

COMPASSION & RELIEF

TZU CHI USA JOURNAL



Hurricane Sandy **Special Report**



ALSO INSIDE:

**CENTRAL VALLEY MEDICAL OUTREACH
SOWING SEEDS OF LOVE ALONG HWY 99**



ISSUE 35 | SPRING 2013



DHARMA MASTER CHENG YEN,
FOUNDER OF
TZU CHI FOUNDATION

CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

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

Safeguard Our Hearts with Discipline

Abide by rules, uphold precepts, prevent wrongdoings, stop evil.
Avoid planting evil seeds and producing evil fruits.

Give rise to a good thought, eliminate an evil thought.
With good thoughts in our minds,
we will guard against the Three Poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance.
With Right Dharma in our actions,
we will not create the Threefold Karma of body, speech, and mind.

Do not forego good deeds because they are minor.
Do not commit bad deeds because they are minor.
Guard against evil, proactively do good.
Do not just wait for an opportunity,
seize every moment, every day, to be diligent.

Compiled into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team

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Bringing Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva to Life

In Buddhism, there is a Bodhisattva who embodies the spirit of compassion. This Bodhisattva, named Avalokitesvara, is so full of love that she cannot bear for people to suffer. When she sees or hears people in distress or difficulty, she goes to them very quickly to offer aid and relief. Exercising wisdom and compassion, she not only helps them out of their material difficulties, but guides them with the Dharma so they may gain the insight to liberate themselves from their suffering and attain true happiness.

Actually, all of us can be Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Deep in our hearts, we have the same great compassion. Why have we not been able to tap into this compassion? It is because it has been buried away beneath our afflictions and delusions. Once we clean away this layer of afflictions and delusions, we will discover our true heart, full of love, compassion, and understanding. Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is not just a figure in Buddhism we hear about—in fact, we are Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is us.

There is a lot of suffering in the world. Seeing the suffering of others, we can do as Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva does and go to people to help them out of their plight.

The story of Mr. Chang is a very good example. Mr. Chang is an elderly man who used to own a lumber company. At the prime of his life, he became addicted to gambling and incurred so much debt that he had to sell his business. His life went downhill from there. Faced with his misfortunes, he lost all sense of hope and motivation and gave up on himself. He became very self-isolated and eventually was so poor that he subsisted on food scraps from scavenging. He lived like this for many years.

One day, Tzu Chi volunteers came to learn of Mr. Chang's situation. They decided to visit him, and after seeing what terrible conditions he lived in, they began to visit him regularly to offer aid and care. Mr. Chang, however, had developed a deep mistrust of people and was far from welcoming. Tzu Chi volunteers had to be very gentle and loving



From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks
Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

with him, patiently building rapport with him over a period of four years. Gradually, touched by their sincere care, he began to open his heart to the volunteers.

Since Mr. Chang was still able-bodied, they encouraged him to get out more and interact with people, and invited him to help out at the local Tzu Chi office. He began to do this. When he was there, he would help mop the floor and wash vegetables in the kitchen. He was very motivated. Whenever he was finished with one task, he would quickly find another. Later, with the help of Tzu Chi volunteers, he found a job. After many years of interactions with Tzu Chi volunteers, he decided to enter training to become a certified Tzu Chi volunteer. Now, he is a certified member of Tzu Chi's Tzu Cheng Faith Corps; he goes with other volunteers to help people in need. So transformed is his life now that one would never guess the life he once led.

His story illuminates the heart of Tzu Chi's spirit and practice. In Tzu Chi, we learn to feel for others' suffering. Through

our efforts to understand our own suffering and afflictions, we gain the insight and understanding to help others. With this, we can better relate to others and help them out of their difficulties.

As Mr. Chang's case shows us, these difficulties are often not only physical and material. It therefore takes more than one-time aid. That is why we visit our care recipients regularly, giving them encouragement, support, and love in their time of difficulty. We seek to be their spiritual friends, and by sharing our experiences and insights into life with them they can gradually open their hearts and break free from their afflictions. Then they can begin to see life differently and consider doing something that is more meaningful or beneficial to others. If we can continue to offer care and support by being their friends and guides, people can be transformed, just like Mr. Chang.

Doing this, we bring to life the spirit of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. 🌿

Tiny Droplets of Love

Han Huang

Several months ago, even before Hurricane Sandy struck, Dharma Master Cheng Yen gave her U.S. disciples a simple message that left a deep impression: "If the U.S. does not awaken, the world cannot awaken!"

In recent years, natural and man-made disasters in the United States have been ever more frequent and ever more destructive. In 2012, we saw widespread forest fires in several western states; uncharacteristic earthquakes in Oklahoma and Maine; a lengthy heat wave that stretched across the country; a Midwest drought that caused corn to wither in the fields; and widespread devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy.

The Buddha teaches that disasters arise from the greed, anger, and ignorance in our hearts; in our society today, we can see more and more turbulence caused by hearts out of balance. This is what concerns Master Cheng Yen. "If the U.S. does not awaken, the world cannot awaken!" So how are we to awaken?

After several years of a down economy, more people are in need of aid than ever before, so we need more people to join the mission of love to help them. When I visited Hualien to request Master's guidance, she responded earnestly and sincerely. She asked: if everyone were to save just ten cents a day in a bamboo bank to donate, would it impact our livelihood? She encouraged us to share this message: small contributions of love can accumulate into Great Love.

Master Cheng Yen, with her compassion and wisdom, immediately struck at the heart of the issue. If we each donate just ten cents, or even a dollar, each day, we will barely notice. Each month, what does it cost us? One cup of coffee? But when many accumulate compassion and kindness, the combined strength is inconceivable. Didn't Tzu Chi, with its millions of active

volunteers worldwide, begin as just a small group of housewives putting coins into bamboo banks?

Tzu Chi Director of Global Affairs Stephen Huang immediately took Master's words to heart. He asked for twelve bamboo banks so that he could cultivate blessings for his friends and family, for those he'd lost, and for those yet to come. The next day, he told a friend what Master had said. This friend not only donated generously, he also requested a bamboo bank for his company. As friends of family members and friends of those friends heard about the initiative, all were eager to answer the call.

When we are safe and healthy, we often overlook the need to do good deeds. But we should see that this time is our opportunity to cultivate. Master reminds us that those who are blessed should go help those who suffer; this is how the cycle of love is set in motion. Each of us can do our part, big or small, to help others.

While the bamboo bank is a good example, the help we give need not be money. After Hurricane Sandy, volunteers on the East Coast gave their time and skills to cook food, assess needs, distribute goods, and collaborate with other aid organizations. Some blessed to live outside the disaster area also traveled there to offer support. Others gathered donations, held events to raise awareness, or manned Tzu Chi's disaster hotline.

Compassion is priceless. When disasters are frequent and the economy is poor, it is vital that we bring forth our benevolence, cultivate our compassion, and carry out the bamboo bank spirit each and every day, and that we inspire our relatives, coworkers, and friends to do the same. Only when the benevolence of many accumulates can all minds be purified, society be peaceful, and the world be free of disasters. 🌿

**Hurricane Sandy
Special Report**

Love & Care to the Northeast



Misfortunes in the world have the power to inspire compassion.
An act of giving has the power to touch our heart.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Photos: Peter Lin



The Storm

On October 22, 2012, a storm began to form in the southern Caribbean. As it grew in strength, the newly-named Hurricane Sandy raged through Jamaica, Cuba, and the Bahamas on a northward trajectory. It damaged more than one hundred thousand homes in Cuba, flooded streets and homes throughout the region, cut power for millions, and washed away valuable crops. Although Haiti lay outside the direct path, its poor, earthquake-damaged infrastructure was no match for the storm. Strong winds, heavy flooding, and an ensuing resurgence of the cholera epidemic left more than one hundred dead in Haiti alone.

As Sandy left the Caribbean, early simulations predicted that it would travel safely out to sea. But it veered westward instead, making landfall in New Jersey on October 29. By the time it dissipated two days later, Sandy had become one of the most destructive hurricanes in United States history. From North Carolina to New York, Sandy caused over 130 deaths, left eight million without power—thousands of them for over two weeks—and destroyed homes, vehicles, and priceless belongings. Across twenty-four affected states, Sandy caused more than fifty billion dollars in estimated damage: a staggering figure surpassed only by Hurricane Katrina in U.S. history. 🌿



Volunteers distribute relief goods in Broad Channel, New York. Photo: William Yang

**Hurricane Sandy
Special Report**

The Relief

Although many Tzu Chi volunteers along the East Coast were personally affected by the storm, they quickly mobilized to help those even less fortunate. On October 30, the morning after the storm, volunteers in New York and New Jersey set out to assess the damage to their communities and plan appropriate assistance for those in greatest need.

The same day, volunteers in New York were called upon by the Office of Emergency Management to serve hot meals to a shelter in hard-hit Lower Manhattan. Lacking power, they cooked under the dim glow of headlamps and flashlights, and served meals to seven hundred displaced victims of the storm. The next day, they served eight hundred more. By November 16, they had served more than eight thousand meals, not just in the shelter, but in Chinatown, Flushing, Staten Island, and Rockaway as well. As they did so, they also offered eco-friendly blankets to those left without power to heat their cold homes.

In New Jersey, Tzu Chi's regional office was one of the millions of buildings left without

electricity in the aftermath of the storm. Nonetheless, volunteers were determined to make a difference. Learning that 250 residents of nearby Teterboro had been evacuated to a shelter, they quickly mobilized to purchase and deliver water and food on October 31.

As volunteers in both states continued to offer comfort and support to those affected by the storm, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien and USA Headquarters in Southern California coordinated daily with local volunteers, shipped necessary relief materials, and worked to raise both funds and awareness across the globe.

On November 10, less than two weeks after the storm struck, Tzu Chi held its first major relief distribution in five locations across New York and New Jersey. Hurricane victims deemed eligible for cash support were given emergency cash cards: between \$300 and \$600 per household. These cards were meant to help the hardest-hit families through the tough first weeks after the disaster by allowing them the financial flexibility to replace water-logged clothing and food rotting in powerless refrigerators, and

purchase tools to repair damaged homes, milk to feed babies, medicines to help the sick and elderly, and anything else that could start them down the road to recovery.

On that first day, more than \$700,000 was distributed to more than twelve hundred households in the first five locations. By December 4, more than \$8.2 million had been given to nearly fourteen thousand families in many of the region's hardest-hit communities.

Whether distributing cash, food, blankets, or other daily necessities, Tzu Chi volunteers did not work alone. They collaborated closely with aid organizations, community leaders, and local religious groups to effectively reach those most affected and positively supplement the support given by others. Across New York City, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation held distributions in a variety of locations, including a Catholic church, a Baptist church, and a Jewish senior center. In the New Jersey boroughs of South Toms River and Keansburg, the local mayors not only helped coordinate their boroughs' respective

distributions, they even put on Tzu Chi vests to volunteer and encouraged their family members to do the same.

On November 18, New York City Comptroller John C. Liu called a press conference to announce Tzu Chi's "unprecedented \$10 million Thanksgiving emergency cash assistance program for storm survivors." Surrounded by local religious leaders of all faiths, he introduced Tzu Chi to the assembled media, describing the love and care that Tzu Chi had been delivering from the moment Sandy struck and thanking Tzu Chi volunteers and donors for their generosity and kindness.

As communities slowly recover from Hurricane Sandy, as its damage is repaired and its victims get back on their feet, Tzu Chi will remain engaged. Over the months that follow, relief of individuals' immediate needs will gradually give way to support of communities' long-term health, and Tzu Chi volunteers will continue to sow the seeds of love throughout the Northeast. 🌱



Volunteers worked closely with several local churches to reach those in need of help. Photo: Peter Chu

Tzu Chi Relief Distributions

In the first five weeks after Hurricane Sandy, Tzu Chi volunteers supported more than forty thousand people with cash cards, meals, and relief goods, including but not limited to:

Emergency Cash	Blankets	Hot Meals	Hygiene Kits	Instant Rice Meals (Family Pack)	Bamboo Banks
\$8.2 million	8,900	8,125	2,182	3,685	6,776

*As of 12/4/2012. Not a comprehensive list. Source: Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Charity Development Department



The bamboo bank represents the spirit of Tzu Chi: tiny droplets of love have the collective power to achieve great things. Photo: Peter Lin



Even without power, volunteers cooked healthy vegetarian meals for hundreds. Photo: Peter Lin



In the cold Northeast winter, Tzu Chi gave warmth: warm soup, warm blankets, warm smiles. Photo: Peter Lin



Immediately after the storm, volunteers ventured into the hardest-hit communities to assess damage. Photo: Peter Lin



The storm left some with nothing but the clothes on their backs. After arriving at the distribution site at 1 AM and standing in line for nine hours, Cassie was touched to meet people who truly cared. Photo: Youren Hong



Tzu Chi New York Regional Director George Chang speaks alongside New York City Comptroller John C. Liu. Photo: Peter Lin



Volunteers as far away as Thailand (L) and Singapore (R) raised funds on the streets. Photos: Yafeng Kang (L), Jingyi Guo (R)

Hurricane Sandy
Special Report

The Support

Dharma Master Cheng Yen has said, "When the unfortunate cannot find help, those who are blessed must go to them." When the people of the Northeast suffered in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, those blessed to live in unaffected areas did just that. Volunteers living as far away as North Carolina, Canada, and the Pacific Coast traveled to the disaster area to provide love and care alongside their local Tzu Chi brethren. As Tzu Chi volunteers always do when disaster strikes, they took time off from their jobs and paid all their own expenses to help at disaster sites.

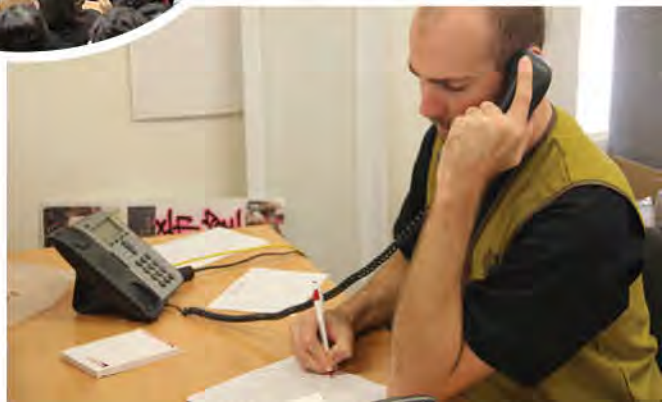
Across the country and around the globe, volunteers of all ages, religions, and ethnicities took to the streets to raise funds for those affected by the storm. From Oregon to Georgia, South Africa to Japan, and everywhere in between, volunteers

devoted their time and energy to educating others about Hurricane Sandy and accepting donations with bows of gratitude. Generous donors across the United States and more than thirty countries around the world heeded the call. Their donations, both large and small, accumulated into the emergency funds that allowed volunteers to serve more than forty thousand in the first five weeks. 🌿



On November 30, volunteers in Cerritos, California, held a concert for Sandy relief. Photo: Fusan Yeh

Volunteers in San Dimas, California, answered the emergency hotline, even on Thanksgiving Day. Photo: Sheng Ping Liu





Mayor Joseph Champagne of South Toms River, New Jersey, volunteered personally to help others. Photo Weizhi Tang

Hurricane Sandy
Special Report

The Response

Hurricane Sandy's devastating physical impact was matched only by its emotional toll. As it destroyed property, it also replaced a season spent in the warm company of family and friends with a long road of struggle. But in the wake of disaster, many also saw the return of a greater sense of community among neighbors. For thousands, it brought caring Tzu Chi volunteers into their lives.

Expressing gratitude through action, many care recipients donned Tzu Chi volunteer vests to give back to others just as they had received; others adopted bamboo banks and returned them filled with funds to help the less fortunate. In the days that followed, many sent their words of thanks.

"Each day the kindness and caring of strangers touches me deeply. I hope that in the not too distant future I will be able to give back the way you have given to us." – Mary Ellen

"Thank you. I was a stranger. You reached out and touched me. Thank you." – Bill

"The warmth of your generosity will help to see us through this disaster." – Paul

"Thank you so much not just for the monetary gift. For your compassion, hope and comfort." – Kerry

"I cannot even begin to express our gratitude and I look forward to working with the Tzu Chi Foundation to bring that same feeling of hope to others." – Anne. 🌿

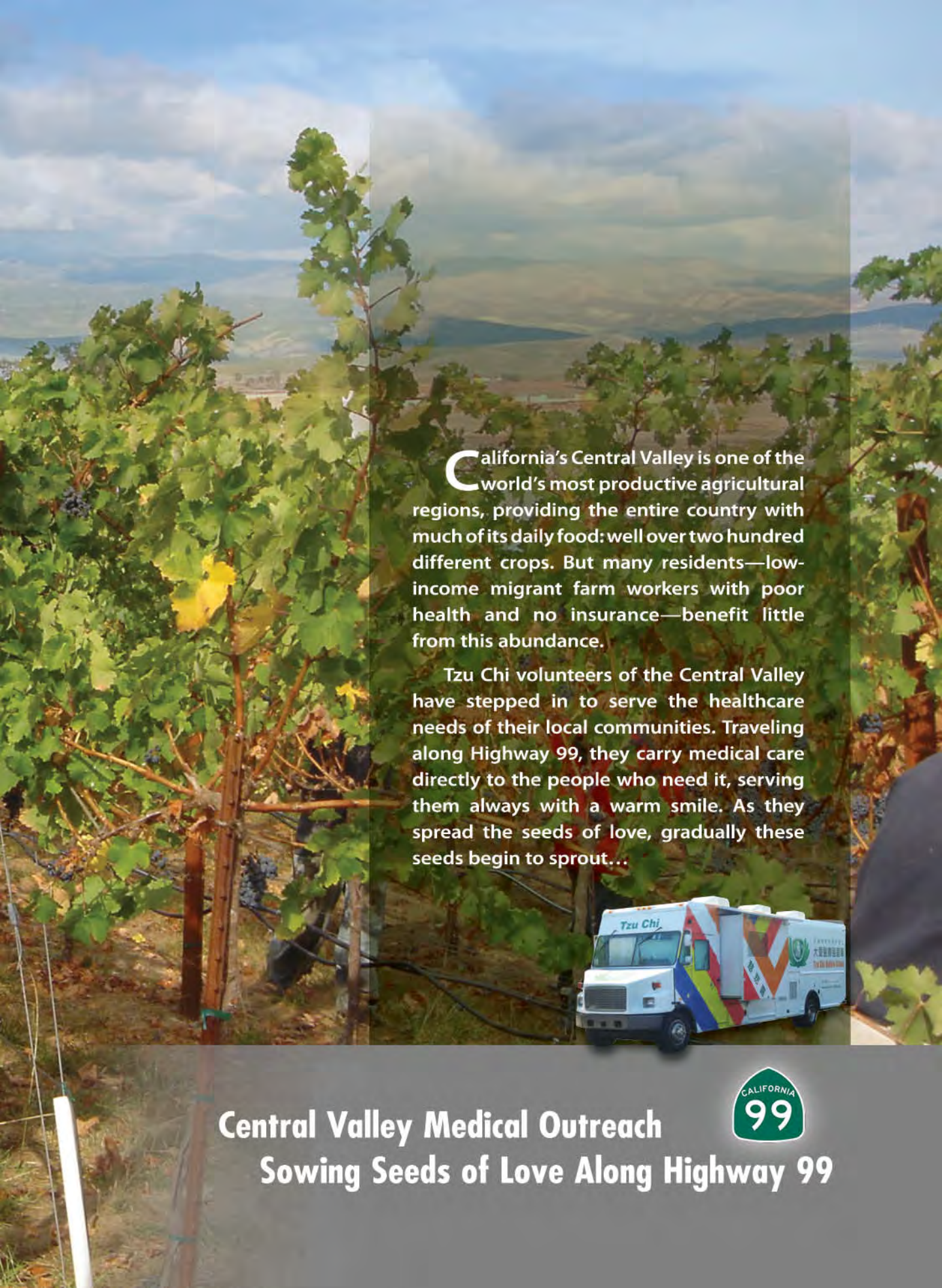


Photo: Chen Lee

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For a full report on Tzu Chi's Hurricane Sandy relief effort, please see USA Journal Issue 36 in Summer 2013.





California's Central Valley is one of the world's most productive agricultural regions, providing the entire country with much of its daily food: well over two hundred different crops. But many residents—low-income migrant farm workers with poor health and no insurance—benefit little from this abundance.

Tzu Chi volunteers of the Central Valley have stepped in to serve the healthcare needs of their local communities. Traveling along Highway 99, they carry medical care directly to the people who need it, serving them always with a warm smile. As they spread the seeds of love, gradually these seeds begin to sprout...



Central Valley Medical Outreach

Sowing Seeds of Love Along Highway 99



Tracing Footsteps to Provide Care

Shirley Tseng & Terry Lin | Translated by An Ning

*He ploughs the field under the midday sun,
His sweat drips down onto the soil beneath.
Who remembers that every grain on the plate
Comes from the hard toil of the farmer?*

The gratitude for farmers' labor expressed in this classical Chinese poem is aptly recalled by the volunteers of Tzu Chi's medical mission.

Dr. Chin-Lon Lin, the first medical director of Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic encouraged others to "enter into the community and serve more people." Prior to the free clinic's official establishment in 1993, medical professionals had already begun providing free medical services to underprivileged individuals in collaboration with Foothill Unity Center in Monrovia, California. They also provided treatment to residents of a low-income public housing complex in El Monte.

Even then, Tzu Chi volunteers understood that the food on the dining table at every meal was the result of agricultural workers farming and harvesting the fields. Agricultural production in California flourished, but summers were exceedingly hot. Farm workers labored under high temperatures that often exceeded one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Their work was undeniably difficult.

Mr. Liao, owner of Lucky Farms and a consistent supporter of Tzu Chi, mentioned that his farms in San Bernardino County hired many migrant workers. Most of them were impoverished immigrants who desperately needed help. From this beginning, Tzu Chi and California farm workers began a long relationship of mutual gratitude and compassion.

In 1994, Tzu Chi began to partner with Catholic Charities and The Boys and Girls Club, two local community organizations, to organize annual medical outreach clinics for farm workers in San Bernardino County.

"We found that many farm workers are carriers of tuberculosis. In impoverished communities, tuberculosis has widespread effects, so we needed to follow up with treatment," explains Debra Boudreaux, CEO of Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation. "Workers we had treated would tell us about their whereabouts from January to June, and their whereabouts from June to December, so we traced their footsteps up north. Footprints of Tzu Chi's free clinics can now be found in towns all along Interstate 5 and Highway 99."

Tzu Chi volunteers followed the footsteps of the migrant workers, moving from San Bernardino County up to Northridge and Antelope Valley in northern Los Angeles County. Then they continued further north to towns such as Bakersfield in Kern County. Taking out an old photo, Boudreaux points to a young boy and explains, "We followed and cared for this chubby little boy and his whole family."

The boy and his family lived with other farm workers in migrating camps. Typically,

the narrowly-spaced mobile homes in these camps would each house a family of about ten members. Sanitary conditions were seriously substandard. Consequently, children were often susceptible to gastrointestinal diseases. The adults, who harvested grapes and other crops in the fields, typically stood from 4 AM until mid-afternoon: often over ten hours a day. Many suffered from pains and injuries, poor blood circulation, and ingrown nails.

Boudreaux explains, "Many seasonal workers are immigrants. They are very reserved. In the

What Tzu Chi can do by itself is limited by available resources, but what it can inspire others to achieve is limitless.

early days, Tzu Chi volunteers knew that farm workers must work during the day, so they would go directly to farm worker camps from 4 PM to 7 PM to provide medical services. Initially workers and camp owners did not trust the volunteers. They were hesitant to seek us out for medical treatment because they suspected we might be from Immigration or another government agency."

Tzu Chi first came into contact with the boy's family in a camp in Bakersfield. At the time, the boy's mother was already suffering severe pain from an ingrown toenail, but she was afraid to come out for treatment. Tzu Chi volunteers treated the child first and gave him a haircut. The child went home and told his family. His mother then came to seek medical treatment after hearing about her son's experience with Tzu Chi. Doctors resolved her physical pain through surgery and continued with follow up treatments. Gradually, workers began to understand that Tzu Chi volunteers were sincere in helping them. As their trust grew, they began to offer information on where they would migrate next, so Tzu Chi volunteers

began to negotiate with local communities to hold free clinics.

Tzu Chi Free Clinic in Alhambra did not have well-equipped mobile clinics until 2000. In those pre-mobile clinic days, setting up a free clinic was an elaborate and arduous undertaking. Just imagine carving out a vast empty space to build exam rooms and treatment areas for three key practice areas—general medicine, dentistry, and acupuncture. Apart from the roof and walls, volunteers essentially had to transport the entire clinic: all the clinical

equipment—including exam tables, room dividers, over forty tables, more than two hundred chairs, and even stethoscopes—had to be moved. Televisions were even set up to educate children on oral hygiene.

Medical outreach events are typically held on Sundays. In those early days, dental director Dr. Stephen Fuang and director of acupuncture Michelle Hsieh, L.Ac., would be especially busy the few days prior to every



From the establishment of the first Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic in 1993, volunteers have reached out to the community to help people in need. Photo provided by Hui-Ping Wang



With the advent of the first Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic in 2000, volunteers have been equipped to take loving care to more remote locations. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

medical outreach event. During the day, they would be busy at their own clinics. Then, in the evenings, they would arrive at the Tzu Chi Free Clinic to prepare medical equipment and other necessities. Preparation was especially time-consuming as dental equipment and supplies are quite complex, so Dr. Fuang often slept in the Free Clinic. The day before each event, volunteers mobilized to load all the equipment and supplies into vehicles, then drove to the event site to put up tents. On the day of the event, volunteers would return in the early morning hours to set up clinical stations. Aside from such physical labor, planning each medical outreach event also required many intricate details, such as applying for government permits and insurance coverage.

"Continued medical outreach not only helps underprivileged groups. Tzu Chi also hopes to inspire other healthcare organizations to offer similar services." Debra Boudreaux has been mobilizing volunteers and planning outreach events since the very beginning, when the Tzu Chi Free Clinic was first established. With each outreach, she hopes that Tzu Chi is able to motivate local healthcare clinics to initiate their own efforts to provide services to impoverished residents. What Tzu Chi can do by itself is limited by available resources, but what it can inspire others to achieve is limitless.

Prior to each outreach, Tzu Chi volunteers frequently interact with the local community,

so many community groups now understand Tzu Chi's operational model and have begun to adopt similar approaches in serving their local communities. Boudreaux tells of a street in Panorama City that was overtaken by prostitution, gang violence, and drug trafficking; it was the dark corner of the local community. Tzu Chi conducted three medical outreach events there, inspiring a local social worker to return to school for an advanced degree in public health. Subsequently, community clinics were opened with government sponsorship and were able to operate independently. Tzu Chi no longer needs to return to offer medical services.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic is now marching into its twentieth year. Since 1994, Tzu Chi has held numerous free clinic events of varying scales. The year 1998 marked the peak of medical outreach. For thirty-two of the fifty-two weeks that year, Tzu Chi volunteers took their talents and medical supplies to a different area each week to provide free medical services.

In recent years, the impact of the economic downturn has caused even formerly-middle-class citizens to become homeless, and veterans' benefits have been reduced significantly. Adapting to these changing needs, Tzu Chi has expanded its scope of free medical services in California. In addition to serving farm workers, Tzu Chi's medical volunteers now also serve the homeless, and this year plan to extend medical services to include veterans and prisoners.

Wherever there is a need, Tzu Chi volunteers will go. The footprints of love will never cease. 🌿

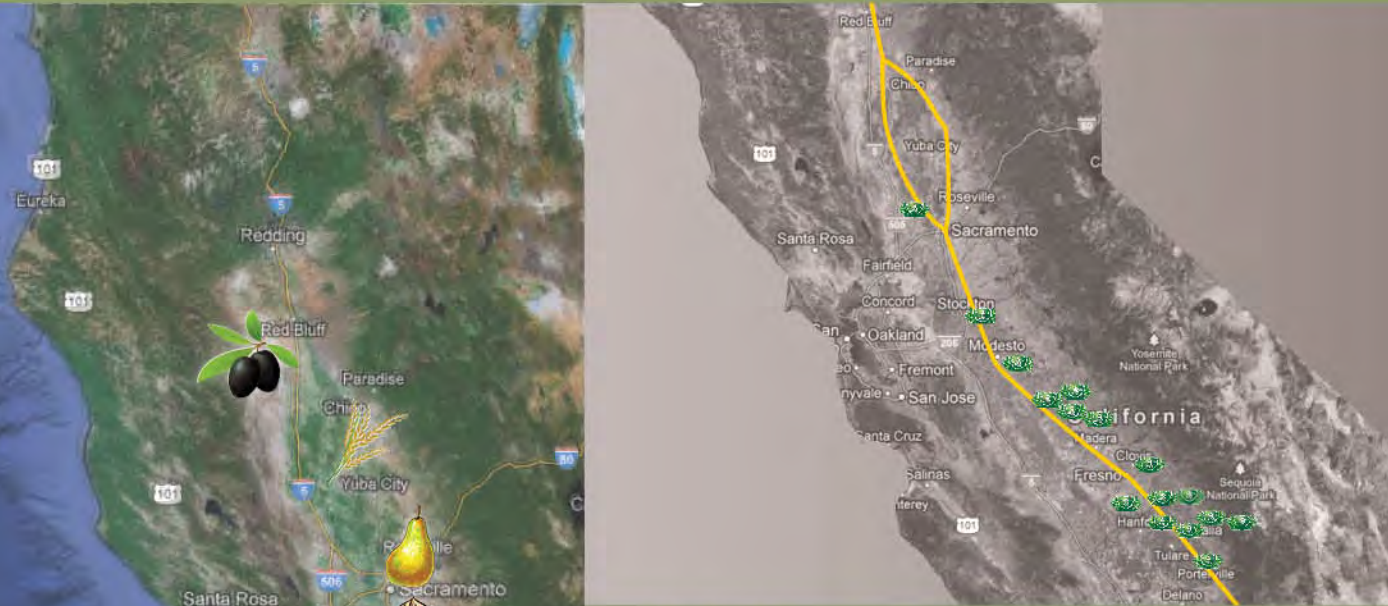
When the unfortunate cannot find help, those who are blessed must go to them.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

California's Bountiful Central Valley



Central Valley Medical



Medical Outreach Locations (2001 - 2011)

Nearly half of U.S.-grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables are grown in California: most of them by seasonal migrant workers in the Central Valley. From 2001 to 2011, many thousands of low-income, uninsured patients were served through 278 medical outreaches along the Central Valley's Highway 99.





Great Need in a Land of Plenty

Colin Legerton

Though better known for the business and cultural meccas of San Francisco and Los Angeles, the world-famous Hollywood entertainment industry, and the unique combination of favorable weather and wildly varied topography that makes it possible to ski and surf all on the same day, California is also home to the breadbasket of the United States: the Central Valley.

Inland from the sea, surrounded by the mountains and deserts that define most of the state, the flat narrow basin of the Central Valley stretches for 450 miles from Redding in the north to Bakersfield in the south. Though both cities lie within the same lengthy valley, the distance between them is comparable to Boston to D.C., Chicago to Pittsburgh, or even Taipei to Kaohsiung and back again.

The eighteen counties fully or partially within the Central Valley hold some of the most productive farmland in the country and, in fact, the entire world. Though it occupies less than one percent of the United States' total

farmland, California's Central Valley produces eight percent of the national agricultural output by value—more than \$20 billion per year—and provides approximately one third of the entire nation's food supply.

The valley's natural products vary greatly as the latitude changes. The north sees a preponderance of lumber production slowly give way to rice, then fruits and nuts, tomatoes, grapes, cotton, and finally citrus in the south. A variety of microclimates and variations in soil quality and water supply ensure that a wide variety of crops grow even within small sub-regions of the valley. In all, the Central Valley produces well over two hundred different agricultural products.

This enormous agricultural output, in turn, requires a large labor force. While the Central Valley's total population, around 6.5 million, is smaller than the bordering metropolitan behemoths of Los Angeles and the San Francisco-San Jose Bay Area, it is still greater than thirty-eight of the country's fifty states.

Though they live in the nation's most abundant source of fruits and vegetables, residents of the Central Valley are overwhelmingly in poor health.



Economically, Fresno, the valley's most populous county with nearly one million residents, boasts the highest agricultural sales of any single county in the United States. In fact, the nation's top four counties in agricultural sales are all located within the Central Valley.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the region's robust agricultural industry, residents suffer from numerous socioeconomic problems. With much of the land and twenty percent of the labor force dedicated to agriculture and the low-paying seasonal jobs that sustain it, poverty is a major problem for the entire Central Valley. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than a quarter of Fresno residents lived at or below the poverty line in 2012: the second-highest such figure in the entire nation. In all, three of the nation's five metropolitan areas with the highest poverty levels were located in the Central Valley.

Some of the most serious problems caused by this rampant poverty can be seen in the realm of healthcare. The low-paying jobs that most locals rely on typically do not include health insurance, and few can afford care on their own.

Unfortunately, many in the Central Valley are in great need of healthcare. Though they live in the nation's most abundant source of fruits and vegetables, residents of the Central Valley are overwhelmingly in poor health. According to a California Department of Health Services study that ranked the adult obesity rates of counties and regions across the state, nine of the twelve regions with the highest obesity rates were all located within the Central Valley. Not a single county or region located within the Central Valley was below the statewide average.

Though California's Central Valley is vital for the health of the entire nation, the combination of high unemployment, low wages, poor nutrition, and lack of accessible healthcare, among other factors, has made the lives of Central Valley residents exceedingly difficult. In this place of such great need, Tzu Chi volunteers plant seeds of love and spread roots of kindness. They continue to bring medical care to those who need it, and inspire locals to pass this goodwill on to their neighbors. 🌱

Sources: National Public Radio, Public Policy Institute of California, California Department of Health Services, California Research Bureau.

Weeds do not easily grow in a field planted with vegetables. Evil does not easily arise in a heart filled with goodness.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Love **Sowing Seeds of** **Along Highway 99**

Tzu Chi Volunteers | Translated by Mei-li Hamilton

On a cool March morning in 2012, the Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic pulled into Cal Expo in Sacramento, California, joining Tzu Chi medical teams from Fresno, Modesto, Stockton, and other Northern California towns. They unloaded nearly one hundred dental chairs and set up a temporary medical clinic to offer free services to local residents without medical insurance. They had just come from a similar four-day free clinic in Oakland.

This was the second year Northern California Tzu Chi volunteers offered a free medical clinic in conjunction with Remote Area Medical (RAM), a Tennessee-based nonprofit that provides free medical services in remote areas. The two organizations teamed up to offer free clinics in Oakland (March 22-25) and Sacramento (March 30 - April 2). Together, the two events provided more than six thousand people with medical services worth over two million dollars.

For volunteers from Tzu Chi Fresno Medical Team, participation in these RAM events was another step on a long and arduous road that began in January 2000, when Tzu Chi volunteers held a community gathering in Fresno to share Tzu Chi with locals. Grace Yang attended that day as a guest, and was deeply touched by the experiences shared by volunteers. She vowed to join the organization and dedicated herself to volunteering.

Grace took action immediately, driving several hours to participate in three different free clinic events held by Tzu Chi. One of these was held in Bakersfield, like Fresno a farming community in California's Central Valley. The clinic served many migrant farm workers in the area. She realized that Fresno could also offer the same kind of service to local farm workers and others without medical insurance.

Debra Boudreaux, now CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Foundation, encouraged Grace to start

*With Tzu Chi Mobile Clinics, volunteers are able to take treatment directly to those who need it most.
Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno*



a free clinic in Fresno and offered her support. Grace recalls, "I had only been a volunteer for a few months, and I had no experience setting up a free clinic. We lacked staff, material, and financial resources. However, the thought of helping those uninsured people get proper medical care gave me the courage to try. So, I agreed to do it."

Within eighteen months, Grace had found a location, invited doctors, and secured clothing donations. August 19, 2001, was the big day. Seeing the final result, local resident Henry Read was astonished. He had helped Grace identify the location for the clinic, and now he saw it filled with dental chairs, equipment, beds, and physicians practicing both Chinese and Western medicine. He called the local television stations and urged them to cover this "incredible sight."

Twenty-four-year-old Monica, a local resident of this agricultural and industrial community, heard about the event at the local Boys and Girls Club and came with her one-month old baby. Monica had been suffering from a toothache for six weeks. A volunteer dentist filled her tooth on the spot, curing her toothache.

Working from a Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic vehicle—equipped with six portable dental machines for dentists to clean, fill, and pull teeth for patients—forty-five medical volunteers provided care in a wide range of fields that day, including general medicine, ophthalmology, dermatology, pediatrics, gastroenterology, pathology, and gynecology, as well as traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, shiatsu massage, and other services. In all, more than three hundred patients sought and received help that day. The event was shown on the news that evening and reported by newspapers the following day.

The success of this first free clinic in Fresno drew the attention of local medical groups who volunteered to cooperate with Tzu Chi. In April 2002, the Tzu Chi Fresno Medical Team was established and volunteers began providing a series of free clinics along Highway 99, which runs through the heart of the Central Valley. On May 19, Valley Health Team, a medical organization in Kerman, invited Tzu Chi to offer medical services in Kerman, an area where most residents were seasonal farm workers without a steady income, and where a full sixty percent of locals lacked medical insurance.

It was the first time that Tzu Chi's Northwest Region ran a major health clinic independently. After months of dedicated planning, more than 140 medical volunteers from Northern and Central California, under the direction of Michael Chern and Jason Lin, provided free medical services, haircuts, food, and daily necessities for more than twelve hundred people, many of whom came from poor, remote communities.

One patient told volunteers that she had not seen a doctor for sixteen years. Another woman, who had suffered from eye problems for years, said, "Today is the first time I have ever seen an eye doctor."

Since 2001, Kaiser Permanente has partnered with Tzu Chi in the "Neighbors in Health" program to offer free clinic services. This joint project encouraged Tzu Chi volunteers

Whether on the grassy field of a small farming town or inside the crowded Cal Expo in Sacramento, Tzu Chi volunteers' mission remains the same. Photo: Robert Ku



to collaborate with even more charity organizations, including the Binational Task Force, Health Net, and Fresno County Health Services. These cooperative efforts helped the Tzu Chi Fresno Medical Team understand the medical needs of area residents. They became more professional and were able to reach out to even more remote areas.

One of the Fresno Medical Team's goals was to work within the community and encourage people to become volunteers. On July 8, 2007, when Tzu Chi offered a free clinic in Merced, local university students Leydy Cervantes and Erika Padilla taught children the importance of brushing their teeth daily, using puppets they had made by hand.

Ninety-five percent of the patients at the clinic could not speak English, so many volunteer translators were needed, as well as volunteers for various other tasks. Fortunately, many people came to help, including Enrid Picart and Esmeralda Aguayo, who signed up

after seeing a flyer for the event. Dr. Bernard J. Marquez, Professor at Reedley College, brought some of his medical students to help in various ways. Sacramento Medical Group's Allen Chen, a graduate of UC Davis, brought in college volunteers to set up equipment, help register patients, measure patients' weight and height, direct traffic, and clean up afterwards. Many people became fully involved in the event, participating in any way they could.

Well-known television anchorwoman Lupita Lomeli of Channel 21 in the Central Valley has reported on Tzu Chi's free clinics since 2001. She has interviewed team leaders Steven Voon and Grace Yang on the air, and has even volunteered as a translator for several events.

On April 18, 2009, the Fresno Medical Team held a monthly free clinic in Hanford. Tzu Chi invited servicemen and women from Lemoore Naval Base to help as volunteers. Many soldiers attended and were a great help, doing whatever was needed to support the clinic.



Prior to an outreach event at Fresno City College, volunteer Angelica Robles-Trinh teaches young volunteers to help patients with gratitude, respect, and love. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno



Over the years, many patients have attended medical outreaches seeking treatment for multiple, complex medical and dental conditions. For example, Marco, originally from El Salvador, came to a clinic with multiple dental problems. He ground his teeth, making it painful to eat. His teeth were in such bad shape that he did not dare to open his mouth in front of other people. He came to the site early, and a volunteer dentist was able to diagnose his problems. It took three months of treatment, including root canals, extractions, and dentures, but now Marco can say, "I finally do not have to be embarrassed to smile in front of other people."



In order to reach all the communities that need help, volunteers, equipment, and medical records are always on the move. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

Years later, Marco could not work because he had developed cataracts. He again asked Tzu Chi to help. A Tzu Chi eye doctor examined him and operated on his eyes for free. Marco's medical expenses were covered by Tzu Chi. Now his eyes are disease-free and he is able to work again.

Another female patient came in to seek help due to internal bleeding. After an examination, she was sent to the hospital immediately. Tests confirmed that she had ovarian cancer. Tzu Chi volunteers helped her apply for emergency medical insurance so that she could receive chemotherapy in a hospital. As a Christian, she was very grateful to this Buddhist organization for also helping her apply for a living expense supplement. Tzu Chi volunteers visited her regularly, celebrated her birthday with her, and accompanied her to the hospital for chemotherapy. Unfortunately, she passed away in 2007. Tzu Chi volunteers were with her until the very end.

It took three months of treatment, including root canals, extractions, and dentures, but now Marco can say, "I finally do not have to be embarrassed to smile in front of other people."

The Fresno Medical Team has served countless needy families over the years. With several years of experience under their belts, team members began sharing their experiences with volunteers in other cities of the Central Valley, helping them hold more free clinics in the region.

In 2008, volunteers started holding free medical clinics in Modesto, followed by more in Stockton and Sacramento. For each one, Fresno Medical Team provided materials and equipment. In 2008, a Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic van was allocated to Fresno, allowing the volunteers to serve farm workers directly in the fields where they work. In 2010, a second vehicle was added to the fleet, allowing the team to extend services to rural areas to reach even more people in need.

Roughly ninety percent of the Central Valley Tzu Chi volunteers are not Buddhists. Volunteers include Christians from several denominations, as well as Hindus and Muslims. They work together to serve poor patients without regard to religion or race. Dr. Ganti, an Indian eye doctor, remarked that when you look into a person's eyes, it doesn't matter what race that person is; all eyes are the same.

Dr. Ganti was involved in a Tzu Chi team that provided disaster relief to El Salvador. He said, "Tzu Chi is the best non-profit charity organization I know." In a Madera medical outreach event in June 2006, he not only examined 142 patients' eyes, but also collected



Through Tzu Chi free clinics, Dr. Ganti draws closer to the Central Valley community.

Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

and supplied all the equipment for the eye exams. He said that his participation in the Tzu Chi free clinics has helped improve his relationship with the community.

Another Indian doctor, Dr. Martin, noticed that many Hispanic patients over fifty suffered from high blood pressure and diabetes, and were largely unaware that a proper diet can help prevent these problems. He understood from experience the importance of health education and the need to emphasize it at each free clinic event.

On April 7, 2012, a new Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic office was opened in Fresno, welcomed warmly by drummers and lion dancers. After eleven years of joint efforts in Fresno, Modesto, Stockton, Sacramento, and neighboring communities, Tzu Chi volunteers now offer at least eighteen free

clinics annually in seventeen sites. They have served thousands of people over the years. The new office now provides a centralized space to store all the necessary equipment, medical records, tents, and appliances that support these events.

Tzu Chi medical volunteers in the Central Valley have left footprints of love in every city along Highway 99, from Bakersfield all the way up to Sacramento. Each free clinic now attracts many community healthcare workers and volunteers, all of whom grow to understand that the spirit of Tzu Chi means more than just treating disease. Through regular free medical clinics, the volunteers of the Central Valley will continue to provide follow-up care to patients and recruit more volunteers and medical staff. Step by step, they will move towards the long-term goal of a permanent free clinic center to serve the Central Valley through prevention and care. 🌿



Materials provided by Grace Yang, Ling Cho, Steven Voon, Olivia Chung, Nancy Ku, Daniel Yi, Winsun Sun, Shu Chuan Wang, Debra Boudreaux, Meituan Kuo, and Xizhi Jia.

Get inspired, be mindful, and bring out love in everyone. Share resources, make efforts, and gather strength from everyone.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



(L to R) Grace Yang, Steven Voon, Minjing Hsieh, Debra Boudreaux, Dr. Walter Fung, Dr. Chun Chung Chan, and Siew Lin Wong, NP, celebrate Tzu Chi Fresno Medical Team's tenth anniversary in November 2011. Photo: Nancy Ku



Central Valley Medical 99

Raisin City Relief

Winter distributions are an opportunity to share not only goods but also warmth and caring. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

Olivia Chung & Ling Cho | Translated by John Ueng

Driving through the countryside, nurse Velia Garza searched for the location of the medical outreach. As the vines along the side of the road trembled in February's frigid morning wind, Nurse Garza thought to herself, "It's inside the vineyard this time, but why can't I see it yet? Am I going the wrong way?" Just then, the billowing green and white flag of Tzu Chi appeared not far away. A sense of familiarity surged in her heart, "I'm home!"

For many years, Father Gabriel Ruiz and Sister Ana Arreguin of the St. Anthony Mary Claret Church have worked with the migrant farm workers around Raisin City, a small rural community fifteen miles from Fresno. Local Tzu Chi volunteers first got to know these migrant workers with the help of Spanish-speaking volunteer interpreters, who told them about the more than twenty areas where they congregate, plus dozens of areas further south. Most of these workers have travelled far from home to work in California; many have left their families behind.

Some workers do bring their families with them, but even those families do not have much of anything. These farm workers who live in remote regions without any means of transportation are out of luck should they fall sick. Even the idea of a basic health checkup is but a fantasy.

The Tzu Chi Fresno Medical Team first learned about the situation of these migrant farmers shortly after receiving their first Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic. They decided to work with St. Anthony Mary Claret Church to provide free medical services for these remote migrant workers.



Sister Ana Arreguin has long cared for the migrant families of Raisin City. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno



In 2011, the winter distribution brought bright smiles to the children's faces as they discovered second-hand toys and books. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

On the early morning of February 15, 2009, as the first light broke over the horizon, the Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic drove into the town of Caruthers. Just a few miles down the road from Raisin City, Caruthers is where many local migrant workers congregate every Sunday morning to attend church. Freezing winds pushed through the volunteers' jackets, and they had to work quickly to set up tents in the freezing cold. It took orchestrated teamwork to get the site ready for the medical clinic.

Gradually the migrant workers, both young and old, gathered around and lined up for registration. The chilly morning was quickly thawed by the warmth of many people chatting and greeting one another, like a large family gathering back together after a long absence.

Since that day, Tzu Chi volunteers have returned to Raisin City twice a year to provide free medical services. In July of the same year,

temperatures reached well over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. It was so hot that the city government opened its air-conditioned city hall lobby to the public so that people could escape from the heat. The city also issued a warning for unhealthy air pollution levels, cautioning people prone to allergies or heat stroke to stay indoors. However, Tzu Chi volunteers were undeterred by the extreme heat. They returned to the grape farms of Caruthers to bring medical services to the migrant workers.

When the innocent beauty of compassionate teamwork shines, language is not a barrier.

Mrs. Hernandez, a worker who suffers from diabetes, had recently fainted and frequently felt dizzy. The Tzu Chi

doctor diagnosed internal bleeding from a stroke and recommended that she be taken to an emergency room immediately for further tests. Her husband immediately realized the urgency of the situation and quickly took her to the hospital for further treatment.

Although the clinic was held on the

weekend, most migrant workers still had to work until noon. Therefore, many of them could arrive only shortly before the free clinic was scheduled to end. The extreme heat had left every volunteer soaked in sweat, and many had faces as red as apples from the unforgiving sun. But the thought of disappointing any migrant worker was far more unbearable than the heat, so they continued working past the closing time until everyone was helped. As the free clinic concluded, the volunteers collected their well-deserved reward for the day: the smiles on the faces of their grateful patients.

In December 2009, volunteers returned. They followed Sister Ana Arreguin's car into the seemingly endless vineyard. A downpour the previous night had left the roads muddy and bumpy, making the ride particularly uncomfortable.

This time, Tzu Chi volunteers not only held a free clinic, they also brought eco-friendly plush blankets made from recycled plastic bottles, as well as jackets and scarves, and food donated

by the local food bank. Since then, Tzu Chi volunteers have held winter relief distributions every year.

Every Christmas, thirteen-year-old Claire receives plenty of gifts from friends and family. Many of those gifts sat unused in the garage, still in very good condition. When her aunt, a Tzu Chi volunteer, mentioned the winter relief distribution and the need for gifts for children of migrant workers, Claire's mother happily donated several large bags of gifts to Tzu Chi.

In January 2011, Fresno Tzu Chi volunteers once again hit the roads between the vineyards on their way to Raisin City. This year, thanks to people like Claire and her mother, the list of distribution supplies added a new item sure to make many kids very happy: second-hand toys. At the free clinic that day, volunteer physicians Dr. Walter Fung and Dr. Jennifer Yang also participated in a distribution for the first time. Both of them said that giving relief supplies to migrant farm workers was an extraordinary personal experience that made them even happier than just volunteering in the free clinic.

Witnessing the volunteers' spirit of selfless giving in action, Sister Ana Arreguin was deeply moved. With the help of an interpreter, she said humbly, "I have so much to learn from Master Cheng Yen." Although she does not speak English, Sister Ana Arreguin led the crowd in cheering and singing, and worked seamlessly with the volunteers. Her ever-present smile showed that when the innocent beauty of compassionate teamwork shines, language is not a barrier. The love and cooperation between Father Gabriel Ruiz, Sister Ana Arreguin, and Tzu Chi volunteers has certainly transformed the lives of local migrant workers for the better. 🌿



Tzu Chi's clinics and distributions are warmly welcomed by farming communities like Raisin City. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

Gratitude is the world's most beautiful language and the most genuine way for people to interact.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Dr. Fung's Unfettered Love

Ling Cho & Grace Yang
Translated by Jacob Rawson

*The opportunity to distribute blankets to those in need brings warmth to Dr. Fung's heart.
Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno*

On August 19, 2001, Tzu Chi caused a local media sensation when it held its first free medical clinic in Fresno. The next day, Dr. Walter Fung's eyes lit up when he opened the Fresno Bee and read the featured story about Tzu Chi's clinic.

Dr. Fung is a gastroenterology specialist who has lived all his life in Fresno helping patients with stomach and digestive problems. A passionate person who enjoys helping others, he has embarked on medical relief trips to destinations such as China, Laos, and Thailand, and been deeply involved in developing pediatric clinics for the community.

In 1994, Dr. Fung was diagnosed with nasopharyngeal cancer. Doctors gave him six months to live, but he fully recovered after treatment. In 1998, he was chosen as a "Portrait of Success" honoree. His personal story was shown on television, and his name went down in the Congressional Record.

Dr. Fung retired in early 2001, and spent the next six months reading newspapers and playing golf. Already bored with this kind of life, his heart jumped with excitement at the news report about Tzu Chi's free clinic, and he quickly got himself involved.

Over the next decade, Dr. Fung was rarely absent from any Tzu Chi clinic in the vicinity of Fresno. He worked tirelessly, no matter how simple or crude his surroundings. He always went about his work with joy, even tasks as simple as administering flu shots. He showed

deep care and respect for each patient, and his warm smile and cheerful laughter always brought joy to those around him.

Dr. Fung is a devout Christian. Even though Tzu Chi is a Buddhist organization, he has always kept an open mind. He often says, "Love is still love. We must try to understand what true love is." Dr. Fung's love for God can be seen in his dedication to those around him. In 2009, Dr. Fung traveled to Raisin City to provide medical services for farm workers. On this occasion, he also had an opportunity to participate in a relief distribution for the first time. The unique experience of giving with his own two hands was a new feeling that deeply touched his heart. Afterward, Dr. Fung smiled and said, "It is wonderful that Tzu Chi is able to help those in need!"

Unfortunately, Dr. Fung's health took a turn for the worse in recent years. Frequently left unable to participate by constant battles with various illnesses, he decided to retire once more. During the tenth anniversary celebration of the Fresno Medical Team, Tzu Chi presented Dr. Fung with a certificate to recognize his decade of dedication. He remarked, "This means even more to me than the award I received from Congress."

In September 2012, Dr. Fung phoned Steven Voon and said, "My health has recovered, and I would like to rejoin the ranks of the free clinic staff." Although he will always be fighting his own physical ailments, Dr. Fung hopes to continue his life's work. 🌱

Dr. Chan's Exemplary Compassion

Fresno Volunteers | Translated by John Ueng



Dr. Chan has been a steady presence since the beginning of Tzu Chi's medical mission in the Central Valley. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

Pediatrician Dr. Chun Chung Chan always remembered the words of his high school teacher back in Macau: "You do not have to aspire to great achievements or positions of power in order to make a great contribution to society. Like a tiny bolt in a big machine, any ordinary person who is steadfast in doing his job to the best of his abilities can make a great contribution to society." Dr. Chan has held these words dear to his heart, and they have guided him throughout his personal and professional life.

Dr. Chan grew up in a large family of meager means. After he finished high school, continued education was not part of his plan. Instead, he tried to find a job in Hong Kong to supplement his family's income. However, without a Hong Kong Certificate of Education, he was repeatedly turned down by potential employers.

One day, as he wandered the streets hopelessly, he bumped into a former classmate who knew of his situation. The classmate suggested that he try applying to colleges in Taipei, where there was financial aid available

for overseas Chinese students. This kind-hearted classmate also helped pay the minimal application fee. Before long, Dr. Chan was accepted into his top choice, the National Defense Medical Center in Taipei. To this day, Dr. Chan remains grateful to his classmate, and he often shares the story of how this small gift changed his life.

After medical school, Dr. Chan specialized in pediatrics. When he immigrated to the United States, he chose to practice medicine in Madera, in California's Central Valley. As a devout Catholic, Dr. Chan is steadfast in treating everyone he meets with genuine care and sincerity. He always gives every child he treats a thorough and complete health check. He says that all good physicians should put themselves in the shoes of the child's parents and treat each one as their own child. He added, "If you don't try to empathize with the parents, then you will develop the bad habit of treating the symptom and missing the root problem, like not seeing the forest for the trees."

Dr. Chan also frequently educates parents so they will know how to handle common health problems. Dr. Chan believes that to truly help

Medical Prescription



Central Valley Medical

CALIFORNIA 99

people, you cannot just give them the answers. Instead, you have to give them the tools to find the answers themselves. Dr. Chan regularly visits hospitals and health departments to share his clinical experience and knowledge, and he has lectured at nursing schools in the University of California system. He humbly describes his teaching as a two-way learning experience that helps him as much as it helps his students.

The Central Valley is dominated by farms, with few industries. The region is poorer than the national average, and the unemployment rate is well over ten percent. Those who work the farms are the most disadvantaged minority groups. They not only have very low incomes, but they also have extremely poor living conditions, and most do not have any health insurance. Dr. Chan is sympathetic to their plight. For many years he tried to think of ways in which he could help them, but he realized that there was little he could do by himself.

Dr. Chan had long been a steady donor to Tzu Chi Foundation. In 2000, he learned about plans by Tzu Chi 's U.S. Headquarters to organize a program for medical outreach in Delano, a city toward the southern end of the valley. He realized that this might give him an opportunity to help the disadvantaged, so he immediately signed up to contribute his services. While volunteering at the

To truly help people, you cannot just give them the answers. Instead, you have to give them the tools to find the answers themselves.

event, he met Fresno Tzu Chi volunteer Grace Yang. Grace was also a first-time participant in the medical outreach program, and was researching the event

in order to plan for a similar one in Fresno. Excited by this possibility, Dr. Chan offered to help in any way he could.

Dr. Chan was true to his word, as he drove to Fresno each month to assist in medical clinics. As time passed, Dr. Chan took charge of overseeing the weekly free clinic at Fresno's Cooper Middle School. When local volunteers in Fresno officially inaugurated their local Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) branch, Dr. Chan joined Dr. Walter Fung as convener for the association. Together, they invited other physicians to join their medical volunteer team and helped arrange all the medicines for the medical supply case to meet the needs of the medical outreach program. They also distributed information to disadvantaged groups about the free clinic events.

Since the beginning, Dr. Chan has given selflessly and without expectation to grow the Tzu Chi medical mission in Fresno. He gives with the same selfless love to all people in need. Though waning health forced Dr. Chan to retire and move away from the Fresno area, he has left an indelible example of kind friendship and extraordinary humanity for all to follow. 🌿

When there are many good people, the power of blessings and kindness is great.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



In 2011, Dr. Chan was recognized for his decade of selfless service to the Central Valley community. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno



Central Valley Medical



My Experience with Tzu Chi

Dr. Richard Furze

Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

My experience with Tzu Chi is both personal and clinical. I started volunteering with Tzu Chi about one year ago after I had a discussion with a colleague who volunteered at Tzu Chi. My question to him was, "What is Buddhism about? How does it manifest in daily life?" He said, "Come to the Tzu Chi dental clinic and see." So, I did. This is what I saw and why I have continued to volunteer monthly and why I expect to do so indefinitely.

On my first day, the people I saw as dental patients were mostly street people and the newly-poor. Their mouths were for the most part well-maintained, but showed signs of deferred maintenance, forced upon them by our trying financial times. The mobile Tzu Chi dental clinic provides very basic services, such as cleanings, tooth removal, and basic fillings. This helps many but cannot provide for the more complex cases.

I also saw the Tzu Chi volunteer staff, particularly noticing how they were as people. They worked hard, did a good job, and were

efficient. But what I noticed most of all was that they seemed to enjoy the work. I saw their consideration for their patients as they took the time and trouble to complete paperwork and exams. There was no sense of assembly-line indifference, but rather of human contact in all its quotidian kindness, tolerance, and patience. There was an atmosphere of peace.

On my first day, I had not registered in time to meet insurance requirements to serve as a doctor, so I triaged patients for the four other dentists providing treatment. I was able to meet with each patient, determine their dental needs, learn their names, and see that they got treated. Many of the patients I saw postoperatively as they were leaving. They were happy with the care and very appreciative. They smiled and thanked me when I asked how it went. I have given free treatment in my own practice and have helped people in other ways unrelated to the practice of dentistry, but I have never heard so many thank-yous as I got on my first day at Tzu Chi. They made me feel good; they made me come back.



Photo provided by Tzu Chi Fresno

The most joyful and fulfilling life is a life of giving.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Why this response? I think it was and is Tzu Chi. I think it is love. At Tzu Chi, people practice love, consideration, and kindness. I noticed that right off when staff members approached me on my first day to welcome me and to introduce themselves. I noticed it in the small groups of young people when they gathered together. I noticed it in a physician in a moment of repose. I noticed it in the large portrait of a woman with a shaved head dressed in a robe, which was placed by the front door. I didn't know a thing about her, but I figured there must be a connection.

I have participated in more than ten Tzu Chi health fairs. Two were in a rural area of Fresno County. This area of the county is grape country. The Tzu Chi mobile dental van parked next to a green patch of grass in a small park in a little village. Two dentists treated patients in the air-conditioned van while I triaged and treated patients adjacent to the van on the grass. As the day wore on, and the patient backlog grew, more treatment chairs were set up on the grass, side by side. There I pulled teeth. What a difference between what most of us think of a dental office and what I was able to provide for needy patients. They appreciated what I could do for them and I felt good. It was a beautiful day.

One patient I remember in particular. He was seventy years old and a master chef. He worked on cruise ships and had learned enough French for the menu. He grew up in India, where his dad was assigned. They had ten servants. He learned Hindi as a boy so he could talk to them, but he was forced to return to Britain during the time of Gandhi. He had only recently immigrated to the United States. He needed a small filling,

I have never heard so many thank-yous as I got on my first day at Tzu Chi.

which I was pleased to provide. Meeting people outside of my provincial life is one of the pleasures of Tzu Chi.

I am learning Chinese—sort of. The Tzu Chi ladies are patiently teaching me some phrases. I can now say, “thank you, good morning, goodbye, how are you?” They are eager to teach me more. I will try to oblige. I think my pronunciation is atrocious, but they smile and laugh and say that I am doing just fine. Tzu Chi has a family feel to it. I know that it is not and never will be, but that is okay. For me it shows the power of love transcending wide cultural divides. I know that in their families and in their lives there is love, and it spills over. I expect it is related to the lady in the robe, who I hear referred to as “Master.”

Local Tzu Chi volunteers are working now toward the ability to provide root canals for its patient base. I have already volunteered.

My first day with Tzu Chi was one of enjoyment. Each succeeding one has been as well. I think my source of pleasure comes in gift-giving. By that I mean that my effort and work is the gift I can give. I think giving comes disguised as work. For me, it brings to mind a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson: “The only true gift is a portion of yourself.”

I understand the Master wants small donations from many. While I have a different Master, I can still make my small donations to Tzu Chi. I believe it is counted by both Masters. As it gives me joy, I will continue. I learned a little about Buddhism now because I hear familiar music. I want to add my voice to the chorus. I find it better to give than to receive. 🌿

COMBATING CHILDHOOD OBESITY



Medical Corner

Dr. Amy Huang

I hesitated in front of the exam room door as I saw on the chart that my next patient, an eleven-year-old girl, weighed 168 pounds! In the last year, this little girl had gained over one hundred pounds. Her mother, a diabetic patient, felt helpless. She told me, "She is constantly snacking and drinking soda. I cannot control her." What is disturbing is that I have countless patients just like this girl: a fourteen-year-old boy with high cholesterol, a seven-year-old who weighs seventy pounds, and depressed teenagers who are bullied at school for being "fat."

Obesity is not a foreign concept to anyone in the United States. However, in the last decade, the obesity epidemic has become more and more serious among children; it is no longer

only pertinent to adults. Today, over twelve million children in the U.S. are overweight. In other words, one in five children under age nineteen is overweight: three times the ratio of thirty years ago!

Obesity is defined by a person's body mass index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by the square of height in meters. An adult is overweight when his or her BMI is between twenty-five and thirty, and obese when BMI is greater than thirty. In children, obesity is defined as having a BMI greater than the ninety-fifth percentile of children in the same age group.

Why does it matter if someone is obese or overweight? Obesity puts a person at greater risk for high blood pressure, diabetes, high



The author treats a young patient in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after the 2010 earthquake. Photo: Doris Wu

cholesterol, arthritis, heart disease, and many other chronic medical conditions.

Why are there so many obese children today? The reason is simple: weight gain results from eating more calories than one expends. In our fast-paced society, we often sacrifice a healthy diet for efficiency and low price. When we do not have time to cook, we opt for cheap fast food or frozen processed meals. Furthermore, in our "supersized" culture, there are countless all-you-can-eat restaurants to satisfy our greedy taste buds, and we are constantly encouraged to overstuff ourselves.

The best way to combat the urge to overeat is by simply following Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teaching of The 80/20 Lifestyle. If we always stop ourselves at eighty-percent full instead of overeating, we will not burden our bodies with the excess fat and calories that will accumulate into fatty tissues.

In addition to the problem of overeating, today's society has become very sedentary. We often sit in front of the television or computer for hours at a time. Some parents also encourage their children to focus solely on their schoolwork, thus limiting their physical activity even more. The American Heart Association recommends that each person should engage in at least two and a half hours of exercise each week: thirty minutes a day, at least five times a week. Some of us feel that exercising is a burden, that we do not have the time to go to the gym or engage in organized sports. In reality, any activity that increases our heart rate and burns calories is good exercise. This includes such simple activities as walking, hiking, and climbing stairs.

To combat the all-too-prevalent problem of childhood obesity, there are several simple

The best way to combat the urge to overeat is by simply following Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teaching of The 80/20 Lifestyle.

suggestions that I frequently recommend to my patients and their families:

1. Healthy eating must be a family effort. Parents are role models for their children and should set a good example by eating healthy meals, exercising regularly, buying healthy snacks, and avoiding junk food.
2. Meal time should be family time. Turn off computers and televisions when it is time to eat. Sit down as a family to enjoy the meal together. Take the opportunity to talk and share stories with each other. By turning off the TV, we can focus better on our meals and avoid mindlessly overeating.
3. An after-dinner stroll is a great family exercise! Walking for just half an hour each day can reduce the likelihood of obesity and improve heart health. Develop the great habit of exercising together as a family.

4. Be mindful of the beverages you choose. Too often we pick drinks that are high in calories and loaded with sugar. Kids lose their appetite for proper meals and nutritious snacks when they fill up on these junk beverages. When choosing drinks, parents should buy one-hundred-percent fruit juices and avoid any drinks with empty calories.

In today's world, we tend to eat for pleasure or luxury instead of eating for health. To satisfy our palates, we eat too much and too unhealthily. To combat obesity and weight gain, we should keep in mind the concept of eating only eighty-percent full while saving to help those in need. We should choose not to go to buffets so that we will not overeat or waste food. We should stop buying unhealthy food and beverages and donate the money we save to charitable causes. 🍃

We must cherish and care for ourselves as well as our planet.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

www.us.tzuchi.org



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.





Kind Hearts Blossom in San Bernardino

Penny Hsu

Lytle Creek students learn that with a different perspective the same thing can appear completely different. Photo: Sheng Ping Liu

A little sheepish grin from little Paulo melted my heart. Nearly a year later, I'm still so glad that the Tzu Chi Character Education Program can make such a positive impact on a third grader.

At the beginning of the school year in 2011, I noticed a boy who would be considered small for a second grader sitting in my third grade character education class at Lytle Creek Elementary in San Bernardino, California. His large, innocent brown eyes attentively followed me across the classroom as I moved around in my usual animated way. Even though I could hardly get him to raise his hand when his classmates were clamoring to be called upon, in his own timid way he let me know that he enjoyed all the discussions, stories, role-playing, and group activities. His name was Paulo.

Paulo and I carried on a friendly student-teacher relationship throughout the first semester: close but not too close, distant but not too distant. Then I

covered an important character education topic called "courage." For each topic covered in the Tzu Chi character education curriculum, content is always tailored to each grade level and activities are always age-appropriate. For the third graders, our two-part lesson on courage first focused on teasing: identifying teasing, how teasing and joking are different, how it feels to be teased, and answering the question: "if you don't like being teased, would you do it to others?" Part two of our lesson focused on strategies that a third grader can use to deal with teasing. We role-played different scenarios and students created a wheel with different appropriate and safe responses to teasing.

Two weeks after the lesson on courage, I returned to teach a different topic. As usual, I reviewed the previous lesson with the class, and then we broke into smaller groups for discussion. When I came to Paulo's group to review the strategies on dealing with teasing, Paulo's homeroom

“For the past six years, Tzu Chi's character education has consistently brought out the intrinsic kindness in these students.”



teacher, Mrs. Hayworth, commended Paulo on how well he had learned the strategies and how he was able to talk to an adult or walk away from a situation where he was being teased. I began to feel sorry for Paulo because I knew that in order to use the strategies I taught he must have been teased a lot. My heart ached for a second, but then I saw that beautiful sheepish smile on Paulo's face. The smile was packed with a lot of gratitude and a little bit of pride. As small as Paulo was, he must have been an easy target for his schoolmates. I had hoped that none of my students would ever have to use the strategies on dealing with teasing. But the reality was that someone did, and it made a difference in his life.

Tzu Chi character education not only makes a difference in individual students' lives, it can have powerful impacts on an entire class. For our topic on giving, the Tzu Chi volunteers and I ran a mini baking class: we made cookies out of mud and had students bake the mud cookies under the sun. Then I showed a clip from a documentary on poverty in Haiti and how some impoverished children had to resort to eating cookies made out of mud. My students were shocked and felt compelled to help. We brainstormed together to think of ways that children could help. The brainstorming exercise was meant to broaden each student's horizons and to empower each child. I planted the seeds of kindness in the hearts of the students, and I hoped that one day, when they were able, they would take action to help others. There was no homework given to them to complete and no projects assigned to be done at home.

Two weeks later, I returned to Lytle Creek. As soon as I entered the first class, the children all pointed to the back of the class and shouted, "Look, Ms. Penny!" I walked to the back of the classroom and discovered a big pile of plastic water bottles and soda cans. The students told me that they had collected the recyclables to donate to Tzu Chi's recycling center. They understood that empty plastic bottles and soda cans can be redeemed for money, and that the money can go into the Tzu Chi charity fund to help others. The entire class was so proud of

their collective effort and I, of course, was the proudest of all for having such great students.

I walked out of that classroom with two bags of recyclables in hand and went to my second class. Much to my amazement, the kids in the second class were just as excited as the first. Except this time I didn't see bottles and cans. I saw an old Tzu Chi bamboo bank on the homeroom teacher's desk. Aha, these kids brought money. I had all the kids share how they had collected the money. Some had donated their allowance. Some found coins under the couch at home. Some did extra chores and got paid a nickel. Some told their families about what they learned in my class and got their sisters and brothers to donate as well.

I held up the jar to show my students that we can do so much when everyone gives a little. The jar was very heavy since it was filled to the top, mostly with pennies and nickels. Everyone learned what a powerful impact we can have on the world if each of us contributes a little.

For the past six years, Tzu Chi's character education has consistently brought out the intrinsic kindness in these students. Our future is a little brighter and the world is filled with a little more hope because of the wonderful kids who decide to take action when they see poverty and despair. 🌱

Editor's Note: The child's name has been changed to protect his identity.



Telling a story with fabric characters, the author demonstrates the importance of treating others with love and respect. Photo: Sheng Ping Liu

If one does not do small things, one will not be able to accomplish greater things.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

As the war in Syria continues, nearly two hundred thousand Syrian refugees have fled into neighboring Jordan. On November 4, 2012, Tzu Chi Jordan volunteers distributed relief supplies in Ramtha, near the border, to help refugees through the winter. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Jordan



Tzu Chi volunteers in Vietnam visited Hon Quan, Binh Phuoc, on October 28, 2012, to conduct their first free clinic and relief distribution for villagers in this remote area. Photo: Baozhi Chen



▲ On August 11, 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers from Durban, South Africa, traveled several hours north to Swaziland to visit poverty-stricken villagers. Here, volunteers comfort a young woman afflicted with AIDS. Photo: Meiling Liao



▲ Each year on November 1, All Saints' Day, millions of people across the Philippines respectfully clean and repair family tombs. On November 1-2, 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers hosted booths in Manila South Cemetery to promote environmental protection. Here, a man hands his recyclables to Tzu Chi instead of throwing them into the trash. Photo: Na Ka Mi



On October 8, 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers installed a solar street light next to Rusununguko Primary School in Zimbabwe, a school they built two months earlier. It is the only street light within ten kilometers. With the new light, local residents are able to sleep more securely at night. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Foundation



To commemorate Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, Tzu Chi volunteers in Malaysia visited thirty elementary schools around the Sungai Buloh district of Selangor from October 6 to 21, 2012, to distribute goods to low-income families of Indian ancestry. In support of Tzu Chi's bamboo bank spirit, many students donated their change to charity. Photo: Guorong Deng



▲ During a trip to thank Dharma Master Cheng Yen for Tzu Chi's flood relief, Mayor Paul Pisasale and Councillor Cheryl Bromage of Ipswich, Australia, visited Tzu Chi's recycling station in Neihu, Taipei, on October 17, 2012. Mayor Pisasale was shown how eco-friendly fabric is cut before it is made into blankets. Photo: Fuhua Zheng



▲ On October 26-27, 2012, Singapore TIMA (Tzu Chi International Medical Association) volunteers joined forces with a local medical team to conduct a free eye clinic in Sri Lanka. Here, a patient is helped into Kahawatta Base Hospital, where the free clinic was held. Photo: Mingjun Wu

▶ Several days of heavy rain caused serious flooding in Bago Region, Myanmar. Tzu Chi volunteers held a relief distribution on August 21, 2012, to help affected villagers.
Photo: Mg Lu Aye Chan



▶ On October 13, 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers in London, England, prepared a vegetarian lunch at the Islington Chinese Association for homeless and low-income members of the community. Photo: Tongyi Xu



▲ Lesotho Tzu Chi volunteers held a winter relief distribution just across the border in Manyatseng, Free State, South Africa, on August 18, 2012. Local villagers were very grateful for the cooking oil and rice they received. Photo: Meijuan Chen



▲ Tzu Chi was invited to host booths promoting environmental protection and vegetarian diet at the Tokyo Vegfood Festa 2012 held on October 20-21 at Yoyogi Park in Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan. Here, a volunteer demonstrates the all-natural, homemade fruit enzyme: an excellent cleanser and fertilizer. Photo: Wensi Chen



Dharma as Water: Great Repentance

Deeply concerned about the state of our world today—a world facing the crises of climate change, environmental degradation, instability and unrest, and eroding of moral values—Dharma Master Cheng Yen has appealed to her followers to engage in the practice of repentance.

Though the collective problems of today's world seem beyond the control of ordinary individuals, the Master tells us that each of us in fact contributes to the problem in many different ways; that is why each of us needs to return to his or her own heart and mind, and deeply reflect.



Understanding Desire's Pivotal Role: Part IV of the Repentance Series

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks

Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

I often say that life is like a play and this play revolves around one theme—want and desire.

Our desires are like a bottomless pit. We are always seeking, never satisfied. This plays out in all aspects of our life. When eating, we not only eat to sustain our bodies and appease our hunger; we want to eat good-tasting food. For our home, it is not enough to have a modest home that shelters us from the elements; we desire comfortable surroundings, the bigger and more luxurious the better. This is the nature of desire.

All our life, we work hard to fulfill our desires. We seek happiness, but for the majority of us, we think happiness comes from having more—more wealth, more success, more power, more fame, and so on. We never feel that what we have is enough.

One dream fulfilled spawns another. Instead of being content with an ordinary, simple life, our vanity causes us to want more grandeur, glory, or power. Our ambitions become endless; the sky is the limit. The truth is, more is not necessarily better and it can have adverse effects. In the endless pursuit of our desires, we actually create much suffering for ourselves.

But, what do we really come into the world for? What is life really about? Only by

turning toward the Dharma can we begin to understand life's true value and purpose. Then, we can be content. We can gain perspective and see things in their positive light. A sense of gratitude will fill our hearts.

If we do not turn toward the Dharma, however, we will continue to chase after our desires. We will toil away our entire lives in this pursuit, missing life's true purpose. In the course of this, we create a lot of negative karma. As we pursue our desires, we do many wrong things. Moreover, with the arising of greed, other unwholesome mental states will arise—anger, ignorance, arrogance, and doubt.

Having created negative karma, we will reap its consequences. Negative karma will bring about negative retribution and suffering. The way to escape misfortune and suffering is to understand the law of karma, peacefully accept the retribution for our wrong actions, repent these wrongs, and henceforth strive not to create any further negative karma.

Prior to learning the Dharma, we were led around by our desires, creating negative karma and reaping its retribution. But when we understand the law of karma and life's true purpose, we will know to make use of our lives in the most meaningful way—taking hold of our life to contribute to the greater good. 🌿

The Truth Shall Set Us Free

Yuru Chou

Dharma as Water:
Great
Repentance

Why are we born into this world?

Why are we here on Earth?

Why do we die?

We all ponder these questions at some point in life. Yet while we try to search for meaningful and fulfilling lives, we also live our routine lives by chasing one goal after another from birth to death, without ever knowing our destiny.

Fashionable goals are youthful energy, beauty, fame, fortune, and power, which are touted in all our print and broadcast media. That is why the Forbes Global 2000 list of the world's top public companies is full of companies that help people reach these goals.

However, when we finally reach our goals, it never seems to be enough. We save and save to own a house and car. When we have accomplished that, we want more zeros in our bank account. If you ask millionaires, they are not satisfied with all their private jets and vacation houses all over the world. They still worry about their aging looks or their precarious social standing.

The search for the newest fad goes on and on. We are like hamsters chasing an ever-tantalizing lure. Meanwhile, we are loaded down with craving, fear, rage, depression, and madness from our failed attempts to seize "happiness." In the whirlwind of all this confusion, life can end suddenly, before we ever get to know its real meaning.

That is why people turn to religious faith to make sense of their lives. The search for universal truth is the ultimate goal of all religious belief. Where is this truth? We will know it when we love all living beings as we love ourselves. Just as love for God and for one's fellow human beings are essential to Christian belief, so Dharma Master Cheng Yen teaches about practicing Great Love, a love that embraces all forms and shapes of existence.

If we have not disciplined our mind, we may not be able to steer safely through a turbulent sea of emotions and desires.

If we accept the Buddha's wisdom and take his teachings to heart, we will learn to see the world from his perspective and free our minds from all delusions. Our delusions come from wanting or holding onto anything that we think will give us joy without realizing that these searches are in vain. The emptiness we feel after leaving a party or receiving a long-awaited gift bears witness to the ephemeral nature of all things.

Building on the Buddha's teachings, Master Cheng Yen has summarized the principles of all things with a framework of three dimensions and four phases. When we closely observe the world as we know it, there are three dimensions: the physical dimension of our surrounding environment, the bodily dimension of all our senses, and the mental dimension of our mind.

Each of these dimensions cycles through

The Buddha's teachings are not only to be studied but realized through actual practice and compassionate acts of giving.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

four phases, which move forward as inexorably as time. In the physical dimension, everything in the universe goes through a life cycle of creation, existence, deterioration, and dissolution. Our accumulation of wealth is not immune. On any given day, our worldly possessions may be burned up, flooded away, nationalized, or stolen. Even the loftiest mountains are slowly eroded by wind and rain and will eventually cease to exist. Time takes its toll: all objects inevitably decay and disappear. Thus, desiring or clinging to material things will only bring us suffering.

In the bodily dimension, our life cycle consists of birth, aging, illness, and death. We cannot stop time or know the future. If our lives might end in the next breath, why do we waste so much time and energy pursuing fleeting sensory experiences? For example, eating is meant to ease the pain of hunger and ensure our survival, but many people overindulge in the pursuit of fine food, which eventually leads to various health problems that impair quality of life and may even bring about untimely death. It took former United States President Bill Clinton two heart surgeries to realize his delusions about the joy of junk food and a meat-based diet. Now he lives a healthy vegan lifestyle in order to pursue real happiness in life.


In the mental dimension, thoughts and feelings manifest, remain, transform, and disappear. Sometimes we feel angry, sometimes we are happy. There is a Chinese saying: "The river of love has swells a thousand meters high; the sea of suffering has millions of waves one after the other." Love is a basic need. If we have not disciplined our mind, we may not be able to steer safely through a turbulent sea of emotions and desires. As a result, without clarity of mind, we may say words we wish we could recall or do things that ruin the rest of our life. Master Cheng Yen has said that anger is like temporary insanity. If we become trapped in any of our

emotions, we will act like an insane person.

The simple universal truth is all about Great Love—a love for all living beings that asks for nothing in return, a love that brings everlasting joy and peace without any attachments or delusions. This Great Love knows no boundaries. When we love all living creatures and truly respect each other, we open our minds and all our senses to appreciate everything in this world. Our hearts will be filled with gratitude for the wonders of this world—our very existence and the natural elements that support it.

What keeps us from bringing out this Great Love? What keeps our hearts from being grateful and worry-free? It is our ignorance and delusions that cause our suffering.

The best way to get rid of our delusions is by helping people in need without asking for anything in return. In this way, we will see these principles in action as clearly as watching a movie. Everyone can teach us by the trials and errors of their different approaches to life. That is why Master Cheng Yen encourages us to practice her teachings by helping others. This is the easiest and most direct way to wake up from the delusions and afflictions that we have wrapped ourselves in.

The Buddha tried to educate us about the true nature of the universe, including our own existence. If we accept and practice his teachings, we will not be sidetracked and lost forever. The Buddha's teachings guide us to experience life fully, without any doubts or questions. We can find bliss in our routine lives—even a shooting star or a falling flower may wake us up from the numbness that we carry throughout life. The meaning of our life can be clearly seen when our delusions are cleared away and our true nature emerges. We have no control over the length of our lives, but we surely can broaden and enrich our lives by loving, respecting, and helping others. 

* Used with permission of Tzu Chi Quarterly.

Hurricane Sandy caused great pain and suffering on the East Coast. The Buddha tells us that life is full of suffering, but he also tells us that there's a way out of suffering. Photo: Peter Lin



US TZU CHI 360

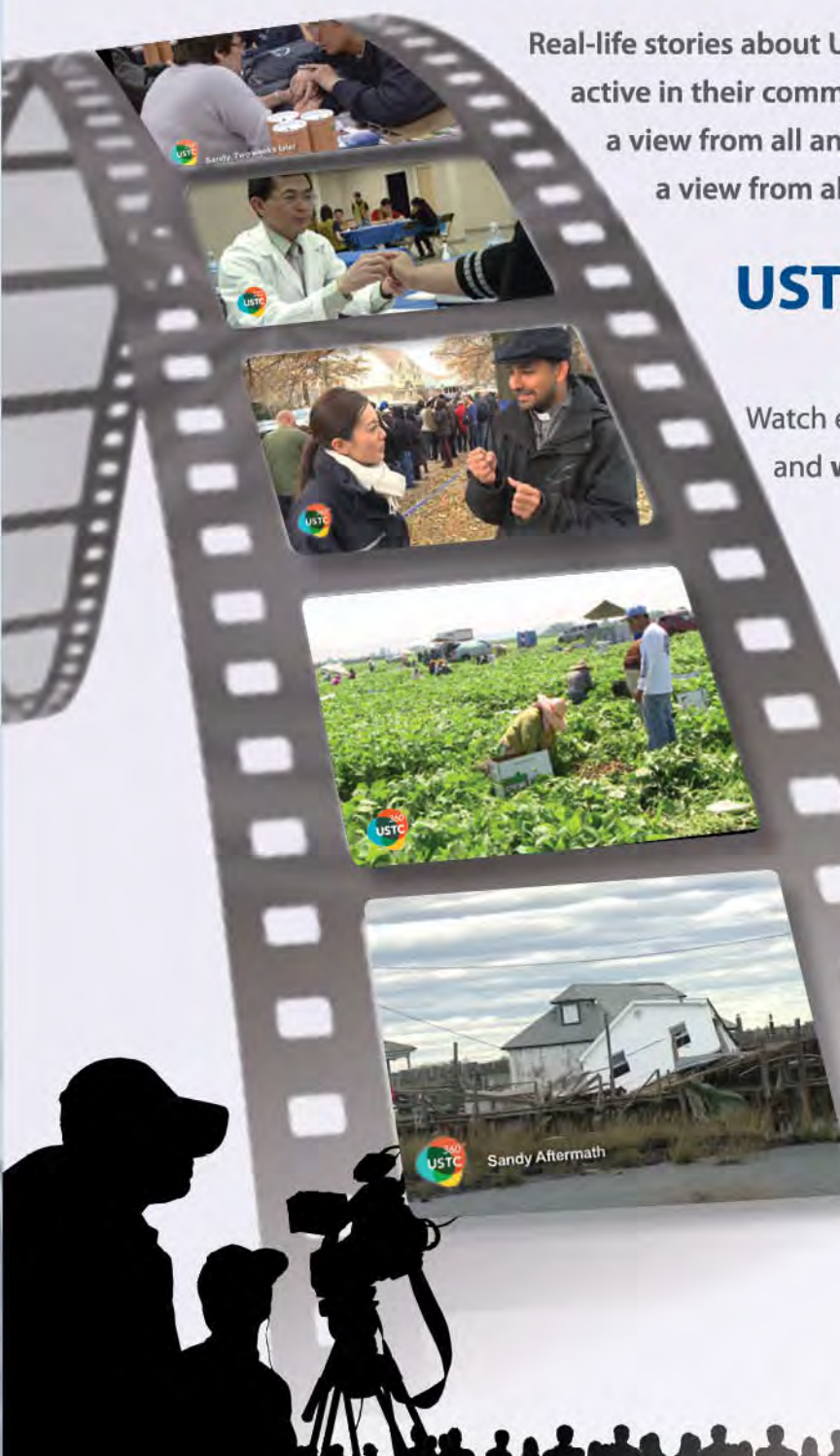
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Repent the Obstruction of Affliction: The Bottomless Pit of Desire

懺 悔 煩 惱 障： 意 望 深 無 底
chàn huǐ fán nǎo zhàng: yì wàng shēn wú dǐ

Life is like a play

人 生 恰 似 一 場 戲
rén shēng qià sì yì chǎng xì

Greed is as deep as the deepest ocean

貪 如 深 海 萬 丈 深
tān rú shēn hǎi wàn zhàng xī

A man works hard just to make a living

辛 勞 只 是 為 醫 饑
xīn láo zhǐ shì wèi yī jī

Once he can afford fancy clothes

綾 羅 綢 緞 身 上 穿
líng luó chóu duàn shēn shàng chuān

Once he owns tall buildings and fancy homes

蓋 得 高 樓 華 廈 起
gài dé gāo lóu huá shà qǐ

Once he marries a beautiful wife

娶 得 嬌 妻 顏 似 玉
qǔ dé jiāo qī yán sì yù

Once he buys a strong horse and a gold bridle

買 下 千 里 金 鞍 馬
mǎi xià qiān lǐ jīn ān mǎ

Once he hires scores of servants

募 得 家 丁 數 十 人
mù dé jiā dīng shù shí rén

The name of this play is "Greed and Desire"

戲 的 劇 碼 叫 貪 欲
xì de jù mǎ jiào tān yù

Desire, unsatisfied, causes great suffering

欲 壑 難 填 苦 來 饑
yù huò nán tián kǔ lái jī

Once he has food, he worries about what to wear

醫 得 饑 來 又 思 衣
yī dé jī lái yòu sī yī

He complains that his house is too humble

抬 頭 卻 嫌 房 屋 低
tái tóu què xián fáng wū dī

He bemoans the lack of a beautiful wife

床 前 又 怨 沒 嬌 妻
chuángqián yòu yuàn méi jiāo qī

He worries about having no horse to ride

忽 慮 出 門 沒 馬 騎
hū lǜ chū mén méi mǎ qí

He grumbles that he has few servants

又 嫌 出 入 跟 從 稀
yòu xián chū rù gēn cóng xī

He seeks power over others

無 權 無 勢 愁 人 欺
wú quán wú shì chóu rén qī

Lyrics: Sixi Wang 作詞：王思熙

Music: Shouquan Li 作曲：李壽全

Arrangement: Zhiyuan Chen 編曲：陳志遠

Translated into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team

One day he maneuvers himself into government

一朝鑽營入官署
yī zhāo zuān yíng rù guān shǔ

When he becomes a high-level official

即使權重位公卿
jí shǐ quán zhòng wèi gōng qīng

Once he becomes the emperor

得了玉璽做皇帝
dé liǎo yù xǐ zuò huáng dì

When the gods play chess with him

神仙陪他把棋下
shén xiān péi tā bǎ qí xià

Before his time to die

若非無常大限到
ruò fēi wú cháng dà xiàn dào

Even if he becomes the Emperor of Heaven

玉皇大帝讓他做
yù huáng dà dì ràng tā zuò

If our greed and desire know no bounds

世人貪欲深無底
shì rén tān yù shēn wú dǐ

Bad karma will invite afflictions

罪業既做煩惱伴
zuì yè jì zuò fán nǎo bàn

Know your wrongs, repent, and be remorseful

知罪肯懺有悔意
zhī zuì kěn chàn yǒu huǐ yì

Then hates the low status of his position

又恨官小職位低
yòu hèn guān xiǎo zhí wèi dī

He dreams of ascending the throne

朝思暮想要登基
zhāo sī mù xiǎng yào dēng jī

He wants to play chess with the gods

想和神仙下象棋
xiǎng hé shén xiān xià xiàng qí

He wants to build a ladder to the heavens

令人快做登天梯
lìng rén kuài zuò dēng tiān tī

Even if he reaches heaven, he is never satisfied

到了天上還嫌低
dào le tiān shàng hái xián dī

He whines that the Heavenly Palace is not opulent

定嫌天宮不華麗
dìng xián tiān gōng bù huá lì

We will never cease to create bad karma

造做罪業永不息
zào zuò zuì yè yǒng bù xī

Causes, conditions, and retributions are interdependent

因緣果報總相依
yīn yuán guǒ bào zǒng xiāng yī

Evils or blessings, the Law of Karma never fails

從來罪福不相欺
cóng lái zuì fú bù xiāng qī



Emphasizing that "prevention is better than cure," Tzu Chi volunteers in New Jersey held their annual free medical consultation on October 14, 2012. Thirteen doctors from different medical fields provided eighty-six consultations to fifty-eight people. Thirty-three people received flu shots. Photo: Jijun Gao

▶ A fire broke out on September 23, 2012, near Shockey Truck Trail and the Campo Indian Reservation. It burnt over 2,556 acres, destroyed thirty homes, killed one, and wounded three. Answering the call from the County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services, Tzu Chi volunteers distributed cash cards, eco-friendly blankets, and other goods on September 28. Photo: Liliane Yong



▲ For the past twelve years, Tzu Chi and First Christian Church have collaborated to hold an annual winter relief distribution in San Jose, California. On November 10, 2012, volunteers prepared hot meals for 250 homeless people, and also passed out eco-friendly blankets, scarves, socks, T-shirts, and toiletries. Photo: Peirong Ju



▲ On August 19, 2012, Tzu Chi New York office held a blood drive jointly with New York Blood Center at the YMCA in Flushing. Seventy-four Tzu Chi volunteers helped at the event, and a total of 152 people donated blood. Photo: Shuying Yang



▲ On October 6, 2012, eighteen Tzu Chi volunteers from Atlanta visited orphans at TurnAround Ministries in Woodstock, Georgia. In addition to bringing the children love and care, the volunteers also cooked them a delicious Chinese meal. Photo: Guochao Ye



◀ Tzu Chi volunteers in New Jersey held their annual beach cleaning in Keansburg Beach on September 18, 2012. Forty-two volunteers gathered to separate garbage and recyclables. Despite the rain, the volunteers kept on with their mission. Photo: Jixin Chen



▲ On October 27, 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers in Arlington, Texas, organized a free medical clinic at their office. Many locals of Vietnamese and Chinese descent brought their parents for treatment. A total of seventy-three people were seen by doctors and forty-nine received flu shots. Photo: Guodong Zhao



▲ On October 14, 2012, Tzu Chi Guatemala volunteers conducted a free clinic in the village of Yerbabuena, Palencia. Here, villagers line up to receive medicine. Photo: Qiongyi Qiu



Hurricane Isaac's strong winds damaged many of the temporary houses that Tzu Chi had erected in the Route Neuve area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Tzu Chi volunteers visited the area on September 4, 2012, to assess the damage and plan assistance. Photo: Michelle Chen



▲ The southwestern Dominican Republic was seriously affected by Hurricane Isaac; many villages were flooded and crops were washed away. Tzu Chi volunteers visited the village of Habanero, Barahona, on September 9, 2012, to conduct a relief distribution. Although poor themselves, many villagers donated what they could to help others. Photo: Shulan Feng



▲ On August 22, 2012, Argentina Tzu Chi volunteers went out on the streets of Buenos Aires to give hot meals and eco-friendly blankets to the homeless, bringing them a little warmth in the cold of winter. Photo: Jingrong Lin

▶ On September 5, 2012, El Salvador Tzu Chi volunteers distributed stationery, school supplies, and clothing to elementary school students from low-income families in San Juan La Ceiba, Ahuachapán. Photo: James Huang





All photos provided
by Olivia Chung

Central Valley's Family of Bodhisattvas

Ling Cho, Grace Yang, Steven Voon, Olivia Chung | Translated by Jacob Rawson

In the summer of 2002, Steven Voon walked into the Fresno Tzu Chi Service Center and said he wanted to become a volunteer. A few years earlier, Steven had met Olivia Chung and the two had exchanged wedding vows. Olivia's family in Malaysia was full of Tzu Chi members, and they had urged Steven to join Tzu Chi in the United States, where he was studying.

Steven searched for the address of Tzu Chi Fresno online and tracked down the office. He decided to join the medical team as he thought this was the best way to put his skills to use. At that time there were not many Tzu Chi volunteers in Fresno. The only volunteers were a group of mothers who had undertaken the tough assignment of running free medical

I feel very lucky that our whole family can participate in Tzu Chi activities. Tzu Chi has become a part of our family life.

clinics. They were quite excited when a young man with computer knowledge decided to join their team.

At that time, Tzu Chi volunteers had just started holding free clinics in the Central Valley, so volunteers had to bring supplies and forms from Southern California each time a clinic was to be held. After Steven joined, he used his expertise to computerize the clinical operations and streamline medical files and records. Fresno Service Center director Grace Yang had never touched a computer before, so Steven taught her how to perform basic tasks. He also used his fluent English to help her conduct public relations, contact various agencies, and discuss collaborative cases. Thanks to Steven's participation, Tzu Chi was also able to ramp up its collaboration with Kaiser Permanente.



Steven Voon speaks at the Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic office grand opening in 2012.

Before the Fresno team had their own medical equipment, volunteers borrowed equipment from Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic each time they held a clinic. Before each event, Steven would make the four-hour drive to Southern California, inventory the necessary equipment, load it into his car, and then drive back to Fresno. Before each clinic, he would drive the equipment to the site and set up operations. After the clinic ended, he would drive the equipment back to Southern California, and then drive himself back to Fresno. All told, each clinic put him on the road for sixteen hours. While in school, Steven suffered a serious car accident that almost cost him his life. After the injury, a steel bar was put in his leg, making it difficult for him to move. Throughout these hardships, Steven silently bore the load and never complained about his work.

Olivia Chung came to the U.S. in 2003 as a professional computer programmer, and quickly became Steven's biggest supporter. She designed a computer program to increase the efficiency of volunteer reporting and compiling patient medical records, and established a system for collecting patient forms and streamlining free clinic services. These new computer systems helped the free clinic operations run more smoothly.

The free clinic conducted on June 13, 2004, in Madera was a major milestone of the Central Valley medical mission, as it was the first clinic undertaken by the Fresno team independent of Tzu Chi Medical Foundation in Southern California. Steven oversaw all administrative operations, including designing flyers and forms, drawing up the floor plan, printing number plates, producing signs for each department, and even setting up partitions to create a temporary exam room. Steven even drove down to the Free Clinic to bring back reclining chairs and dental tools. At that time, Olivia was still on bed rest after delivering a baby girl. While at home, she used her computer skills to help design forms for the clinic. Even her parents, who were visiting from Malaysia for the birth of their grandchild, helped make patient number cards for three days straight.

In the years that followed, Olivia was never slowed down, even when carrying her two young daughters. Monthly clinics were familiar to the two little girls, Alvina and Brianna, who started attending even before birth. When clinics were held out of town, Olivia would wake the girls up at five o'clock in the morning, put on their little volunteer uniforms, comb their little pigtails, and then the whole family would leave home together for a day of volunteering.

When the two sisters saw other volunteers going about their work, they would ask, "Can we help too?" As the adults prepared for the day's work, the two sisters happily arranged the smaller, lighter tools and cleaned the

workspace. They would even use their stroller to help move the folding chairs, following behind the other volunteers and happily chatting away. Even when their school held its annual festival, the girls preferred to volunteer at the free clinic instead. Working together with the other volunteers made them feel happy and full of energy. At the end of each full day of volunteering, the girls fell fast asleep as soon as they were in the car. Alvina and Brianna have brought joy and warmth to the entire volunteer team, and Olivia is a very proud mother. She said, "I feel very lucky that our whole family can participate in Tzu Chi activities. Tzu Chi has become a part of our family life."

Steven is very kind to others, and always carries out his work happily and skillfully. His work has become an example for others, and he has inspired many Central Valley residents of all races and religions to give back to their communities. In May 2009, the local KSEE 24 television station honored Steven with the Asian/Pacific Islander Portraits of Success Award. The other medical volunteers were all happy to see his hard work rewarded, but Steven deflected the honor back to the nurses, doctors, and other volunteers.

Olivia has said that she and Steven have learned from working, and worked while learning. The Fresno team has thrived because its core team members are dedicated to achieving common goals and working through difficulties while carefully evaluating the situation around them. Team members are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to contribute, and their efforts have helped the team spread its roots all along the cities and towns that dot Highway 99, where the team continues to offer medical services for those with low incomes or without health insurance.

Drawing on her ten years of experience in medical outreach, Olivia has compiled the Tzu Chi Medical Outreach Handbook. The handbook spells out a systematic approach

to managing medical outreaches, and Olivia hopes that volunteers will use it to clarify the entire process of running an outreach event, and also to help each volunteer assume his or her individual duties. The handbook also includes lists of required forms, important issues to consider, and medical equipment to be used. Olivia has passed the handbook on to other Tzu Chi contacts who are currently working to expand their own regions' medical services. She hopes that the handbook will eliminate planning frustrations and will help volunteers avoid difficulties they may otherwise face. Most of all, she hopes that the handbook will help promote further development of local volunteer medical services.

Olivia said, "We ask our volunteers to participate in a training program to help them understand the nature of Tzu Chi charity programs and to encourage them to share



Following their parents' example, both young Voon girls have become dedicated volunteers.



the spirit of Tzu Chi with others. Our training program attempts to spread an understanding of the proper procedures for each department, as well as methods of finding information about the services that the Fresno team provides. In addition to conveying information about Tzu Chi and its free medical outreaches, we also hope that the training sessions encourage our volunteers to use their gratitude, respect, and love to assist each person who seeks medical help from our team.

“Although the Fresno team now has more than ten years’ experience administering free medical outreaches, we are careful to avoid falling into a lazy routine. We often explore ways that we can improve the services we provide and offer a more professional environment to our patients. We also seek to build a more systematic approach to outreach management

that will create a comfortable and organized environment for our volunteers to contribute their time and expertise to the outreach.”

Olivia and Steven’s selfless dedication to charity has become a model for the entire Tzu Chi family. 🌿



The Voon family volunteers together.

The family is an everlasting school; parents are lifetime teachers.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Sweet & Sour Mushrooms

Recipe provided by Vegetarian Cooking Team

Tzu Chi University Continuing Education Center | Instructor: Tjie Hoei Oei

Ingredients:

1 lb fresh Button Mushrooms
5 cups Vegetable Oil
1/2 Red Bell Pepper
1/2 Green Bell Pepper
1/2 can Pineapple Chunks
1/2 medium Carrot
White Pepper Powder
Salt
Cornstarch

Batter

1 cup Flour
1 cup Water
2 tsp Baking Powder
1/3 cup Cornstarch
1 tsp Oil

Sweet & Sour Sauce

1/2 medium Lemon (sliced)
1 cup Sugar
1/2 cup White Vinegar
1/2 cup Ketchup
1 tsp Cornstarch
1 pinch Salt
Water

Vegetarianism cultivates perseverance, compassion, and wisdom.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Directions:

1. Cut bell peppers and carrot into large chunks. Set aside.
2. Prepare batter: combine batter ingredients in a bowl and mix until smooth. Set aside. (Take care not to over-mix; otherwise batter will become runny and difficult to fry.)
3. Wash mushrooms and pat completely dry. Dust with white pepper powder, salt, and cornstarch.
4. Heat vegetable oil in a deep fryer to approximately 365-375 degrees Fahrenheit. (If you do not have a thermometer, use a toothpick to drip a drop of batter into the oil. The oil is ready when the batter takes exactly 3 seconds to rise to the surface.)
5. After oil is heated, evenly coat seasoned mushrooms in batter and slide into oil. When mushrooms return to surface, remove with strainer. Wait a minute, then fry again. (Frying the mushrooms a second time will give the coating a better texture and absorb excess oil.)

6. Prepare sauce: combine lemon, sugar, and vinegar. Cook over low heat until sugar dissolves. Add ketchup and salt. Mix well.

7. Combine 1 tsp cornstarch and 1 tbsp water in a small bowl. Slowly add a small amount to sauce and stir. Wait a few seconds. If sauce is still runny, add more. (Do not add all the cornstarch water at once: this will result in a thick, sticky sauce.)

8. When sauce has reached proper consistency, remove from heat.

9. In a heated pan, lightly sauté pineapple, carrot, and bell peppers in oil. Pour sauce into pan. Mix well, then add mushrooms. Once mushrooms are evenly coated, remove from heat and serve.

Photo: Kevin Chiang

CORRECTION:
Recipes in 33 & 34
should be credited
Instructor: Jimmy Chiu





THE FRUITS OF KINDNESS

Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Compiled into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team

When you are wronged, do not feel resentful or jealous.
Open your heart and be understanding.
That is true spiritual cultivation.
Dharma Master Cheng Yen

We can see the suffering caused by never-ending cycles of revenge and retribution everywhere in the world. In our own lives, if afflictions arise in response to the people and matters we encounter, we may readily act and speak in negative ways. This perpetuates the cycle of enmity, as others will react to us in the same way. However, if we condition ourselves to respond with understanding and kindness, we can break that destructive cycle.

As spiritual practitioners, our goal is to purify ourselves and benefit others. As we work to succeed in our own spiritual practice, we also want to help others succeed. However, the minds of ordinary beings often run wild. When we witness others' success, we may become jealous. Likewise, other people may become jealous of us. If we return jealousy with revenge and seek to hurt others for our injuries, we only continue this vicious cycle. But if we open our hearts and broaden our minds, we can embrace everyone and everything. As we see in the following story, this can eliminate not only our own resentment and hatred, but theirs as well.

A long time ago, in the State of Liang, there was a senior official named Song Jiu. He was the magistrate of a county that lay on the border of the State of Liang and the State of Chu. Song Jiu was very wise. His wish was that the people living along that border would get along peacefully, and that everyone would carry out their own duties

and work hard to improve the quality of their lives. But the citizens of these two states could not get along.

Each spring, the season for planting watermelons would arrive. The climate and the quality of the soil on both sides of the border was the same. People in both states sowed their watermelon seeds at the same time.

To grow watermelons, farmers must be very mindful. The people of Liang worked diligently and earnestly. They planted their seeds at the right time. Then they properly fertilized and watered their crops. These farmers were very mindful, so their watermelons grew beautifully.

What about the people of Chu? They also sowed seeds, but the farmers there were lazier. They did not fertilize or water their crops at the proper times. So though their watermelons grew, they were not big, beautiful, or plentiful. The people of Chu looked over and saw their neighbors' fields and wondered why they had such a big, beautiful crop. If they shared similar land and climate, why did those people do much better?

The more they looked at their sparse harvest and tiny watermelons, the angrier they became. This anger grew out of jealousy. They were jealous that their neighbors were better farmers, so they devised a plan to destroy the other side's crops. In the middle of the night, they crossed the border to sabotage the crops of Liang.



The people of Liang woke up to damaged fields and wondered what had happened. How could their plants and watermelons have been destroyed overnight? They decided to take up watch in the night, and saw that this was the work of people from Chu. The people of Liang got very angry, but they did not act rashly. They went to Song Jiu, the magistrate, and explained the matter. The magistrate was very calm and analyzed the situation with great wisdom.

He said, “Negative thoughts are the source of resentment and disaster. If we repay hurt with vengeance, the cycle of animosity will continue. The enmity and hatred will only deepen. That is not good. Let me tell you a way to resolve this.”

“They are upset because their watermelons are growing poorly. So, during the night, you should send people over to fertilize and water their crops so their melons can grow abundantly like ours. Then this problem can be safely resolved. But do not let them know that you are helping them. We must do this in secret.”

Many of the citizens had doubts. “Really? They destroyed our crops. Why should we help them?”

But since these were the wise magistrate's instructions, they listened. The farmers secretly snuck over each night to water the crops and fertilize the land in the state of Chu. After some time, the melons in the state of Chu flourished and grew beautifully.

The people of Chu noticed and thought, “That's strange. How did our watermelons grow in size to look like the ones in Liang? We have not taken special care of the crops or done anything differently. Why are there so many watermelons? We will have a plentiful harvest soon!”

The people of Chu were very curious about the change. So, it was their turn to take up watch at night. What they saw amazed them.

“Wow! The people from Liang are secretly watering and fertilizing the fields for us at night. They have revived our crops!”

Seeing this, the people of Chu were truly grateful.

This story began with resentment and jealousy. Resentment led the people of Chu to sabotage their neighbors. But in this case, the victims of destruction and jealousy were able to wisely repay resentment with virtuous actions. They decided to secretly help their rivals become successful. The offenders witnessed true kindness and their hearts were filled with gratitude.

Mutual respect and gratitude dissolve resentment and hostility. This principle can be applied in our daily spiritual practice. If we are mistreated by others, we must open our hearts and be accommodating. We should try to understand why they are treating us negatively. If we can look at things from their point of view and be understanding, will we still feel resentment, hatred, jealousy, or enmity? Absolutely not. 🌱

The Superior Scenery of the Bodhisattva Mind

Jordan Van Voast



Photo: Pema Karpo Van Voast

Blessed are those who can make good use of their time for the benefit of humankind.

—Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

I have always felt a special connection to nature's tranquility and splendor. As a young boy, my parents would take me hiking in the mountains of New England and sailing along the coast of Maine. Seeking the hidden jewels of the natural world while experiencing solitude and a sense of the interconnectedness of life has become a lifelong tradition for me.

As a parent of a nine-year-old, I want my daughter to feel a connection to nature, to experience the intricate web of interdependence, and to understand the importance of caring for this Earth upon which all living beings depend for sustenance. Many children in the world today grow up in urban environments and never have the opportunity to venture beyond the concrete jungle with its jarring noises, hustling crowds, and sensory overstimulation. I am alarmed and concerned that this nature deficit disorder, as it is now commonly called, will only accelerate humanity's destruction of the natural world. If we fail to appreciate and see the beauty of something, then there is little motivation to protect and care for it. Furthermore, our inner spiritual growth is stunted due to our sense of alienation from the natural abundance and diversity of the biosphere.

On a recent visit to Hualien, I decided to take my daughter to Snow Mountain to explore what some say is one of the most beautiful natural areas of the island. We hiked over twenty kilometers in three days. Although we came up just short of the 3886-meter summit, the inner spiritual summits we realized cannot be measured with any worldly yardstick.

After the hike, I joined my wife at the Jing Si Abode in Hualien to celebrate Dharma Master Cheng Yen's birthday and the forty-sixth anniversary of Tzu Chi's founding. After breakfast, Master delivered a Dharma talk which spoke directly to my heart.

Our life is very brief, she said. Time is so precious. We only have a short time and then it is time to leave this body and life. Now that we have encountered the teachings of the Buddha, we have an opportunity to put them into practice and be of profound benefit not only to ourselves but to all sentient beings. This chance may not come again for many lifetimes.

In the past, all of us have created many negative karmas and any one of these could ripen at the moment of death. At this point in time, most of us are not in control of our own destiny, but instead are ruled by the constantly



Photo: Jordan Van Voast

shifting currents of our minds, which are under the influence of ignorance, greed, and anger. Each one of us has the pure Buddha potential within. But to fully manifest that potential requires diligence and perseverance. Time is so precious.

{ We only have a short time and then it is time to leave this body and life. }

from many angles and to contemplate and meditate again and again. We are challenged to look deeper than our personal identities, our conditioned beliefs, and

our cherished viewpoints.

After the talk, I followed a small group of Tzu Chi volunteers up to the front of the hall to seek an audience with Master. After being introduced, Master commented on the island's natural beauty, but she told us that the scenery of the Bodhisattva spirit is more beautiful, so we should not waste our time being attached to the external beauty of nature. As a Tzu Chi International Medical Association volunteer, it would have been better for me to volunteer my time at Tzu Chi Hospital instead of spending three days climbing a mountain. I bowed in gratitude for her words of wisdom.

In my own case, although I know that it is important to connect with nature, to spend time with my daughter, and to teach environmental stewardship, I also have a valuable skill as an acupuncturist with the ability to directly alleviate others' suffering. If I have an opportunity to visit Hualien again, I will accept Master's invitation to volunteer at Tzu Chi Hospital. We all have the Buddha-nature. By manifesting Buddha's love and compassion in service to suffering beings, anyone can create incredibly profound positive karma. That is the key to really making our lives meaningful. We need to use our time wisely. 🌿

When you commit yourself to a path and a teacher, often the teachings and advice do not soothe your ego. We have a tendency to listen to spiritual advice with one-dimensional, linear, superficial, either-or thinking. Hearing the voice of the Buddha requires us to look at things



Photo: Jordan Van Voast

Rising to Challenge

As East Coast residents suffered in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, young people in every corner of the country volunteered their time and energy to Tzu Chi's relief efforts. Together, they transformed a crisis into an opportunity to help others.

Sandy's



Tender loving care is found in all corners of the world.
Everyone can be a Bodhisattva to help those in need.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Boston, Massachusetts Photo: Caroline Sun



Queens, New York

Photo: Peter Lin



Dallas, Texas
Photo: Phoebe Ko



Seattle, Washington
Photo: Angela Wang



Brooklyn, New York
Photo: Peter Lin



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Photo: Peter Lin



Staten Island, New York
Photo: Peter Lin

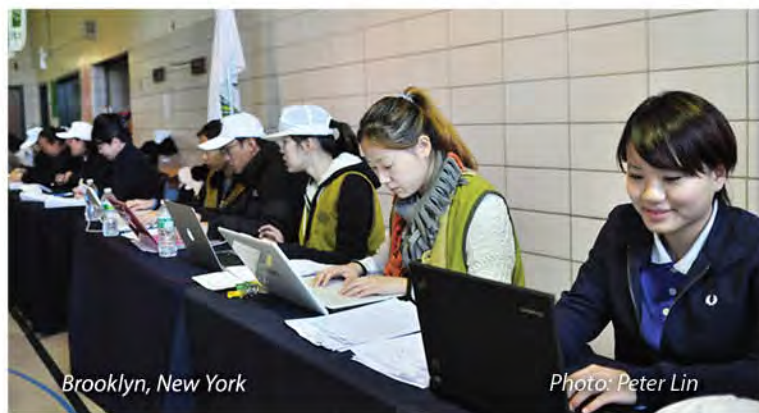


Cedar Grove, New Jersey

Photo: Wankang Wang



Irvine, California
Photo: Emily Chu



Brooklyn, New York

Photo: Peter Lin



Atlanta, Georgia

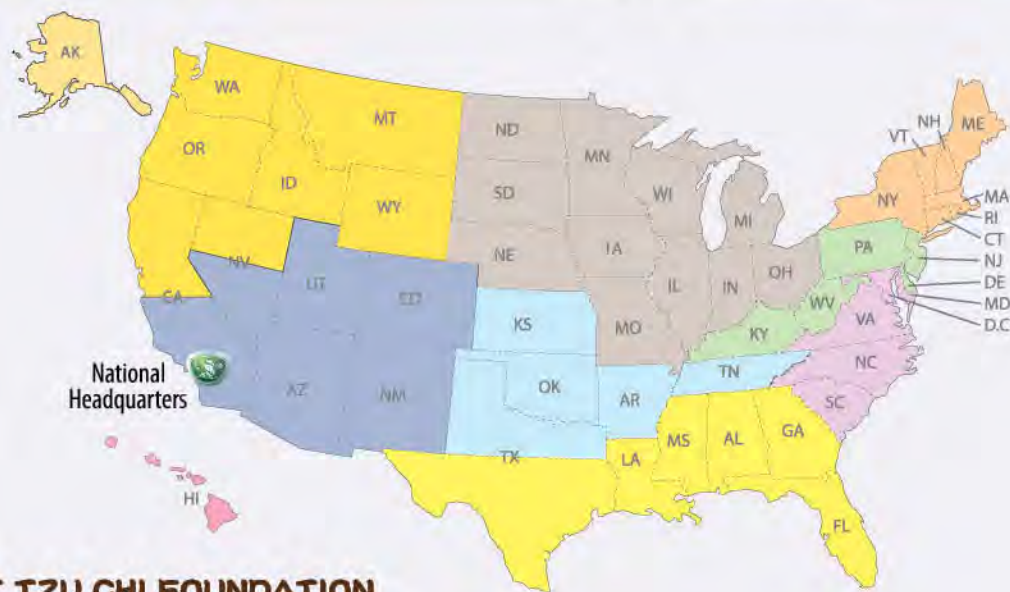
Photo: Emily Ko



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Photo: Lee Jia Law

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Tel: 973-857-8666
Fax: 973-857-9555

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Dayton, OH 45429
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Fax: 937-431-8192

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JING SI BOOKSTORE KIRKLAND, WA
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WISCONSIN

MADISON OFFICE
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Madison, WI 53715
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TZU CHI

A BRIEF HISTORY...

On April 14, 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. During the first five years, 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: across the island and around the world.

Today, Tzu Chi is a nonprofit charitable organization with ten million volunteers and donors in more than fifty countries worldwide. Over the past forty-six 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 nationwide. Volunteers give back to their local communities through family services, emergency disaster services, 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, Hurricane Katrina, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and Hurricane Sandy.

In recent years, Tzu Chi volunteers' charitable work has been increasingly recognized by the global community. In 2010, Tzu Chi was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In 2011, Dharma Master Cheng Yen was recognized with the Roosevelt Institute's FDR Distinguished Public Service Award, and was named to the 2011 TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people.

SPREAD THE SEEDS OF LOVE





Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

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Life
is filled with
pain and suffering,
but also with
hope and love.

*Jing Si Aphorism by
Dharma Master
Cheng Yen*

