many fields of society. That diversity and Buddhism as a science of the mind and the development of a compassionate heart was very helpful in those fifteen years for many people. But the outcome also was that the sanghas were getting bigger and bigger due to our existence. We were the fastest growing broadcaster of any religious station. As head of programming, I personally was always inspired by Buddhism that is engaged in society, so we did a

lot with Thich Nhat Hanh and Bernie Glassman, those kind of teachers. Once you have developed your own meditational practices, then it is

very important to integrate it in society. We would get a lot of feedback from people who had not known what Buddhism is or didn't want to become Buddhist, but that were very supportive of our station because it transformed their lives.

What was also very interesting was to witness not only that the sanghas grew because of us, but also that the sanghas themselves in the different directions—the Zen teachers, the Tibetan teachers, the Chinese, the Thai, and the Vietnamese—they never had any contact with each other before. But because we started an advisory board from representatives of teachers and sanghas, they met for the first time. I really liked that, but also the fact that

I feel that we are living in a time where women are coming to the surface as being given the importance that they actually have.

there was dialogue about: Do we just stay on our cushions? Do we just meditate? Within some of the Zen practices, it's just sitting and that's it. All of those are important, so I'm not judging, I'm just saying that it was an added value that the different kinds of Buddhist practitioners and teachers finally were aware of each other and communicated within a context of Westernization of Buddhism.

Since I was a producer next to a filmmaker, I went to many different countries also before we started the station, and I would make films about, for example, the Bhutanese concept of Gross National Happiness, instead of measuring by Gross National Product. Then you get a dialogue within the country about what that

means: What do we emphasize in our lives? What can the concept of Gross National Happiness bring to a Western society? I am a believer that

it will take different kinds of skillful means in diverse stages, within the different cultures.

CL: For this film, how did you learn about Tzu Chi in the first place, and what made you decide that you wanted to create this film?

BV: I was awarded this Outstanding Women in Buddhism Award in Thailand in 2013, and they asked me to also deliver the keynote speech. Since it was Outstanding Women in Buddhism, I presented excerpts of several films I had made specifically about the position of women in Buddhism. There was a nun from Taiwan who came up to me and said, "It's amazing what you

did about Women in Buddhism. In Taiwan we have Tzu Chi and Dharma Master Cheng Yen." So that was the genesis.

CL: In your years of doing the TV station, and prior to the event in Thailand in 2013, had you not been familiar with Tzu Chi before?

BV: Not really with the vastness of its scope. As a commissioning editor I had been involved to do a short TV special on the Silent Mentor program a few years before. And then after Bangkok my colleague at the Buddhist Film Festival in Berkeley visited Tzu Chi and we discussed it. But now just recently a woman from Holland wrote an article about Tzu Chi that was quite substantial. I was told that my film had inspired her. She called it "the largest charity organization that you have never heard of." Tzu Chi is known so little here in Europe. That is very intriguing: how is it possible that there are so many members and that people don't know much about it yet?

CL: Did you have a specific audience in mind as you were filming? Non-Buddhists? Westerners?

BV: Yes, for a Western audience and also for non-Buddhists. In the international film and documentary world I'm known as an auteur filmmaker, which is quite different from the American style. In this genre you're not being told what you see in a constant voice-over, but the storyline unfolds on a different level. That to me corresponds more to an experiential level and in that way also more to a Buddhist practice. So that requires a mindful audience. I think this film would work best within an event

or educational context. I noticed that when I showed it here for a group of CEO women a lot of dialogue started about the state of our healthcare system, and charity and relief work in general. While at the film festival premiere in the film museum in Amsterdam, some people were also crying. Thanks to your [Tzu Chi] ladies, I borrowed the lotus lamps that they use, so I had those in the film theater. At the end, in the scene when Master Cheng Yen does the practice with the planet, I asked the audience to turn them all on. That created a very special feeling of connectedness. There are not that many Tzu Chi people in Holland, but some of them came in their Tzu Chi outfits, and that was wonderful.

Mostly there was a mixed audience during showings. I would say one-quarter was maybe familiar with Buddhism, and the rest not. They are professors in universities, schoolteachers, artists, some people aligned with the government, medical therapists, some work in other charities, and things like that. And it was very interesting, because they all have their own section of the film that they relate to most. As you know the film is built around Tzu Chi activities: the hospitals, the charity, education, relief work, and then the religious or cultural aspects that those are all nurtured by.

CL: I thought the ending was very powerful and striking, because you had just said in the voice-over before that the message is "the suffering of the world can be healed." It brings it from that very personal one-on-one touch from the beginning and then to something much larger, where everyone is joined together in this spirit: it was a very powerful way to finish.



BV: At the premiere, when some were crying, I asked them, “Why are you crying?” And they had a hard time answering. They cried for being emotionally touched. But also I still cry sometimes, when I hear Master Cheng Yen and that song, during that blessing of the planet. So I think it exposes an emotional layer that doesn’t need to be explained, and that people who are open enough can just experience. And that is one of the big challenges for a filmmaker, since everything happens inside the mind and the heart, how do you transfer that to a screen, to an illusionary world of cinema?

CL: You’ve mentioned the hospital and the medical mission a few times, and the first third of the movie was really focused on that. Why did you decide to focus first on that as opposed to anything else?

BV: Well, it’s twofold. First of all, I think the hospitals are so amazing. And it also had to do with the fact that I got to spend most of the time filming there. The Tzu Chi hospitals function so much against the current trend—at least in the Western world. Here doctors have almost no time for patients, and I feel that Tzu Chi, by its system of those volunteers, is freeing doctors from a lot of bureaucracy, so the doctors have more time. But also just to hear a doctor, a former military doctor, talk about love and learning from his patients—it just doesn’t happen here. I could feel his honesty and total dedication to a holistic and comprehensive medical care system. So I think the hospitals really show people exactly what it is that Tzu Chi

is doing and it’s doing that in a very important field, the medical field.

CL: Do you think this message has resonated with people?

BV: I think it has, and it will even more. I feel it’s all about human potential, how that changed when Tzu Chi entered their lives. These couples in the film just so wonderfully illustrate that: to show people who are very wealthy, but have gained so much more from working with Tzu Chi. They come across as very humble.

When you are a long-term practitioner, you learn more and more to surrender, that it’s not like a struggle anymore. But you never give up.

Many people ask me, “Why is Cheng Yen not more in this film?” At first I was very worried to make this film when I met her and she told me: “It shouldn’t be about me, it should be about the

organization.” Then when I faced this challenge I worked with it as part of her humbleness. I feel that by capturing the people in Tzu Chi as human capital—from their soul, without even talking about the fact that some are extremely wealthy—I think that the message basically is that Tzu Chi has enriched all kind of people’s lives, rich or poor. That giving is receiving!

By standing in Japan [after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami], they learn to recognize the suffering. They see it firsthand. I think that is the Master’s intention of direct giving, that you have to experience and see it for yourself to generate true compassion and generosity.

CL: Did you find it a challenge to approach

such different topics as the hospitals, recycled blankets, character education, and disaster relief and tie them together?

BV: Yes, I found it a big challenge, and I thought about it a lot, because I could have envisioned making a whole film about Tzu Chi just in the hospitals. But I felt that since Master's vision is so all-encompassing, that I should represent all those parts. Master Cheng Yen cultivates the holistic concept of the human being, but also especially our inner development as spiritual beings—our true potential, and our capacity for love and compassion, which for me is the biggest revolution that we are living in this time and age. I felt that should be part of the film,

and so that's why I decided to cover all of those pillars.

CL: Early in the film, and in our discussion today, you've commented on how remarkable it is to see such an enormous global organization started from this single woman. Then looking at your past work, there are films with titles like *Women and the Buddha Potential*. Could you talk about the importance of a woman creating such a movement and what Buddhist organizations and our whole society can gain from such examples?

BV: I feel that we are living in a time where





women are coming to the surface as being given the importance that they actually have. Having been the head of this TV station, I noticed the gender inequality even still today in Western society. At the level of CEO meetings, I was one of two women, and the rest are all men, still now.

My Buddhist teachers told me they also had female teachers. So I asked, "Why don't we ever see these women teachers in the West?"

However, I made some films in Bhutan, where women are more equal to men. I had filmed in many other Asian countries before, and I would say women play a very subordinate role.

Being in Bhutan, which is the last remaining independent Buddhist kingdom in the world, I saw a structure and a country in which both people were equal. I just felt that as a woman, I should give more presence to women in the media, but also particularly in Buddhism, because it looked so much like a patriarchy, and I know that in the Buddhist teachings, in essence, women are just as important as men in terms of their spiritual capacity, so I wanted to correct history a little bit and give women more presence.

I've made another film that was very important in this field, which is called *Khandro, a Woman's Path of Peace* about the most well-known female Tibetan lama rinpoche. She started her own nunnery in her early twenties. When her father died, she became the spiritual head of a monastery in India with several hundred monks, due to a family lineage. That is very unusual. Most of the time when Tibetan teachers travel, it's men. So a woman like that, with a huge

organization in the United States and in India, is very important and helps to see female role models in Buddhism. And since men usually don't film women in Buddhism, I felt I should do it.

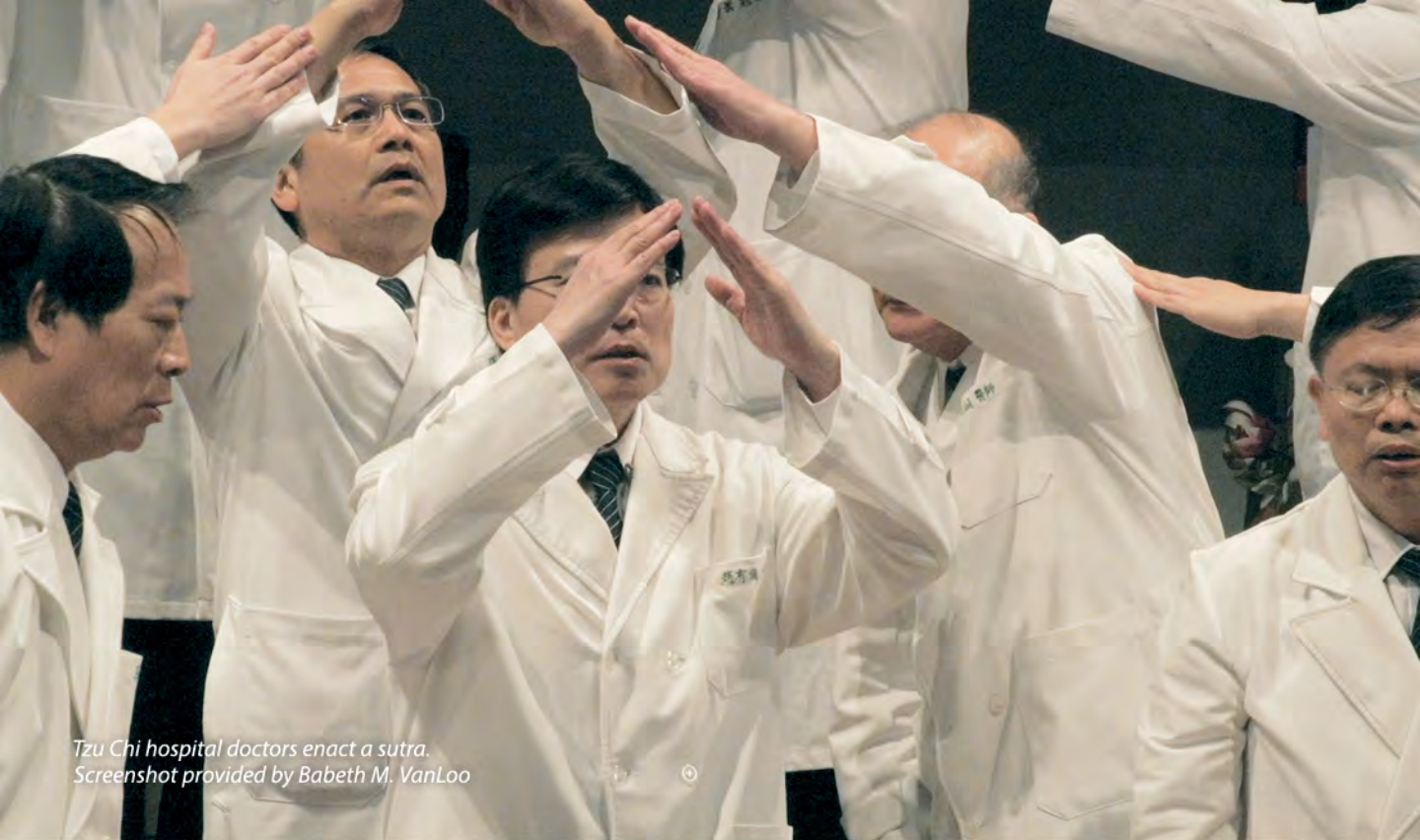
I also felt pleased to see that in Tzu Chi there were so many men. In Hualien, the women lead, so to speak. It's a female lineage, basically—started as a female lineage at least—but to see how many men are there was important,

too. I think that's very healthy. As I am myself a Vajrayana, Dzogchen practitioner, meaning one tries to master non-dualism, we are in essence all the same.

I'm hopeful that when I die those films will still give scholars and students and practitioners in the future a window to look into that world.

CL: What other projects do you have in the pipeline now? Any you'd like to mention?

BV: This weekend I will be filming with Matthieu Ricard, whose contributions to science and Buddhism I documented in an earlier film, but now the focus is on his mother Yahne, who is a very inspiring nun of ninety years old, who also still exhibits as an artist. There are several films and art projects that I'm busy with, but to tell you the truth, right now my main concern is to launch the Tzu Chi film in the best possible way. That's my first priority at the moment. That carries a message that is much needed in this competitive and egocentric society. And of course to help take care of our archive of the Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation. Closing it down has been painful, but we also should cherish all those programs that we made—to face its impermanence and still give it a positive outlook.

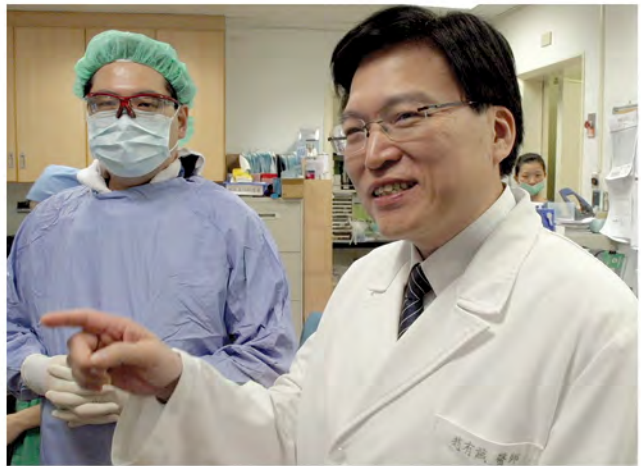


*Tzu Chi hospital doctors enact a sutra.
Screenshot provided by Babeth M. VanLoo*

CL: Do you have plans of how that content can be made available in the future?

BV: Well there are many plans within our Foundation, but not definite as of yet for me to comment on. Something new will be born out of this. For the future generation this is very important: if I look at how many Rinpoches we have documented that have already passed away. In the Tibetan case, for example, those were the ones who were still born in Tibet and not in exile. They were completely rooted in their Buddhist culture. And those are all dying. It's been a great fortune that I was given their trust to document even their rituals. Even though I knew that in the film it would be a scene of only three minutes, I still filmed the complete ritual. For future generations, they can see even how to do the practice and what it looks like.

So I'm hopeful that when I die those films will still be there and they will give scholars and students and practitioners in the future a window to look into that world. I'm very grateful to have been able to be of service to enable that. 🙏





Understanding Zika

As the Zika virus continues to spread, arm yourself with knowledge!

Dr. Stephen Denq

Zika has drawn public attention because of the recent outbreaks in Central and South America and the increased reports of birth defects and Guillain-Barré syndrome which might be associated with this virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on February 1, 2016, because of clusters of microcephaly and other neurological disorders caused by the virus. Furthermore, on February 8, 2016, CDC elevated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation to Level 1, the highest level.

According to WHO, Zika virus is an emerging mosquito-borne virus that was first

identified in Uganda in 1947 in rhesus monkeys through a monitoring network of sylvatic yellow fever. It was subsequently identified in humans in 1952 in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Outbreaks of Zika virus disease have been recorded in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific. In May 2015,



the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued an alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infections in Brazil. As of February 2016, outbreaks are

occurring in many countries in Central and South America.

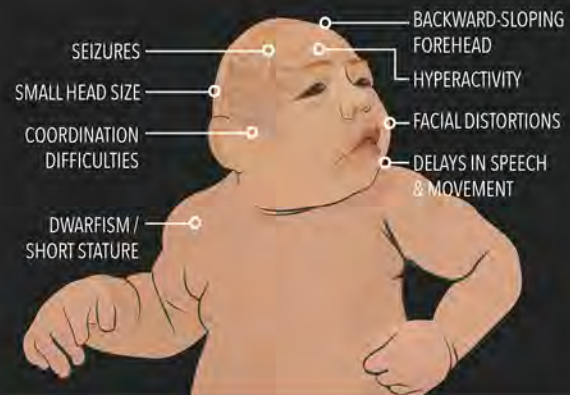
Keeping our environment clean and preventing pools of stagnant water can help control mosquitoes and keep us safe.

SYMPTOMS OF ZIKA VIRUS



Source: Beth.herlin, Wikipedia

SYMPTOMS OF MICROCEPHALY



Zika virus is a single-stranded RNA virus transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito from the *Aedes* genus, mainly *Aedes aegypti* in tropical regions. *Aedes* mosquitoes are aggressive biters. They feed indoors and outdoors, both day and night. This is the same mosquito that transmits dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever. Sexual transmission of Zika virus is also possible, and is of particular concern during pregnancy. Three cases have been reported as of mid-February 2016.

Characteristic clinical findings are acute onset of fever with maculopapular (red and bumpy) rash, arthralgia (joint pain), or conjunctivitis (pinkeye). These are the typical signs found in many other types of viral illness. Only about one in five people infected with the Zika virus become symptomatic, and the symptoms often last for only about one week. During this time, mosquito bites can transmit the virus from one infected person to another.

Zika virus can be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth. It is not yet known how often Zika perinatal transmission occurs. For pregnant women with symptoms consistent with Zika virus, testing is recommended during the first week of illness. Zika virus RT-PCR and serology assays can be performed on maternal serum, plasma, or amniotic fluid. Serology assays can also be used to detect Zika virus-specific IgM antibodies, while RT-PCR is more specific. Ultrasound is a useful tool as routine fetal screening, but the sensitivity of detecting microcephaly is limited.

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent Zika virus infection, nor is there a specific treatment for Zika infection. Travelers can protect themselves by taking steps to prevent mosquito bites, such as use of insect repellent, wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants, and staying in places with air conditioning or with screens on windows and doors. CDC recommends that pregnant women in any trimester should

consider postponing travel to an area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. If a viral infection is suspected, a primary care physician should be consulted immediately.

Some infants with possible Zika virus infection have been found to have intracranial calcifications and abnormal eye findings. There have been more than five hundred reported cases of infants born in Brazil with microcephaly since the outbreak of Zika virus in 2015. Although some of the mothers were infected with Zika virus while pregnant and Zika virus infections have been confirmed in several infants with microcephaly, it is still not known how many of the microcephaly cases are associated with Zika virus infection. Further studies are ongoing.

Guillain-Barré syndrome is a condition in which one's immune system targets its own nerves and causes nerve damage resulting in muscle weakness and paralysis. There have been cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome reported in patients following suspected Zika virus infection, but the relationship between Zika virus infection and Guillain-Barré syndrome is not yet known. Although GBS is often associated with viral infection, it is difficult to determine any specific virus that is the cause for this syndrome.

The United States does have *Aedes* mosquitoes that can become infected with and spread the Zika virus. Due to the recent outbreaks, the number of Zika virus disease cases among travelers visiting or returning to the United States will likely increase. Keeping our environment clean and preventing pools of stagnant water can help control mosquitoes and keep us safe. Early detection and prevention is the key to control the Zika infection before it becomes even more widespread. 🌿



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Community Education & Simple Life

In Tzu Chi's community education program, students learn valuable life skills in a positive environment.

Alex Chiu | Translated by Yijia Wang

Photos provided by Tzu Chi Continuing Education Center

The Mission of Education has been holding community education courses at Tzu Chi USA Headquarters since 2009. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of employees and volunteers, this community education has been developed and promoted through their time, effort, and wisdom. With limited resources, they have put their plans into practice with love, perseverance, and courage, and developed community education courses from occasional classes into a systematic, well-organized, and consistent model today, which has benefited many people and earned a positive reputation in the local community. Many individuals have signed up for these beneficial classes.

The community education program arose from Master Cheng Yen's teachings that simple living leads to prosperity. Master Cheng Yen hopes that all people will take good care of their minds in order to live a simple life, save resources, and always maintain positive spiri-

tual practices in day-to-day life. The educational programs offered at USA Headquarters include soap-making, vegetarian cooking, gardening, home maintenance, calligraphy, flower arrangement, tai chi, yoga, decoupage, and more. All of these classes are designed according to the teachings of Master Cheng Yen to help cultivate one's mind, develop good conduct, purify one's soul, and bring interpersonal relationships into

harmony. These classes also encourage individuals to save resources, develop skills for self-sustainability, reduce spending, and protect the environment. Jing Si Aphorisms incorporated into each class encourage students to cultivate compas-

sionate hearts, strive to enlighten their lives, take on the responsibility of benefitting others, help the poor and educate the rich, and learn to recognize their blessings, cherish them, and sow more blessings.

The world today is facing so many problems: global warming, the greenhouse effect, and all

The educational programs offered at USA Headquarters include soap-making, vegetarian cooking, gardening, home maintenance, calligraphy, flower arrangement, tai chi, yoga, decoupage, and more.



kinds of disasters. Life is impermanent, and we will reap the fruits of the seeds we sow. Earth-shattering disasters should bring us to awakenings. The most important lesson from community education programs is how we can balance humanity's impact on nature, instead of using up all of nature's resources to satisfy our needs. According to Master Cheng Yen's teachings about living a simple life, we should purify and cultivate our minds, discipline our behavior, be less materialistic, and learn to contribute to society. By doing so, we will gain prosperity in our spirit.

The community education program also serves as an opportunity for individuals to join as volunteers. As students gain a better understanding of Tzu Chi's spirit, many of them sign up for volunteer training to become Tzu Chi volunteers. We hope that all kind people can find opportunities to work together as volunteers, and we will all work hard to support Master Cheng Yen's Four Missions and Eight Footprints,* hoping to realize the goal of a world in which all minds are pure, society is in harmony, and there are no disasters in the world. 🌿



Tai Chi



Tea Ceremony

*Tzu Chi's Four Missions are Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture. The Eight Footprints also include International Disaster Relief, Bone Marrow Donation, Community Volunteerism, and Environmental Protection.



Community education students volunteer at a food bank.

The Hungry Thief

Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Translated by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team

The Buddha's teachings serve as a guide for our spiritual practice. He teaches us to "do all that is good and refrain from all that is evil." According to the law of karma, the kinds of causes we create result in the effects and retributions we face. Thus, people who practice goodness will receive favorable retributions.

One of the sutras illustrates this teaching through a story. Long ago, there lived a prime minister of a certain kingdom. For years, he suffered from illness, so the king granted him permission to go back to his hometown to recuperate. However, even after he returned home, his illness continued to ail him for a long time. The medicine for his treatment was very expensive, so after a few years, he completely drained his family's wealth. Eventually, he died from this illness, and his family's fortunes gradually declined. His wife also soon passed away, leaving their teenaged child alone.

What was this child to do? He was left to wander about the kingdom, living a life of poverty and hardship. One day, he thought, "I might as well steal to support myself." So, he decided to become a thief. But then he thought, "The people here are also quite poor. If I steal from them, won't they be even poorer? That won't do." Then it occurred to him, "Well, the

king has many treasures. If I steal from the palace, the king won't really suffer from the loss."

So, he dressed up to look intimidating and stuck a bamboo stick into a scabbard so it looked as if he were carrying a sword. Disguised in this way, he snuck into the palace. The king had not yet fallen asleep, so when the young man entered his royal chamber, the king sensed that someone was in the room. He was afraid to make a noise, so he pretended to be asleep and observed the intruder. "What does this man want?" he wondered. Then he soon saw the intruder begin stealing things. The young man took necklaces, jewels, and clothing and wrapped them all together.

But after he secured this bundle, the young man noticed a bucket of water in the room. He was very thirsty, and as he was about to take a drink, he thought of the dirt in his scabbard, and an idea came to him. He thought of mixing the dirt with the water to drink. After drinking it, he felt full and satisfied. In that moment, he had a sudden realization: Just drinking dirt and water had lessened his hunger, so if he simply foraged for wild herbs and fruits to eat, how much better would that be? "As long as I feel full, that is enough. Why do I need to resort to thievery? If my father were alive, he would

Do not fear making mistakes; fear only not correcting them.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Storytelling by the Master

never have permitted me to do this." Standing there, he repented and quietly left the palace empty-handed.

The king saw everything this young man did—how his movements were so gentle and how he left quietly without stealing anything after all. The king immediately ordered people to follow him. They followed him to his dwelling. Since he did not have a house, he was living in a cave under a tree. When they found him, they asked him to explain his actions. "Well, I was going to steal to relieve my hunger," he said. "But then I drank some water that I mixed with dirt and realized that something as simple as that could fill me up. So, I ended up not stealing anything. There is no need to arrest me."

But the king's men said, "Whether you stole anything or not, you must still go before the king." Therefore, they brought the young man before the king. And when the king questioned him, he told his story from the beginning.

"When I was a young child my parents taught me to do what was right, and though I have fallen on hard times, I know I should not have acted this way." Hearing this, the king felt that the young man was very open and honest. He had integrity and showed promise, and he

had been taught well by his parents. Moreover, he was content and had few desires; simply drinking water with dirt had satisfied him. This demonstrated his virtue, which very much pleased the king.

"I think you have great potential. Come live at the palace, and I will hire tutors to teach you about governing the kingdom so you can inherit your father's post as prime minister," the king said.

From this story, we know that improper thoughts may arise when people fall into certain situations, yet human nature is inherently kind. Under circumstances such as these, even the son of a prime minister had improper thoughts. But then he realized that life could actually be very simple. A bowl of water with a handful of dirt mixed in had eased his hunger. When he grasped that he could survive without having to steal, he quietly left the palace. So, the young man did not actually steal anything; he recognized his faults and changed his ways in time. Deeply touched by this, the king saw the inherent goodness in him and rewarded him.

No matter what happens to us, we must remember the Buddha's teachings for being a good person. By doing all that is good and refraining from all that is evil, we can fulfill the potential for goodness within us. 🌿

A Small Paradise in Zimbabwe

Giving will reap the greatest harvest. Rusununguko Primary School, near Harare, Zimbabwe, is now a school for our future ministers, teachers, doctors, lawyers....

Precious Dzuty

Master Cheng Yen says, "Blessings flow from our ability to love and be loved by others." However, we never expected the love which God sent us from Taiwan. Love is what we have for girls and boys who are orphans or who are from single-parent families.

Yes, seeing these kids roaming the streets was a bitter taste to swallow.

This school of ours started in January 2000. Mrs. Elina Mazhandu and Mr. Sylvester Mahurevana, filled with love, had this plan. Others also gave their views, but those two had



*Each classroom is well ventilated through eight windows and three ceiling vents.
Photo: Zhi-Qiang Chen*

the children at heart. They never gave up. At that time, I was still in secondary school.

When Rusununguko Primary School started, there was nothing to protect the teachers and students from the sun or rain. Yes, some helpers came and promised to help. But Master Cheng Yen says, “To begin is easy, to persist difficult. Talking about truth without practicing it leads neither to enlightenment nor to realizing the Dharma.” Only one group among many persisted with the help. In 2006 they gave the school some large pieces of cloth to protect us from the sun. But they could not protect us from the wind, rain, and cold.



Zimbabwe means “large houses of stone” in a local dialect. Stone is abundant in the nation. Rusununguko Primary School was an outdoor school amid boulders, which provided some shade against the sun, but nothing against rain.
Photo: Liang-Xu Wei

Summer came. Rain and the bitter sun beat on the children mercilessly, but they strove to learn. They had nowhere else to go. This was the only place where they could get an education. Many schools rejected these children because they did not have birth certificates to prove their eligibility or money to pay school fees. Teachers also came and went because of the harsh conditions. They could not stay for even a term. So, when I had taken my O-level exams, I thought of my community. I came back to be a teacher at Rusununguko Primary School.

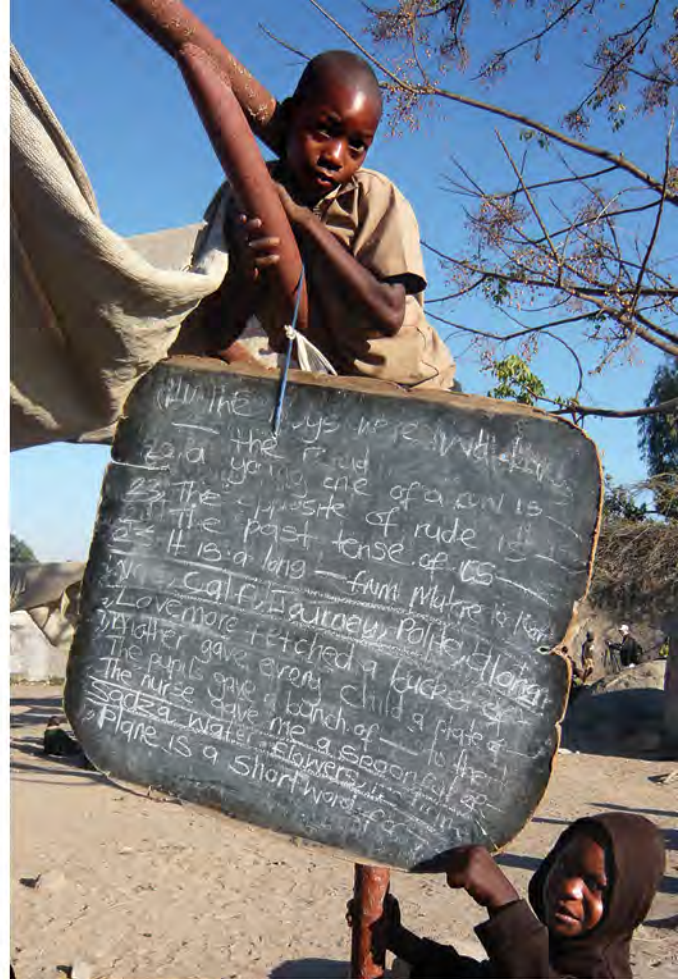
It's true it was difficult to teach in a bare place without shelter. In summertime—October, November, December, and January—children suffered from severe headaches and

sore eyes. These were the worst days. As the Earth orbited round the sun, the winter season came. Ballpoints could not write. Children could not even hold their pens and pencils because they shivered so badly. Diseases like fever and influenza attacked both teachers and children. I remember one morning I shivered to the extent that I was not able to write on the chalkboard. At around ten o'clock, after the sun had warmed me, I finally started to write.

Weather was not the only problem which we faced. Dust from the ground affected us also. Books and clothes always looked untidy. Even teachers went home looking like people from the fields, not from school. The noise from passersby disturbed our school. Children could not concentrate on what the teacher said. In addition, the children and we teachers suffered discrimination from members of the community and other schools. People would bully our students on their way home, and they would call our school bad names. This discouraged the children and made them feel like outcasts. This pained us, but we could not do anything about it.

We were suffering, but God did not sit aside and watch. He sent brothers and sisters from Taiwan to rescue us. Master Cheng Yen heard our cries from afar, and she looked into the distance and saw us. Her loving heart ached for our safety. She sent members of the Tzu Chi Foundation to our aid. At first we could not believe that shelter would truly come. When Mr. Tino Chu came and told us about the plans made by the Tzu Chi Foundation, we could not believe our ears. But it was true because in Tzu Chi it is said, "Make great vows to benefit all sentient beings, then carry them out

God did not ignore our pleas and cries, and indeed he sent help.



For over ten years, the school had no classrooms. Makeshift chalkboards such as this one were hung by students every day. Photo: Cheng-You Huang

in action." Mr. Chu came in October 2011 and bought us bricks to build toilets. This was the first step of a journey. Master Cheng Yen says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one first step. Even a saint was once an ordinary human being."

The second step which the Tzu Chi Foundation took was a big one. In July 2012, brothers and sisters came from Taiwan, from America (including Brother Joe and Brother Jiren), and from South Africa (Brother Michael). When these brothers and sisters came, it was a miracle.

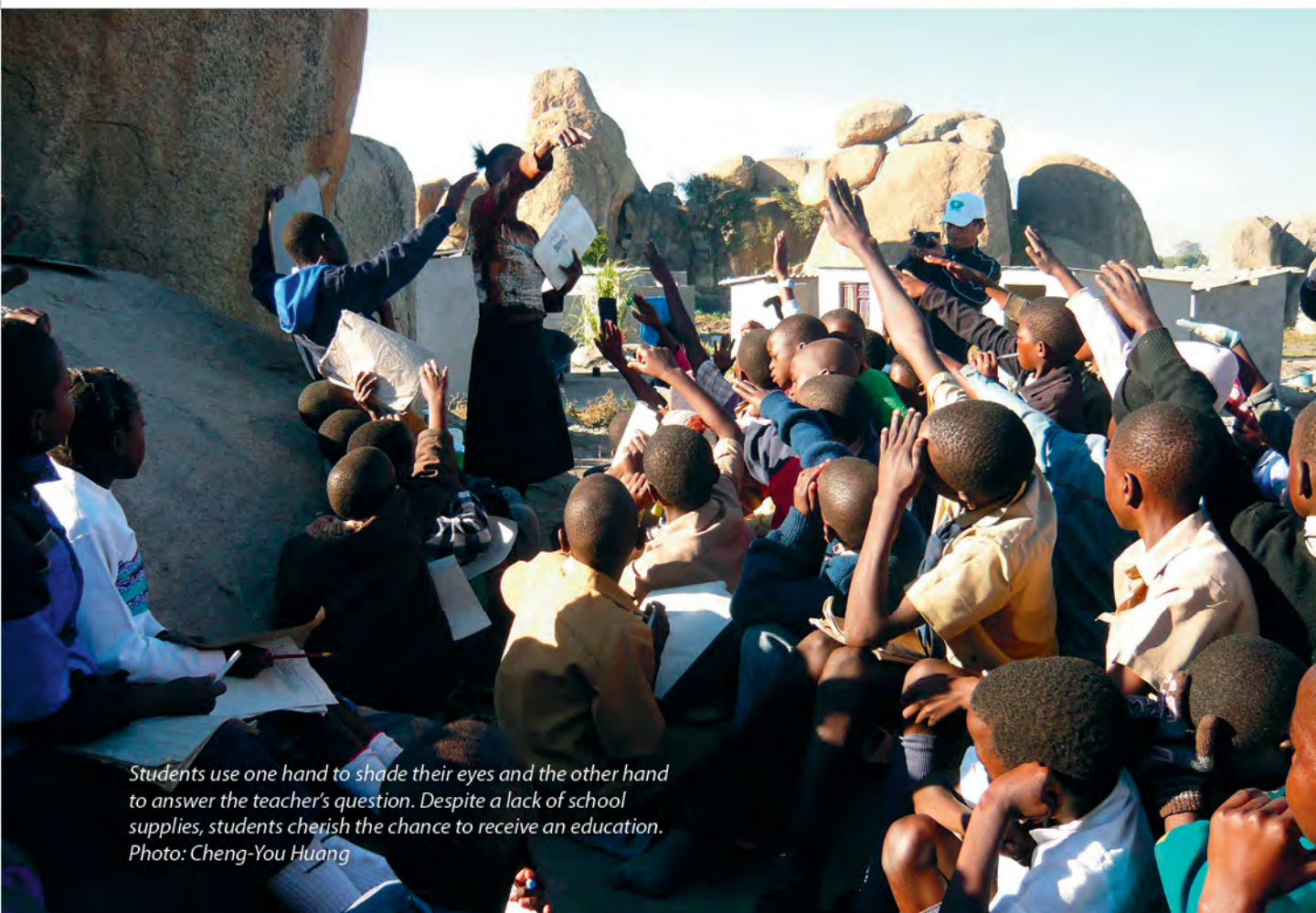
The building started on a Sunday. On Monday when I came to school, I could not

believe my eyes. I pinched myself to see if I was dreaming. I felt pain and saw that I was awake and that it was really happening. I was overjoyed. I thanked Master Cheng Yen for the Great Love for our outcast community. I felt the warmth of the tears rolling down my cheeks. It was not because I was hurt, but it was because of the unexplainable joy and thankfulness filling me. In one week and a half, the new shelters were complete. I also thank parents from the community who helped the engineers from Taiwan.



In the open-air school or in their homes, students had no desks to use. They had to write their homework on the floor or on a rock, not the most comfortable writing positions. Still, the handwriting was neatly done page after page. Photo: Cheng-You Huang

In August we used the shelters for only a short period because the schools were closing. When the third term began in September, we were very happy to go back to school. Now that we have shelters, many things have changed. There are no complaints about headaches or about the sun and harsh winds which used to beat on us. The rains no longer distract us from our



Students use one hand to shade their eyes and the other hand to answer the teacher's question. Despite a lack of school supplies, students cherish the chance to receive an education. Photo: Cheng-You Huang

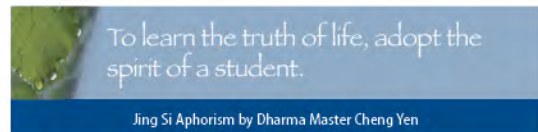
lessons and make us go home before break time. We can study until the proper dismissal time, because now we have a roof over our heads. Now I am proud of being a teacher at Rusununguko Primary. I even boast of being a teacher on my way home. The bad names have disappeared. Parents have transferred their children to our beautiful Rusununguko school, improved by the Tzu Chi Foundation, and we now have fourteen hundred students.

The shelters are warm inside and have good ventilation. Master Cheng Yen says, "When we have something, let us cherish it. When we do not, let us be content." Thank God for giving us Master Cheng Yen. Now we are cherishing what we have. Because of the improved condition of our school, the children have gained the respect of children from other schools. Teachers have gained respect from the community and from other school teachers. Those who once laughed at us now admire us. With the addition of flowers and other greenery, hey, Rusununguko is now a small paradise on Earth!

God did not ignore our pleas and cries, and indeed he sent help. How fortunate we are at Rusununguko to have friends even from abroad with unlimited love. Master Cheng Yen says, "Remain soft-spoken and forgiving even when reason is on your side." We did that even when people called us bad names. We remained focused. Now the Master of love and mercy has rewarded us with Great Love.

Master Cheng Yen, although we cannot be together every day, I know and believe we are always and will always be together in spirit. 🌿

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Seven new classrooms were built using fortified plastic sheets over light steel frames, one classroom for each grade. The materials came from Taiwan. Photo: Liang-Xu Wei

Tzu Chi volunteers are active in fifty countries and regions worldwide, and have delivered relief in more than ninety countries across the globe. With Tzu Chi volunteers widely spread across every continent and time zone, there is always a volunteer somewhere serving with respect, gratitude, and love.

▶
As they have for nearly five years, Tzu Chi volunteers in Jordan continue to provide care and support for Syrian refugees displaced from their homeland. On January 1, 2016, volunteers visited young refugees in Amman to deliver school supplies.
Photo: Chiou Hwa Chen



◀ *A group of religious leaders from Cempaka Putih district of Jakarta, Indonesia, visited the local Tzu Chi office on November 23, 2015, to learn more about Tzu Chi's environmental philosophy and spirit of selfless Great Love. Here, they fill out applications to adopt Bamboo Banks to carry that spirit back home with them.*
Photo: Metta Wulandari

▶
After a food and materials distribution for underprivileged families in Ipswich, Queensland, Australia, a number of recipients donated back into bamboo banks to support education for Syrian refugee children.
Photo: Deyao Luo



▶
Tzu Chi volunteers held a rice distribution in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on December 20, 2015. Some recipients were so moved that they donated coins into Tzu Chi's bamboo banks to pass forward the love and care. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Cambodia



On December 10, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers accompanied several Tzu Chi scholarship recipients on a hospital visit in Photharam, Thailand. While comforting patients, students also realized their own blessings by witnessing others' suffering.
Photo: Yafeng Tang





▲ Tzu Chi volunteers in Kluang, Johor, Malaysia, held their annual year-end distribution on January 3, 2016. Volunteers warmly welcomed long-term care recipients and their families to gather together and look back on the year past. Here, volunteers provide free haircuts. Photo: Yunfu Wu



▲ On November 17, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers in the Philippines donated their award-winning boat of recycled plastic bottles to the residents of Quezon City. They hope the boat will help save lives whenever typhoons flood the area. Photo: Nisi Dan



▲ Tzu Chi volunteers in British Columbia, Canada, collaborated with the Richmond Food Bank to hold six winter relief distributions for low-income families between December 7 and 12, 2015. Here, volunteers lovingly present a stuffed animal to a small child. Photo: Yarong Huang



On November 11, 2015, volunteers traveled to Mvurwi, a rural town in northern Zimbabwe. There they distributed rice, potable water, and medicine to impoverished locals. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Zimbabwe



▲ On December 20, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers delivered Christmas presents in the Jardim Ângela district of São Paulo, Brazil, to bring a merrier Christmas to local poor children. Photo: Qiuqin Zeng



▲ When a fire broke out in the Kilimanjaro district of Maipú, Chile, six families were driven from their homes and left with nowhere to turn. On November 27, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers visited the disaster site to distribute daily necessities and deliver care to these affected families. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Santiago Service Center



On December 9, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to Tzu Chi La Romana School in Villa Hermosa, Dominican Republic. They visited with the students and gave them apples as a healthy early Christmas present. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Dominican Republic

Asparagus and Fruit Salad

Recipe provided by Vegetarian Cooking Team / Tzu Chi University Continuing Education Center
Instructor: Cheng Wei Liu

Ingredients

- ¼ cantaloupe (about ½ pound)
- 1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound)
- 1 tbsp vegetarian bacon
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese (about 4 ounces)
- 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

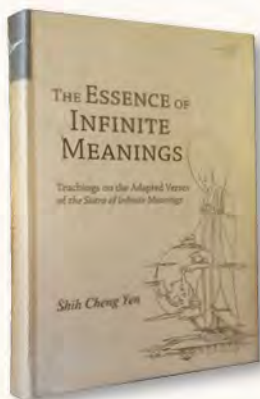
1. Skin and dice the cantaloupe. Cut the mozzarella cheese into small chunks.
2. Cook the vegetarian bacon in a frying pan until golden.
3. Wash the asparagus, add a dash of salt and pepper, and mix with olive oil.
4. Heat a frying pan over a low flame and cook the asparagus until soft. Arrange neatly on a plate.
5. Squeeze lemon juice into a bowl. Add salt, pepper, and olive oil to taste. Mix in the cantaloupe and cheese.
6. Place cantaloupe, cheese, and vegetarian bacon on top of the asparagus. (Pine nuts may also be added, if desired.)

A vegetarian diet is not only good for our health, but also good for the Earth.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Photo: Steven Chiu



(Excerpt)

The Essence of Infinite Meanings

In this volume, Master Cheng Yen discusses The Sutra of Infinite Meanings, a foundational text for Tzu Chi.

Shih Cheng Yen

Bodhisattvas “relieve suffering wherever sentient beings are.” The suffering of sentient beings is found everywhere. In addition to humans, other living beings also feel pain. Tzu Chi volunteers have therefore long been committed to promoting vegetarianism and protecting life in the hope that this will lead everyone to give rise to compassion and wisdom. Humans are the most intelligent of all beings, so we must have the correct perspective on how to lead our lives. We should protect all living beings, not sacrifice animals because of superstitious beliefs or consume the flesh of animals just to satisfy the momentary craving of our taste buds.

Every sentient being lives in its own world and faces its own circumstantial retributions and direct retributions. However, animals are often captured, tormented, and killed by humans. Indeed, many people do not understand the karmic law of cause and effect.

They do not know that being born human is a direct result of their karma. Some people have the blessed circumstantial retributions to be born in rich and powerful nations, live in good and wholesome environments, and have warm and loving relationships. Others are born into impoverished and weakened countries, where people fight and kill each other; the many man-made calamities they face make it hard to even survive.

Since we have been born human, we should be content. Since we were born in a peaceful, harmonious, and favorable environment, what is there to complain about? If everyone understands that we reap what we sow—that sowing good seeds brings blessed retributions—then we will care for and protect all sentient beings. If we remove all cruelty from our minds, the world will naturally be peaceful and harmonious.

The Sutra of Infinite Meanings tells us that, to walk the Bodhisattva-path, not only must we coexist with all sentient beings and protect all life, if any sentient being is suffering, we must also help to relieve that suffering. In learning the Buddha’s Way, we must first learn how to be good people. Since humans are the most intelligent of all sentient beings, we should open wide our loving hearts and protect all creatures, care for the Earth, and safeguard the environment. If we have the virtue of caring for all living things, we can realize our inherent Bodhisattva-nature.

Thus Living Bodhisattvas work to “relieve suffering wherever sentient beings are.” With modern information technology, no matter where a disaster occurs, the news is quickly spread

all over the world. When Tzu Chi hears of a disaster, we immediately mobilize volunteers who are close to the affected area to care for those in need. Once they arrive at the disaster area, they quickly do an assessment to understand what kind of help is most needed, and then they provide what the disaster survivors need most.

After relieving people of their physical suffering, Tzu Chi volunteers use the Buddha-Dharma to help them face their sorrows, fears, and anxiety. Like Bodhisattvas, they help the survivors to calm their minds and let go of the matters that are causing them suffering. The volunteers point them in the right direction so they can raise their spirits and face the future. Thus, "having relieved them from suffering, Bodhisattvas then expound the Dharma for them and enable sentient beings to experience happiness."

Finding water after a long drought, finding food in times of starvation, or finding clothing in the cold winter brings comfort to body and mind; this brings the most happiness.

As we learn the Buddha's Way, we must not only cultivate ourselves, but at the same time also help others. Our lives are all interconnected. Only when we help each other with selfless great love can we lead lives of mutual benefit. If we can help others in their time of need, if we can provide water, food, and clothing to victims of drought, hunger, and cold, we can bring comfort to their bodies and to their minds. At the same time, we will also experience happiness and peace of mind.

Modern technology is very advanced and keeps us closely connected—transportation is very convenient, and telecommunication networks are extensive. We can see what is happening everywhere, and with our own eyes, we can witness the suffering of people in every corner of the world. When we hear about or see people experiencing hardship, we cannot bear it. For instance, if there is a prolonged drought, we seek to quickly bring everyone's good thoughts together in reverent prayer; this can move the heavens and bring relief to that suffering land.

Whenever Tzu Chi volunteers have the opportunity, they will go to a devastated area and help the affected people by giving them material aid, companionship, and counseling. If there is a need that can be met, they will do everything they can to help. For example, when volunteers see someone weak with hunger and thirst, they will quickly give them a cup of water and a bowl of rice. This not only provides the nutrition that they need, but also makes them feel cared for with respect and genuine love. When people's livelihoods are threatened, volunteers will aid them through the crisis and help boost their will to work for a better future. By helping others, by bringing "comfort to body and mind," the volunteers themselves also experience the joy of giving. 🌿

Excerpted from The Essence of Infinite Meanings by Shih Cheng Yen (Jing Si Publications, 2015). For more information, please visit Jing Si Books & Café (directory on pp. 76-78) or jingsi.us.tzuchi.org



Bonding with Our Children

Lina Lee

LMFT, Licensed Psychotherapist / Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation

As a working mother, the challenge of trying to balance work and parenting often leaves me feeling that motherhood is stressful and challenging. For many parents like me, time is scarce. Twenty-four hours a day is barely enough to juggle all our various responsibilities to home, office, children, spouse, and self. Sometimes, I find it impossible to balance it all.

Despite all these modern-day stresses, bonding and connecting with my child has always been and always will be my priority. Professionally as a psychotherapist and personally as a parent, I know that this bonding is an important part of my child's development. A child who bonds well with her parents and caregivers is often a more secure and happier child.

When it comes to time with our children, I believe that quality and quantity are equally important. Our children need our time, and they deserve the best we have to give them. Having a quality moment requires many hours of little moments; it takes time and effort to develop the trust and love that truly create our bonds.

At least once a day, I set aside a few moments to focus on listening and talking with my child. I give her my complete attention and enjoy the close connection. As Master Cheng Yen has taught us to cherish every moment

and do the right thing, I have learned to enjoy every moment together

with her and to do the right thing for both of us by bonding with her.



Our children need our time, and they deserve the best we have to give them.

Over the years, I have learned not to rush through the moments I have with my child. I treasure the time spent counting her fingers and toes when she was a baby, singing to her when she was a toddler, and listening to her questions as she grew. I cherish each moment we have together, because before I know it, she'll be all grown up.

Remember to nurture, hug, touch, or cuddle your child each day. Your child will develop trust and feel more secure in the safety and warmth of your arms.

I feel that bonding with my child brings out the best in me, and also the best in her. I learn to nurture my child and understand her better, and she grows to understand my values, beliefs, and expectations. 🌿

The love one receives is as great as the love that one gives.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



◀ Tzu Chi volunteers in Dayton, Ohio, visited the local YWCA on December 2, 2015, to deliver their love and care to women and children affected by domestic violence. They hope that their care and gifts helped provide a warm holiday season.
Photo: Yunzhong Lin



◀ On November 18, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers and Tzu Shao high school volunteers organized canned food donations and delivered them to a food bank in Norwalk, California.
Photo: Jiande Wu



On November 24, 2015, Tzu Chi Mid-Atlantic Region hosted the annual Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. Representatives of Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and Buddhist faiths gathered together to lead the community in prayers for a world free from disaster.
Photo: Renjie Li



When tornadoes struck northern Texas in December 2015, the storms led to twelve deaths and destroyed over a thousand homes. Tzu Chi volunteers from Dallas visited the disaster area to hold four days of distributions, during which they helped nearly four hundred families. Photo: Peng-Fei Wu



▲ After devastating Mississippi River floods in late 2015 that were among the worst in history, Tzu Chi volunteers from throughout the Midwest Region reached out with love to those affected, distributing relief goods and more than \$130,000 in emergency cash to more than four hundred families. Here, volunteers comfort flood victims in St. Louis, Missouri, on January 16, 2016. Photo: Sylvia Aye



▲ On November 23, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers from the Greater Washington DC Region paid a pre-Thanksgiving visit to an elementary school in Silver Spring, Maryland, where they provided local care recipients with daily necessities and cash cards to help them pass a warmer winter. Photo: Mark Tsai



◀ Tzu Chi volunteers in Queens, New York, held a winter clothing distribution on December 13, 2015. Local low-income and homeless individuals were provided with jackets and other items to bring them warmth throughout the cold winter. Photo: Peter Lin



◀ On Christmas Day, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers in Seattle, Washington, delivered firewood, hats, scarves, and gloves to the Nickelsville homeless encampment. Besides the physical gifts, they created a warm holiday in the cold winter by showing their sincere love and care. Photo: Lijia Zhang



Nations Unies Conférence sur les Changements Climatiques 2015

COP21/CMP11

Target

Tzu Chi representatives joined the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, from November 30 to December 11, 2015. Alongside other NGOs and world leaders, they discussed humanity's impact on climate change and considering the best path forward for a brighter future. Here, Debra Boudreaux (second from right) and Dr. Chi-Ming Peng (right) discuss how Tzu Chi volunteers fight climate change during a December 1 press event. Photo provided by Tzu Chi USA Headquarters

COP21/CMP11

Paris, France



The devastating Valley Fire in September and October 2015 burned nearly two thousand buildings and led to four deaths in Lake County, California. On December 9, volunteers visited residents of Middletown, one of the hardest-hit areas, to provide free dental care and delicious vegetarian meals.

Photo: Winson Sun



On December 6, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers in Southern California held a free medical clinic at Charles H. Lee Elementary School to provide much-needed care to the Azusa community.

Photo: Andrew Lin



Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States and Haiti joined together in Port-au-Prince to hold a year-end blessing ceremony on December 17, 2015. Volunteers and supporters were thanked for their continued support and service.

Photo: Grace Wong

Clean Earth

La tierra limpia



By Sunny Su



From *Protecting Mother Earth*, a collection of stories about loving our Earth by kids for kids.

Collection Editor: Ralph Boyer

Collection Designer: Chinghui Chen

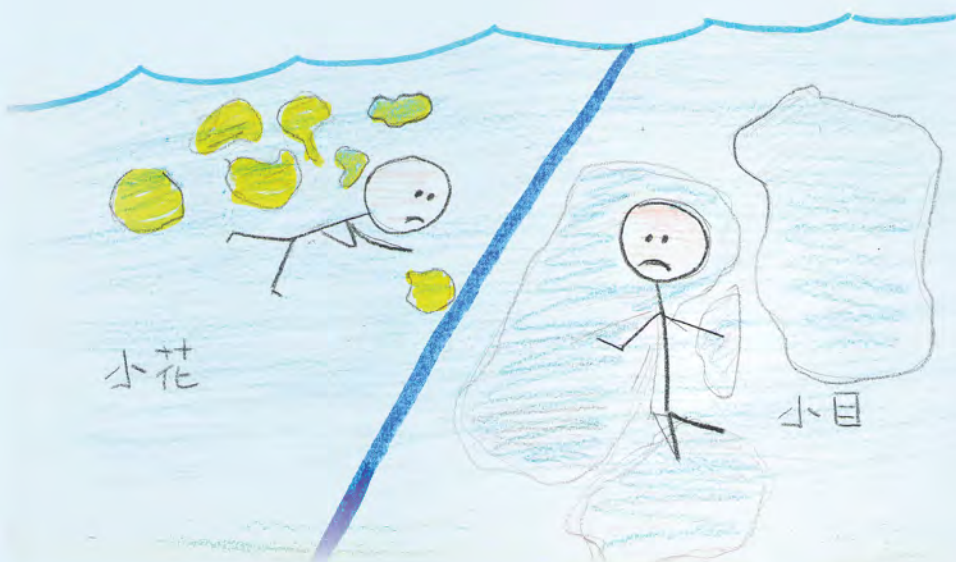
Spanish Translations: David Hoy & Emma Ong

Academy Teacher & Coordinator: Yali Li

Writers & Artists: Irvine Tzu Chi Academy Students

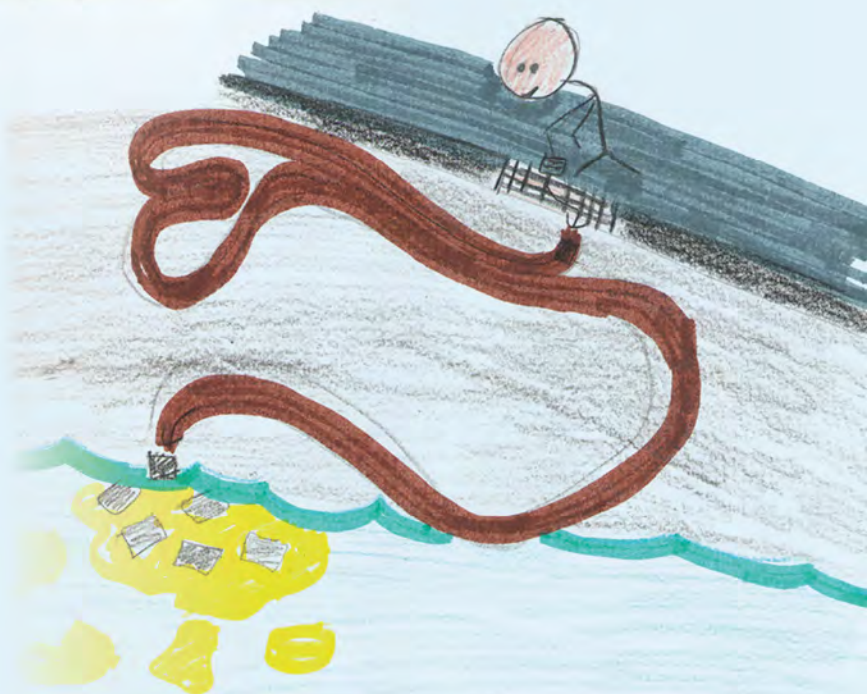
One day, in the year 2050, two people were swimming in the ocean. While they were swimming, Little Wood and Little Flower became trapped in a bunch of plastic. Little Wood's friend, Little Flower, accidentally swallowed some oil. While Little Wood kept struggling to free his friend from the plastic, Little Flower wanted to throw up.

Un día, en el año 2050, dos personas estaban nadando en el océano. Mientras nadaban, Maderita y Florecita quedaron atrapadas en un montón de plástico. La amiga de Maderita, Florecita, accidentalmente tomó un poco de aceite. Mientras que Maderita trabajaba para liberar a su amiga del plástico, Florecita quería vomitar.



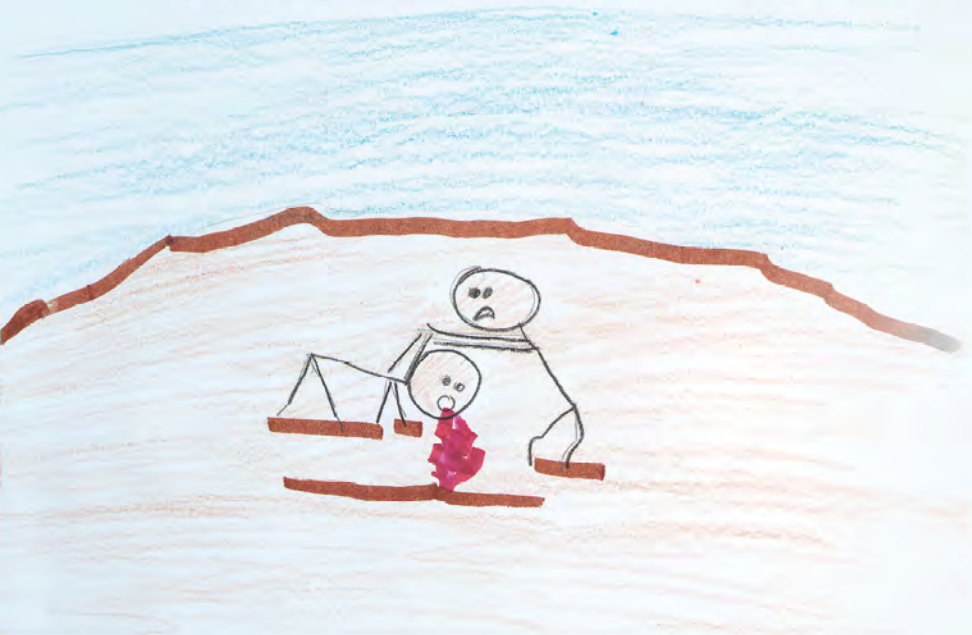
Because so many people threw their trash into the ocean, the ocean had become full of plastic bottles and oil. As a result, the ocean had become very dirty.

Porque mucha gente tira su basura en el océano, el océano se había llenado de botellas de plástico y de aceite, y como resultado estaba muy sucio.



Little Flower and Little Wood gradually were able to swim back to the shore. Once they reached the shore, Little Flower continued throwing up for a while. When she was no longer ill, the two friends looked back at the ocean. They were saddened by how dirty it had become.

Gradualmente Florecita y Maderita pudieron nadar de regreso a la playa. Cuando llegaron ahí, Florecita siguió vomitando por un rato. Cuando se compuso, los dos amigos miraron hacia el océano entristecido por lo sucio que se había convertido.



When they got home, they decided to come up with an idea to help make the ocean cleaner. In order to allow everyone to have a clean beach, they decided to gather a bunch of people together to work to protect the ocean environment.

Cuando llegaron a casa, decidieron crear una idea para ayudar a limpiar al océano. Para poder permitir que todos tuvieran una playa limpia, decidieron juntar un grupo de gente para trabajar en proteger el ambiente del océano.

Little Flower and Little Wood named their organization "Protecting the Ocean and its Environment." They gathered many people together, and once the people were introduced to the organization, they joined. All of the people wanted to have a better, cleaner ocean.

Maderita y Florecita nombraron a su organización "Protegiendo al Océano y su Ambiente." Se reunieron a mucha gente, y cuando les presentaron la organización ellos, se unieron. Toda la gente quería tener un océano mejor y más limpio.



This organization met every weekend in order to clean up the beaches. At the beach, they put up signs about not littering. They also put advertisements in newspapers and magazines about not littering. Everyone hoped to have a cleaner and healthier world.

Esta organización se reunía todos los fines de semana para limpiar las playas. En las playas, pusieron anuncios de no tirar basura. También pusieron propaganda para no tirar basura en periódicos y revistas. Todos esperaban tener un mundo más limpio y más saludable.



WORD SEARCH

Clean Earth

Circle the following words and phrase from the story.

Words are written down and across, but not diagonally.

Answer key and more in Issue 49!

A	E	K	L	N	M	A	O	U	X	L	M	A
E	N	W	D	A	P	R	O	Q	U	I	N	L
N	V	S	F	S	L	M	C	H	A	T	E	K
K	I	C	L	E	A	N	E	A	R	T	H	J
A	R	P	O	A	S	O	A	Q	E	E	S	H
X	O	Y	W	B	T	U	N	T	G	R	W	G
B	N	T	E	C	I	O	A	W	N	M	O	A
P	M	R	R	B	C	D	I	R	T	Y	O	V
I	E	P	R	O	T	E	C	T	B	G	D	B
A	N	H	A	E	Q	F	O	I	L	A	V	W
X	T	S	H	O	R	E	A	R	Y	T	N	Q
Z	V	X	E	H	E	A	L	T	H	I	E	R

CLEAN EARTH
WOOD
FLOWER
OCEAN

ENVIRONMENT
OIL
PLASTIC
SHORE

DIRTY
PROTECT
LITTER
HEALTHIER

The Lake's Saviors

Los que salvaron al lago



By Whitney Chang



Once upon a time, there was a fish called LeeLee. He liked to keep everything neat and tidy. Whenever he saw a dirty spot (or a spot that he just thought was dirty), he would clean it up immediately.

Hace mucho tiempo había un pez llamado LeeLee, a quien le gustaba mantener todo arreglado y en orden. Cuando veía una mancha sucia (o un lugar que él pensara que estaba sucio), lo limpiaba inmediatamente.



LeeLee's owner was named Maylee. Maylee was always busy cleaning her house everyday to make sure that it was neat and tidy also. Maylee, like LeeLee, loved to keep everything VERY clean. Maylee's hobbies were cleaning and going to the lake to see the birds and fish. She often went to the lake when she wasn't cleaning her house.

El dueño de LeeLee se llamaba Maylee. Maylee siempre estaba ocupada limpiando su casa para asegurarse que todo estaba intachable también. Maylee, al igual que LeeLee, le encantaba mantener todo muy limpio. Los pasatiempos de Maylee eran limpiar e ir al lago a ver a las aves y los peces. Cuando no estaba limpiando su casa se iba al lago.





One Day, Maylee was cleaning her room and LeeLee was swimming in the lake. Suddenly, LeeLee spotted a portion of the lake engulfed in trash. He was dumbfounded and rushed home to tell Maylee the horrifying news.

Un día, Maylee estaba limpiando su cuarto y LeeLee estaba nadando en el lago. De repente, LeeLee vio una porción del lago llena de basura. Estaba perplejo y corrió a casa a darle la terrible noticia a Maylee.

Maylee rushed to the lake, where she saw with her own eyes that the lake WAS polluted and engulfed in trash! Maylee looked at LeeLee and said in a very worried, brokenhearted voice, "Since when did this become a trash dump?" LeeLee replied, "I don't know! I was just swimming when I spotted this."

Maylee corrió al lago donde miró con sus propios ojos que el lago estaba contaminado y lleno de basura. Maylee miró a LeeLee y le dijo con voz muy preocupada y con el corazón quebrantado, "¿Desde cuándo el lago se convirtió en un basurero?" LeeLee contestó, "¡No lo sé! Estaba nadando cuando vi esto."





Without wasting a second, Maylee rushed home to get her cleaning supplies. She then rushed back to the lake. Maylee cleaned the eastern part of the lake, while LeeLee tidied up the western part. After two long hours of work, Maylee and LeeLee tidied up and cleaned the entire lake.

Sin perder un segundo, Maylee corrió a su casa por artículos de limpieza. Luego se regresó al lago. Maylee limpió la parte este del lago, mientras LeeLee limpiaba el oeste. Después de dos largas horas de trabajo, Maylee y LeeLee arreglaron y limpiaron todo el lago.

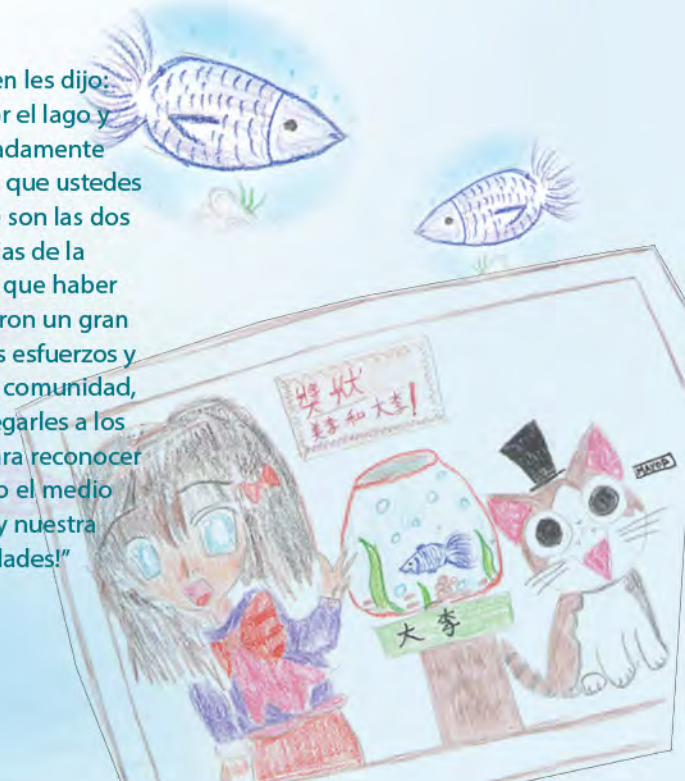
When Maylee and LeeLee finished, they had a very long walk to get back home. With exhaustion setting in, and Maylee carrying all of the cleaning supplies, they were VERY tired when they got home. When Maylee lay down on her bed and LeeLee went back to his aquarium, they fell asleep in less than a second. After nine hours, they received a phone call.

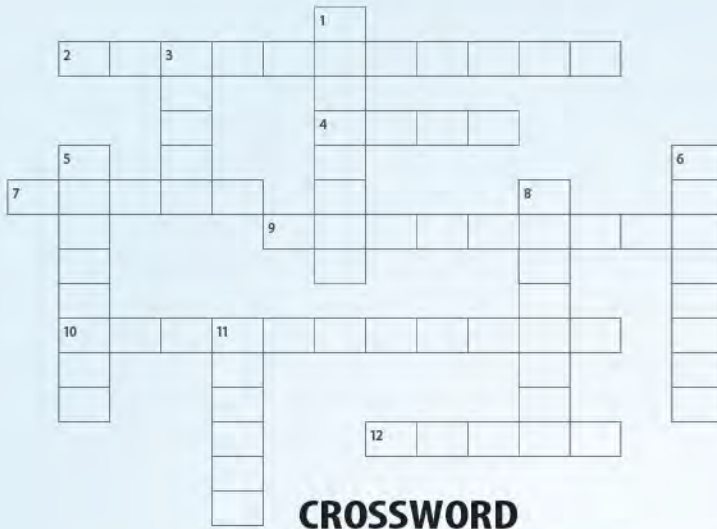
Cuando Maylee y LeeLee terminaron, tenían una larga caminata para regresar a casa. Con tanto trabajo y con Maylee cargando todas las cosas de limpieza, llegaron a la casa muy cansados. Cuando Maylee se acostó en su cama y LeeLee regresó a su acuario, se quedaron dormidos en menos de un segundo. Después de nueve horas, recibieron una llamada telefónica.



It was the mayor! The mayor said, "I just passed the lake and found that it is extremely clean. I figured that since you two are the cleanest people in the community, you had to be the ones who cleaned it. You guys did a great job! I appreciate your contribution and effort for the community. I would like to give you both an award to recognize your achievement in taking care of the environment, the Earth, and our community. Congratulations!"

¡Era el alcalde! Quien les dijo: "Acabo de pasar por el lago y vi que está extremadamente limpio. Me imaginé que ustedes lo limpiaron ya que son las dos personas más limpias de la comunidad, tienen que haber sido ustedes. ¡Hicieron un gran trabajo! Aprecio sus esfuerzos y contribuciones a la comunidad, y me gustaría entregarles a los dos un galardón para reconocer sus logros cuidando el medio ambiente, la tierra y nuestra comunidad. ¡Felicidades!"





CROSSWORD
The Lake's Saviors

Across

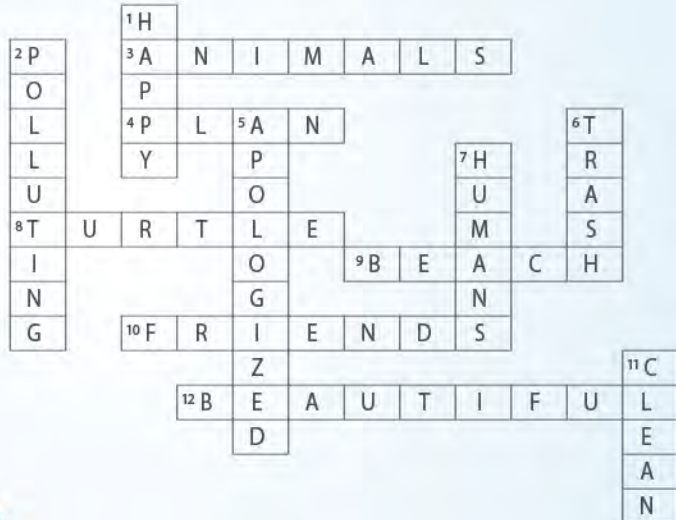
2. How LeeLee felt when he saw the trash.
4. Where LeeLee went swimming.
7. Maylee and LeeLee were given one of this.
9. The mayor wanted to ____ their achievement.
10. LeeLee always cleaned dirty spots ____.
12. Maylee liked to see them fly by the lake.

Down

1. Maylee saw that the lake was this.
3. He called Maylee and LeeLee at the end.
5. LeeLee liked to go ____ in the lake.
6. One of Maylee's favorite hobbies.
8. Trash ____ the lake.
11. The mayor appreciated their contribution and ____.

Issue 47 Answer Key

Crossword: The Turtle Clean Up



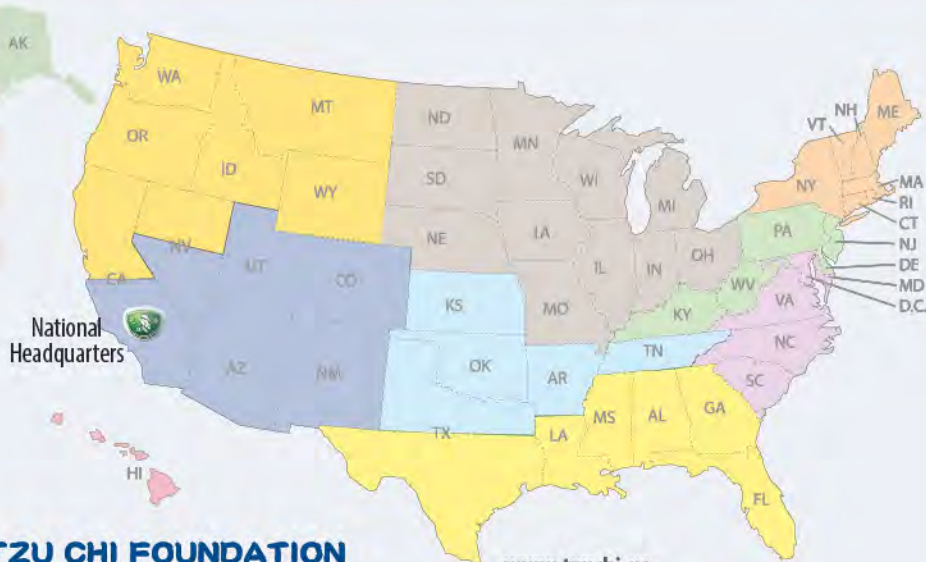
Word Search: The Beautiful Ocean



Answer key and more in Issue 49!



TZU CHI FOUNDATION, U.S.A. LOCATION DIRECTORY



BUDDHIST TZU CHI FOUNDATION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1100 S. Valley Center Ave., San Dimas CA 91773
Tel: 909-447-7799 Fax: 909-447-7948

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BUDDHIST TZU CHI FOUNDATION, NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (WESTERN REGION)
1100 S. Valley Center Ave.
San Dimas, CA 91773
Tel: 909-447-7799
Fax: 909-447-7948

BUDDHIST TZU CHI MEDICAL FOUNDATION
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Tel: 310-684-4466
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Fax: 973-857-9555

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Tel: 973-857-8666
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NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE OFFICE
839 Nakomis Dr. N.E.
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NEW YORK

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NEW YORK**
Tel: 718-888-0866
Fax: 718-460-2068

**NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE SERVICE CENTER**
4527 Dwight Evans Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28217
Tel: 704-281-8060
Fax: 704-943-1031

RALEIGH SERVICE CENTER
3705 Mason Road
New Hills, NC 27562
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Fax: 713-981-9008

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Fax: 713-395-0305

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Fax: 703-707-8607

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Tel: 425-822-7678
Fax: 425-822-6169

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Tel: 425-822-7678
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Brookfield, WI 53005

TZU CHI

A BRIEF HISTORY...

In 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Merits Society in Hualien with the support of thirty housewives who each put aside a couple cents of their grocery money every day to establish a charity fund. In the first year, they helped a total of thirty-one elderly, ill, and poor people from fifteen families. As word spread, more people participated and the program gathered strength. It spread beyond Hualien: first across the island and then around the world.

Today, Tzu Chi is a nonprofit charitable organization with ten million volunteers and donors in fifty countries worldwide. Over the past fifty years, Tzu Chi's four missions—Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture—have grown from the seeds of gratitude, respect, and love, and Tzu Chi's activities have expanded to include international disaster relief, bone marrow donation, community volunteerism, and environmental conservation.

In the United States, Tzu Chi operates nine regional service areas with more than eighty offices and facilities nationwide. Volunteers give back to their local communities through family services, emergency disaster relief, homeless services, school support programs, college scholarships, income tax reporting assistance, relief distributions, holiday care packs, free and low-cost medical clinics and outreaches, preventive health education, cancer support groups, character education curricula, community education classes, and production of positive, inspiring media.

Whenever disaster strikes at home or abroad, Tzu Chi volunteers deliver cash aid, hot meals, and emergency relief supplies directly into the hands of disaster survivors. Over the years, US Tzu Chi volunteers have actively provided relief after such major disasters as 9/11, Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, and earthquakes in Haiti, Japan, and Nepal.

In recent years, Tzu Chi volunteers' charitable work has been increasingly recognized by the global community. Tzu Chi was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2010 and honored as a White House Champion of Change in 2013. Dharma Master Cheng Yen was presented with the Roosevelt Institute's FDR Distinguished Public Service Award and named to the TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people in 2011, and honored with the Rotary International Award of Honor in 2014.



SPREAD THE SEEDS OF LOVE



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*Our responsibility
in life is to do
the greatest good
for all of humanity.*

*Jing Si Aphorism by
Dharma Master
Cheng Yen*

