

COMPASSION & RELIEF

# TZU CHI USA JOURNAL

## **SOUTH AFRICA: A JOURNEY OF THE HEART**

- ◆ HAITI'S MIRACLE TREE
- ◆ FLOWERS IN THE SNOW



ISSUE 31 | SPRING 2012



DHARMA MASTER CHENG YEN,  
FOUNDER OF  
TZU CHI FOUNDATION

## CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

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

# The Radiant Jewel Within

Clean and polish the radiant jewel within,  
the perfect, luminous pure nature.  
Like a clear mirror, it reflects everything.  
As layer after layer of afflictions and ignorance build up,  
like the accumulation of mud and filth,  
the radiance of our pure nature cannot shine through.


Let the Dharma enter our hearts  
to cleanse away defilements and  
eliminate all attachments and ignorance.  
Then the light again shines through;  
this perfect, radiant wisdom can illuminate the universe.

*Compiled into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team*



The inaugural issue of the Tzu Chi USA Journal was published a decade ago, in February 2002, in order to “bring the message of peace and love to a world now confronted with terror and hatred.” After ten years and thirty issues telling tales of compassion, the journal has expanded.

This new, larger format will allow us to share more moving stories and dazzling photographs of Tzu Chi volunteers active across the country and around the world. As before, Tzu Chi USA Journal will rely on quality content from generous volunteers just like you. We thank you for your past contributions and appreciate your continued support.

Gratefully, Tzu Chi USA Journal Editorial Team 

editor's note

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The Tzu Chi USA Journal Editorial Team sincerely thanks all the volunteers who contributed to this issue, and warmly welcomes your articles, photographs, comments, and suggestions. Please contact us at [journal@us.tzuchi.org](mailto:journal@us.tzuchi.org). Please help us save paper by reading the journal online at [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org).



# US TZU CHI 360

## New Episodes Every Sunday

Real-life stories about US Tzu Chi volunteers active  
in their communities and around the world:

a view from all angles,

a view from all perspectives:

### US TzuChi 360

Watch episodes online at [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org)

or find us on Facebook & YouTube.

Check out Episodes 16 & 17  
for a look at the Tzu Ching  
journey to South Africa!



## TO GIVE IS TO RECEIVE

William Keh

Dharma Master Cheng Yen frequently reminds us that every disaster is an opportunity for awakening. In the twenty-first century, at least one major disaster seems to strike each year, so this message becomes ever more poignant.

Not long ago, I read that the March 2011 earthquake in Japan stirred loose twenty million tons of debris that is currently floating across the Pacific Ocean. Television sets, refrigerators, and even boats are expected to wash up on Hawaii's shores by early 2013. More debris will hit the Pacific Northwest a year later.

Major disasters like this earthquake seem to strike every year now and, like this earthquake, their effects are not constrained by national borders. We truly live in a "global village" and that village is growing ever smaller. Every event affects each of us, no matter where we live.

So how do we face this difficult time fraught with disasters? We can start in our daily lives. We can work harder, be more frugal, and have the strength to endure hardship. We can take responsibility not only for ourselves, but also for society and the earth. We can work together to leave for future generations a beautiful and harmonious home.

Tzu Chi volunteers take it upon themselves to support the suffering, going forth wherever and whenever they are needed. Since 1994, US Tzu Chi volunteers have been responding every time disaster strikes, whether at home or abroad. After the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, hundreds of volunteers dedicated themselves to four months of disaster relief, and their efforts have led to several long-term relief projects. Most importantly, they successfully spread the seeds of love to the local

population, inspiring many Haitian bodhisattvas to carry on the work of caring for their local communities.

Currently, Tzu Chi volunteers from the US and Haiti are promoting the growth of Moringa trees in Haiti. Growing Moringa, with its many nutritional benefits, is an opportunity for Haitians to help themselves and others. As a sustainable local project, it is an opportunity to inspire more locals to join the effort and to pass blessings on to future generations.

This summer, a group of Tzu Ching college volunteers from across the United States took time from their summer vacations to travel to South Africa. Their hearts were set on helping those in need. But as they entered the villages and witnessed the local Zulu volunteers caring for AIDS patients and orphans, joyfully giving time and love in spite of their own poverty, these Tzu Ching volunteers began to understand the true meaning of a bodhisattva's compassion. Inspired by the local Zulu volunteers, they came to realize that in this journey they received far more than they gave.

This message is the reason why Master Cheng Yen started Tzu Chi forty-five years ago: so that by helping others we can become enlightened to life's meaning. Buddhism teaches us that each person's life has its own higher purpose. If we run around seeking only fame and fortune, then we start to think that this is the goal. But when we leave this world, fame and fortune lose all meaning.

In their journey to South Africa, the Tzu Ching volunteers found that the greater goal is the Bodhisattva path: when we give without asking for anything in return and embrace those who suffer, we see the real meaning of life and receive true joy and happiness. 🌱



## WHOLESOME FRIENDS

As mundane beings, we really need to make friends with and cherish friends of good character, for they can have a positive influence on us, by encouraging us to do good, pointing out the errors we make, and preventing us from going astray when we are in the deep suffering of anguish and afflictions.

When we become afflicted and get confused about what to do with our life, we are like a traveler who loses his orientation and doesn't know which way to go. The way for him to get back on track is to quickly seek help from someone who can point out the right road. When he is given directions, he should really mindfully listen; otherwise he will soon get lost again and not be able to reach his destination.

In life, we need wholesome friends beside us. Not only can they provide guidance, support and encouragement; they also set a good example for us. The following story will help us better understand this.

One day, when the Buddha and his disciples were out on a journey, they saw a string on the path. The Buddha asked one of his disciples to pick it up, and the disciple tentatively did so with his thumb and forefinger. Seeing this, the Buddha asked why he did not hold the string more firmly. He replied honestly, "Buddha, it really stinks." "Why does the string stink?" the Buddha asked. "Perhaps it was once used to tie fish," the disciple guessed, "and the bad smell came from the fish."

"The fish is long gone," the Buddha noted, "so why does this string still smell so bad?" "It must have been used to tie the fish for long enough to absorb the smell," the disciple offered. The Buddha agreed, "The fish and the string were once together, but are now apart, yet the string still has the smell of the fish on it. You can think about this more."

Continuing on their journey, they soon saw a piece of wrapping on the path. The Buddha asked the same disciple to pick it up. The disciple did so with a smile on his face. "You seem very happy to find this wrapping," the Buddha observed. "Yes, Buddha. It smells pleasant, like sandalwood." The Buddha smiled back and said, "It's a piece of wrapping. Why do you speak of sandalwood?" "Well," replied the disciple, "it must have been used to wrap sandalwood for it to smell like sandalwood. And although it isn't used to wrap the wood any more, its scent lingers."

The Buddha seized the moment to offer a teaching, "Yes. We human beings are exactly like the string and the wrapping; if we often mix with wayward friends, it will be hard not to be influenced by them. If we are surrounded by wholesome friends, we will have them as good examples to follow."

I remember a case that illustrated this when I visited Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital sometime ago. Entering the busy lobby, I saw a young man sitting in a wheelchair, accompanied by a Tzu Chi volunteer who seemed very kind and gentle. Walking toward



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

them I found that the young man's body was covered with tattoos, and the pattern extended to his hands and palms.

I was very curious about why he had been admitted to the hospital, so I bent down to meet his eyes and speak to him. It turned out he had been injured in a fight after getting drunk with some friends. I patted his hand in encouragement, and seeing the openness and sincerity in his eyes, I told him, "You are still young and have your whole life ahead of you. Do you really want to spend your precious time that way, getting drunk with friends and getting into fights?" I encouraged him to think on it and told him, "It would be wonderful if the next time we meet, it turned out that you were there as a volunteer helping others." He nodded and gave me a timid smile. I smiled back and said, "Best wishes to you."

One day, sometime later, I saw him on a Da Ai TV program, being introduced as a dedicated Tzu Chi recycling volunteer. He told the interviewer about the episode in the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital. He had taken in my words wholeheartedly and after receiving great encouragement by the Tzu Chi volunteers in the hospital, he was inspired to lead a more meaningful life.

When he was discharged from the hospital, it wasn't easy to begin anew. Knowing this, he kept in

close contact with Tzu Chi volunteers and started volunteering at a Tzu Chi recycling station. He spent whatever time he could there, turning down his old friends' invitations to join them in their activities. With the great support and encouragement from fellow volunteers at the recycling station his conviction to change was firm, and he gave up smoking, drinking, and drugs. He even established a daily habit of copying out Jing Si Aphorisms and would give the aphorisms to his old friends. He ended up influencing some of them for the better.

This young man was greatly touched and positively influenced by the unconditional love and care of many Tzu Chi volunteers. His experience encouraged him to take the initiative in helping others get back on track, as he had learned how important it is to have wholesome friends.

Drawing close to friends of good character, we enwrap ourselves in wholesome influences. We will be inspired to reflect on our thoughts and behaviors and to cultivate ourselves to become better people. Indeed, wholesome friends are like wise mentors to students, a guide at the crossroads, fragrant sandalwood to a wrapping sheet, and Dharma to our afflicted mind. 🌿







# SOUTH AFRICA: A JOURNEY OF THE HEART



The Tzu Chi Collegiate Youth Association (Tzu Ching) was established in Taipei in 1992 to offer young people an opportunity to learn life's value and meaning through helping others and interacting with people from different backgrounds. Tzu Ching college volunteers are now active across the United States and around the world.

After months of intensive planning and preparation, a group of US Tzu Ching volunteers and advisors traveled together to South Africa in August 2011 to assist and learn from the many active volunteers in Johannesburg and Durban. This is the first international journey to spread love undertaken by US Tzu Ching.





# US Tzu Ching Journey to South Africa

Tiffany Pan

*US Tzu Ching volunteers journey into the villages of rural South Africa. Photo: Peter Lin*

On August 7, 2011, thirty-one members of the US Tzu Chi family from California, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, and Michigan arrived in South Africa for a two-week volunteer journey to Johannesburg and Durban. Everyone was bleary-eyed and tired from sixteen-hour flights and a six- to nine-hour time change, but we were all extremely eager to begin helping the needy in South Africa. None of us could possibly have known that in the next two weeks we would receive so much more than we would give.

From its inception, the South Africa project had four main goals: 1) for US youth to realize and appreciate their own blessings after witnessing the suffering of others; 2) for US youth to experience the Tzu Chi spirit by joining our South Africa family in their acts of charity; 3) to inspire US youth to become more dedicated to Tzu Chi missions; 4) for this journey to serve as a pilot program to develop a standard operating procedure for deeper charity work in the future.

In the long-term, we hope to strengthen our partnership with Tzu Chi in South Africa and continue to send volunteers who can dedicate more time and provide essential services through a fellowship program designed for sustained, long-term engagement between American youth and the people of South Africa. Ultimately, such a program would spread awareness of Tzu Chi throughout colleges in the United States and help shape promising students into compassionate global citizens.

Although these goals are geared toward the development of US Tzu Ching, as young Americans traveling from one of the most powerful nations in the world to the "Dark Continent," we were all more focused on the opportunity to help those less fortunate than ourselves. In fact, the initial spark for this project came from Tzu Ching who attended the United Nations Youth Assembly and wanted to take

action on the global issues they discussed there.

As the coordinator of the US team, I worked directly with Mary Keh and other Tzu Ching advisors to recruit, select, and prepare both Tzu Ching participants and volunteer mentors for this transformational experience in South Africa. Personally, I made an extra effort to be well-informed by following current affairs in the news, reading up on South African history and culture, and staying up-to-date with scientific research on issues of poverty, education, public health, and environmental conservation in South Africa. Having never been to South Africa before, I relied heavily on frequent emails and Skype calls with our South African family to develop our itinerary and make logistical arrangements. I also hosted monthly Skype conferences that spanned three different continents - including administrators in Hualien, South Africa, and the United States - which helped ensure that our plans would accomplish the journey's goals.

Six months of collaborative planning resulted in a jam-packed itinerary of volunteer work and cultural exchange. Though the schedule was intense, we were set on making good use of every moment in South Africa to help people in desperate need and inform others about the wonderful work that Tzu Chi does around the world. We visited primary schools to teach health and hygiene, humanity, respect, compassion, and environmental protection; we tutored high school students in English, math, and science; we went out into the townships and rural villages to care for the injured and the sick in their

*The author (front) is humbled by her South Africa experience  
Photo: Grace Wong*





*The Power of 5 is carried to South Africa.  
Photo: Peter Lin*

homes; we distributed hot lunches to orphans, many of whom had lost their parents to violence or AIDS; we helped raise awareness of Tzu Chi in South Africa and promoted The Power of 5; along the way, we hand-delivered gifts donated from generous supporters in the United States.

Though we came with such good intentions, we often felt like no matter what we did, we could never repay the kindness of our gracious hosts. From the moment we landed in South Africa, our extended Tzu Chi family went out of their way to accommodate our every whim. A new branch office had just been purchased in Johannesburg, so volunteers rushed to clean and renovate the buildings in time for our arrival in Johannesburg. The Lien family in Durban even remodeled their own home to create a meeting space for our group. Because of our voracious American appetites, volunteers had to work overtime to prepare twice the amount of food they expected to feed a group of our size. This thoughtful, selfless care we received from our South African family helped me see the unspoken arrogance behind our altruistic motives and made me feel ashamed.

Once the volunteer work began, we quickly discovered that we had much to learn from our South African family—not only the methods for their service work, but also the spirit with which they carry it out. Over the course of this journey in South Africa, we encountered so many people with such tragic personal stories of violence, disease, and injustice. I think every member of the US team, at some point, felt a sense of helplessness and disappointment in our inability to relieve all the suffering around us.

Unexpectedly, this sadness became a unifying factor for our group. In our nightly discussions and sharing, we drew wisdom from our hosts and strength from each other. We were inspired by the Zulu sisters who, despite the many difficulties

they have come through, exude such joy and warmth as they sing while caring for the sick and wretched in the urban slums and rural villages. We determined to emulate the South African Tzu Chi alumni in their commitment to their Tzu Chi work and their complete embodiment of the “just do it” attitude necessary for making a real positive difference in their communities. Looking at the work our South African Tzu Chi family does on a daily basis, our “contributions” during our short visit seem like child’s play. But, this very realization has motivated us to further dedicate ourselves to the betterment of humanity.

Along the way, we developed a motto for our South African journey: “Turn sadness into compassion, compassion into wisdom, wisdom into strength, and strength into action.” As a group of relatively unskilled college students from the United States, our original vision of making a profound impact over two weeks in South Africa was naïve at best. But over those same two weeks, South Africa made a profound impact on each of us.

Now that we have returned to the United States with a better understanding of the challenges of making the world a better place and the resolution to support each other in doing so, our next step is to put all that we have learned into action. We must continue to build strength by sharing our stories with as many people as possible. In this way, we will never forget the people we met, the experiences we shared, and the lessons we learned. Therefore, I must thank you, the reader, for taking the time to read about our journey in South Africa. Only with your support, can we continue to work together to relieve the suffering of people, not just in South Africa, but also in our own communities and around the world. 🌿

Acts of generosity are perceived as helping others when we ourselves are the true beneficiaries.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



# The Essence of Happiness

Jayson Hsieh | Translated by Jacob Rawson

Ever since I went to college and began to know something of the world, an image of the South Africa of apartheid and extreme gaps between wealth and poverty has been branded in my mind. I never thought I would have the opportunity to visit such an undeveloped and poorly-policed nation. I even feared that if I walked down the wrong street or turned down the wrong alley, I would breathe my last breath on the African continent.

But ever since I joined the Tzu Chi Foundation, I have heard about a brave team of Tzu Chi volunteers sowing seeds of love at the gates of hell, like a sliver of heaven that has broken through the clouds. Over time, my perceptions of South Africa turned from fright to curiosity, from anxiety to expectation. Once I heard about the volunteer journey to South Africa, I filled out the application form without a beat of hesitation.

Before I set off, I gave myself a number of mental exercises and tasks, knowing full well that I would represent all Tzu Chi volunteers, and that my every movement would affect the future relationship between US Tzu Ching and South Africa. This sense of importance made me more vigilant and attentive toward the task. I knew that this program was not a chance for “voluntourism,” and that only by leaving with the proper mentality could I avoid unrealistic expectations. From preliminary preparations to meeting up with the team, I continuously mulled over some soul-searching questions: Would I be able to fulfill the expectations of this role? Would I be able to avoid letting my external cultural influences oppress the care I show for local families and people? Would I fail to live up to the expectations held for this journey?

On August 5, I finally set foot in Africa: a continent at once familiar and strange. After clearing customs,





*Volunteers serve hot meals to AIDS orphans. Photo: Peter Lin*



*With a helpful aid, the Tzu Ching volunteers teach proper hygiene techniques to schoolchildren. Photo: Peter Lin*

I immediately spotted two senior organizers who had come to welcome me. Coming to a foreign land and immediately seeing the blue sky and white cloud volunteer ensemble accompanied by amiable smiles made my tired body feel relaxed and at ease, as if I had arrived at home. Although I do not have any relatives in Africa, the Tzu Chi volunteers are my Dharma kin.

Much of our time in South Africa was spent interacting with children. The local elementary schools' basic health and environmental education rose above our expectations, but we faced major challenges in teaching implementation and execution. To cite an example, all of the students had learned the proper methods to brush their teeth and wash their hands, but as soon as we asked how often they should brush their teeth or when they should wash their hands, we were not sure whether to laugh or cry at the bizarre responses. In response, our team used an entire class period to set up props, games, and dances to communicate simple and easy-to-understand implementation methods, especially emphasizing to the children how to spread these lessons to their families and communities.

When we were set to leave this area after five days, the children ran up to us not only to embrace but also to seek agreement on a time when we would meet them again. In their smiles of artless innocence and interactions of mindful sincerity I found a deeper grasp of the true essence of happiness. As the German inventor Frederick Koenig said, "We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have." Happiness is actually very simple: it is in wiping off the detached and indifferent poker face, transforming the vacuous and blind stares, and setting out to cherish and give thanks for what we already possess.

During each of the seven days in Durban, we prepared hot meals together with local volunteers to feed the local orphans. Later we learned that the local volunteers have been rising at dawn to prepare these communal meals for the past ten years. All of the food comes from gardens that they till themselves. They ask for nothing in return and their tireless



The first step on the path of Buddhism is to lessen our desires and be satisfied with what we have. Then our minds will relax and we will begin to gain wisdom.  
*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

efforts are truly moving. As I watched them darting busily around the kitchen while laughing cheerfully, I saw the incarnation of a bodhisattva garbed in blue sky and white clouds. Most of these women live in situations no better than the orphans they feed, and yet they persist. They weather their own difficulties and practice selfless devotion because they cannot bear to see lonely and helpless children suffer further hardships. It moves me deeply.

What was most impressive, and also most shocking to me, were the seemingly insurmountable barriers the local volunteers must cross to make home visits. As we followed the local volunteers to poor mountain villages and unstable slum housing, we saw heart-wrenching scenes stretched across the horizon. I felt as though I had stumbled upon the gates of hell. Scanning down the street, each home

seemed forged from sheets of iron. They looked like solid shelters from wind and rain, but in reality, residents may as well have had the starry heavens as a blanket and the savannah as a mattress as they suffered the full ravages of icy winds and the scorching sun.

Gravestones were scattered around the homes. I was amazed to discover that many villagers who had passed away from AIDS had chosen areas in front of their previous homes as final resting places. After hearing this we were all rueful and moved, overtaken by sighs and sobs. Among the living, we saw frozen limbs, frigid stomachs, sickly faces, and malnourished bodies so emaciated that their thin bones showed through like match sticks. Due to a shortage of local resources, the villagers could only use cooking oil as a substitute for Vaseline to protect their skin from the cold. Many of us Tzu Ching volunteers were deeply saddened and immediately proposed that we canvass for contributions of basic medical equipment for South Africa. But senior volunteer Michael Pan warned us that we should not recruit only money and supplies, but that we needed to recruit hearts instead. He reminded us that Tzu Chi is not only a charity organization, but also a spiritual cultivation ground, where we should form karmic affinities to spread the fields of blessings.

My interest in international medicine and aid started in 2001 when I followed the Tzu Chi senior organizers to Mexico to distribute food and visit local families. This year, I ventured through remote realms to set foot on the African continent and saw with my own eyes how the local Tzu Chi volunteers work long hours through wind and rain to carry out Master Cheng Yen's noble ambitions and care for local residents who suffer. This has made it even clearer how I should equip myself to approach international medical aid with spiritual devotion. As an attentive disciple of the Venerable Master, I cultivate my mind and spirit on the Tzu Chi Bodhisattva path. 🌿



*Zulu volunteers prepare hot meals for AIDS orphans, as they have for ten years. Photo: Peter Lin*



## Rural Life in the Durban Area

Tiffany Pan

Our first visit to the rural area of Inanda was a shock, to say the least. We had all seen the photos and heard Michael Pan's stories, but nothing could prepare us for what we were about to witness. This was our fifth day in South Africa, but our first day out in the field. Many on our team were eager to start working after days of traveling, orientation, and preparation, but we were quick to discover that there are limits to what many of us are willing and able to do. This realization is a testament to how amazing and how genuinely full of selfless compassion the local Tzu Chi volunteers in South Africa are.

We visited a woman who had a stroke that left her immobile. Local Tzu Chi volunteers have been visiting her regularly and they told us her story. After her stroke, her family abandoned her: she was left completely helpless and alone in her own home.

Upon our arrival, we noticed that there were

tires, bricks, and other miscellaneous objects weighing down the corrugated sheet metal "roof" to keep it from being carried off by the wind. As we approached the entrance, we were hit with the overwhelming stench of urine and rotting food. We found the woman lying on the ground on top of two couch cushions saturated with at least three days' worth of her own bodily fluids and feces. She had scars all over her thighs from where her own daughter had beaten her. Her clothes and blankets were all completely soaked with w h o - k n o w s - w h a t. There were mugs with dead spiders in them, bowls coated in an inch of green mold, and plates

*With great compassion, volunteers carefully clean a patient's home.*

*Photo: Peter Lin*







*Tzu Ching and Zulu volunteers embody the spirit of Great Love as they bathe and care for a patient. Photo: Peter Lin*

covered with a substance that looked and smelled like vomit. There were flies everywhere and the room had no ventilation. I could barely stand to be in that room for more than a few minutes at a time. Can you imagine living under those conditions, unable to move for days at a time?

None of us from the US had imagined anything like this before, even in our worst nightmares. We were all taken aback, unsure of what to feel or how to act. While I was still reeling from the stench of the room, the local Bodhisattvas immediately began to bathe the woman and gather all the soiled dishes, cushions, blankets, and clothes. There was a tap with running water outside the house, and I watched one of the local volunteers reach her hand into a hole filled with muddy water just to turn it on.

At this point, I started to regain control of my wits and decided that I had to do something, anything. I had no idea how to even begin caring for the poor woman, so I settled on helping with the dishes. You have to do the little things in order

to achieve the bigger goals, I figured. But by the time we were finished, I could not fend off a sense of utter frustration and helplessness. I felt like there was nothing short of death that would bring this woman out of the hell she lives in.

At that very moment, the local Bodhisattvas began to sing as they marched up the hill past me. Their smiles and their cheerful songs sent a wave of reassurance over me. It reminded me that helping others does not stop at tangible gifts or acts of kindness. Compassion has the ability to transcend physical boundaries and the power to inspire.

The indomitable spirit of the local Bodhisattvas is truly incredible. It can be seen in their faces, heard in their voices, and felt from every fiber of their being. It is so humbling and such a pleasure to know them. 🌿

*For more on Michael Pan's story, please see USA Journal No. 29 (Summer 2011) – The Man with "Three Hearts": The Legend of Michael Pan.*

# Book Drive for South Africa

Edward Chang &  
Jennifer Wenli Chen



*Tzu Ching volunteers give out books with deep bows of respect.  
Photo: Peter Lin*



We are collecting good condition children's picture books, reading books and school supplies for AIDS orphans in South Africa.

**Why do they need it?**  
AIDS orphans in South Africa have an impoverished school environment. Many of them have **no books to read or pen & paper to write.**

**What do we need?**  
Please bring your **children's picture books, up to 4th grade books, and school supplies** that are in **good condition.**

**When and Where?**  
Please bring all donation to the **Main Lobby Office** before **May 25th, 2011.** All collected items will be **handout** **not directly** to the AIDS orphans in South Africa. For more information please contact [tsuchingclubny@ny.edu](mailto:tsuchingclubny@ny.edu).

**Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation**  
<http://www.tzuchihq.org>

hoped to raise awareness in the US of the dire circumstances in South Africa. The book drive was also an opportunity for all Tzu Chi chapters to work together, learn from each other, and overcome any challenges encountered.

The Buddha teaches us that the world is full of suffering. This painful message is met with varying reactions that change with experience. On my Tzu Chi path, I have felt resistance, acceptance, and everything in-between. My sentiment always fluctuates as I face challenges, overcome them, and then reflect on those experiences. This year's book drive for South Africa was an especially emotional rollercoaster ride of challenges faced, accomplishments achieved, and lessons learned.

In the planning stages of the US Tzu Ching journey, Michael Pan, who has been working for the past decade to improve the lives of the Zulu people in Durban, approached Tzu Chi USA to conduct a book drive to provide children in South Africa with quality reading materials. Through this book drive, we

Our Tzu Ching chapter in New York was asked to coordinate the nationwide book drive. We were tasked with designing and successfully implementing an effective campaign in four months. We needed to coordinate with other regional Tzu Ching chapters, ensure that all books arrive in New York before the deadline, manage the logistics of sorting and packing



*Volunteers inspect the quality of each book before packing them up.*

the books, and send the cargo to South Africa. In the end, everything came together and the deadline was met: twenty thousand books were collected and sent off to South Africa. But it was not a simple journey.

In the beginning, we targeted university students. We contacted campus clubs, sent mass emails, put up posters, and introduced the book drive in our classrooms and libraries. The number of books from this endeavor was meager and disappointing. To complicate the matter, our member participation began to decline at the same time. Some of us became more occupied with schoolwork while others felt overwhelmed and disheartened. There is a saying: "you don't challenge yourself until you put yourself out there." We had put ourselves on the front line and had suffered catastrophic losses. At this point, we were already two months in and had little to show. We really wanted to give up, but we decided to persevere and change our approach instead.

We reached out to our Tzu Chi mentors who dug through every possible channel to help us publicize and expedite the book drive. They provided connections to schools and opportunities to meet with superintendents and principals, helped us promote our campaign at every Tzu Chi event, and put us into contact with a shipping company. They pushed the book drive back on course and recharged our shaken spirits. On June 6, 2011, we loaded the last box of books in Jamaica, New York. I could not believe we had done it. With the help and guidance of our mentors, the rollercoaster ride of emotions was met at last with relief and satisfaction.

At that moment, one of Master Cheng Yen's aphorisms resonated in my head, "What is to be feared is not the long distance to our goal, but rather not moving forward even one step." Though tempted to stop, we had continued pushing forward. The next time we saw the books, we were in Africa.

When we arrived in South Africa, we were in constant contact with the local Zulu people: we taught lessons in elementary schools, visited AIDS orphanages, served hot food, and distributed the books and supplies we had gathered. But Africa was not at all what I expected. Many South Africans live in



*With joyful smiles, the children show off their new books and toothbrushes. Photo: Jennifer Wenli Chen*

destitution. Many of them have lost at least one family member as a result of AIDS, tuberculosis, or violence. Many South African children grow up as orphans or with a single parent, and many are starving: they can eat just one meal a day, if any. Despite such an impoverished environment, the people I met were not poor. They were active, fun-loving, and very welcoming to the new visitors in town.

During one book distribution, I saw a little boy sitting by himself and flipping through a book. He seemed unable to read it, so I sat down and read the book to him line by line. Within minutes, another boy came over and then another. By the end, I was engulfed in a pool of inquisitive children. At that time, some locals and volunteers started a festive celebration of dancing and singing. I was curious and naturally wanted to join. So I asked the children, "Do you guys want to join them over there? Or do you want me to read some more?" They sat still and all pointed to another book. I realized that these children were truly hungry, not for food but for knowledge.

Our journey to South Africa was a mere two weeks. Even if we spent the whole two weeks reading to the children, we were still limited by time. At this time, we began to understand that perhaps this international relief mission was about more than giving out books, serving food, teaching lessons, and alleviating suffering. After all, the pencils we handed



Everyone celebrates together a successful book drive and distribution. Photo: Peter Lin

out will eventually be sharpened to the erasers, and we could only carry a limited number of books. In the end, material gifts can only go so far; the more important gifts are intangible.

For the remainder of our journey in South Africa, we took our stories to local elementary schools. We tried our best to inspire and motivate more children to take action to alleviate the suffering in their communities. After the two weeks, we left with the same backpacks we came with. But I hope our presence left an impact on at least one person and that one person is now out doing good deeds and spreading the seeds of love.

When I embarked on this ride, I did not expect where it would take me. I learned the importance of communicating, taking the initiative, planning ahead, and seeking help when needed. I learned about the importance of teamwork and of mentors who not only teach but also support you in your endeavors. I confronted the limitations of my personal effort, recognizing that often we can accomplish more together. At the same time, I learned not to be afraid


to take the first step.

We began this journey with the objective of helping orphans and children with

scarce resources. But in the process, I learned a lot about myself, about how the world operates, and about life. Life can be a roller coaster as we swing between optimism and pessimism, challenges and accomplishments. Sometimes we do not see the meaning or purpose, but we just need to stick it out and see the experience through. Never give up if you want something. There is a way to achieve it, but you do need to find it. 🌱



A young child reads a carefully handwritten Jing Si Aphorism. Photo: Peter Lin



What is to be feared is not the long distance to our goal, but rather not moving forward even one step.  
*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



[www.thepower5.org](http://www.thepower5.org)

What can you do  
instead of drinking a cup of coffee?

**You can feed a child in South Africa for a month  
with just \$5.**

What can you do  
instead of eating a cup of ice cream?

**You can provide education to a child in Haiti for  
ten days with just \$5.**

What can you do  
instead of watching a movie?

**You can provide two meals to a homeless friend,  
or two books to a child in need,  
or a pack of stationery to a school-aged child  
with just \$5.**

A group of children are sitting on the ground, eating a meal. In the foreground, a young girl in a red floral dress and a blue and white checkered hat is eating. Other children are visible in the background, some wearing blue and yellow vests. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a community meal.

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**Your donation is tax-deductible.**



*Tzu Chi volunteers walk cheerfully through their vegetable garden. Photo: Peter Lin*

## A Life-Changing Journey to South Africa

You Ning Lee | Translated by Mei-li Hamilton

When we arrived in Durban, Michael Pan said that if we do everything with an open heart, eventually we would know whether we were helping or being helped. I kept this guidance in mind as I observed our local volunteers helping people with warm hearts, pure minds, and unconditional love.

The local volunteers taught me that the most beautiful love is “forgiveness.” Some of them had suffered badly. Brenda was betrayed by her sister-in-law and was raped by several men. With the loving care and help of her husband and Tzu Chi, she chose to forgive her attackers and devote her life to helping others.

Before she joined Tzu Chi, Adelaide was injured by gunfire and several of her relatives were murdered. She was filled with hatred and considered hiring someone to kill the perpetrator. Fortunately, she met Gladys, a Tzu Chi volunteer, who brought her the teaching of Dharma Master Cheng Yen— that love removes all obstacles— and counseled Adelaide to turn her enemy into a friend. Adelaide chose to give up hatred and also to teach her enemy how to grow vegetables. When he asked her how to atone for his

crimes before his death, Adelaide told him to repent sincerely and find peace in his heart.

When I heard Brenda and Adelaide’s stories, I wondered at the ease with which they both gave up hatred. I asked them repeatedly how they were able to do so, and the answer was always the same: if you consistently pray to forgive your enemies, you eventually will forgive them. Once you forgive others, God will forgive you. Instead of holding onto old feelings or over-thinking, they simply chose to do the right thing.

Brenda and Adelaide both turned deep hatred into love. When they work with orphans, they not only feed them, they show them love. At the same time, they are happier and more enriched because they devote themselves totally to the orphans.



*The author (center) is inspired by the Zulu volunteers' joyful service. Photo: Peter Lin*



*Adelaide shares her story.*  
Photo: Peter Lin

Thinking back, I realize that sometimes I look at things negatively, which causes me harm. These volunteers truly embody the truth of the aphorism: "With a broad and open heart, we will not hurt others. With a simple and pure mind, we will not be hurt by others."

I learned a lot about dedication and cooperation from the South African volunteers on this trip. One time I saw a volunteer bathing an AIDS patient while several other volunteers washed his soiled clothing. Even Gladys's young granddaughter helped to massage the patient. I really wanted to help, but I was afraid my immune system would not be strong enough. I felt very uncomfortable about my negative thoughts and started to wonder why I felt that way. I realized that I put myself before others, even while helping others, by thinking that I was better than the people I was helping.

Later, I learned that some local volunteers have worse economic and living conditions than the people they are helping. Some are sick, but they still take care of orphans and sick people and grow vegetables for them. I became ashamed after I heard their stories.

From observing the local volunteers as they worked, I learned that helping others is a basic human responsibility and not just the responsibility of more fortunate people, and that it should be done selflessly and without vanity.

During our brief two weeks in South Africa, we saw that the local Tzu Chi volunteers are selfless and practical; they care for the people around them with truly sincere hearts. Their only concern is how to bring love and hope to the people they serve. Even though they have few material things, their hearts are rich and

their lives are meaningful. We do not want for material things, but are our hearts rich? Are we as happy as they are? Do we still have the innocence of a child? Can we give without expecting anything in return? Who are the truly rich people and who are the truly poor?

As we were about to return to the Durban Service Center after visiting an AIDS patient, we saw four orphans running towards us. One raised his arms for me to hug him, and a little girl hugged my leg tightly. The other two lined up behind them and waited for the chance to be hugged. Upon encountering such innocence, I forgot all my worries and just gave them all heart-warming hugs. My heart was warm and touched when we were hugging. This group of innocent, lovely children gave me a lot of love and made me realize that I was the one who had received the most, not them. At that moment, I realized that I was not the one helping, but rather the one being helped.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen has said that good and bad are engaged in a tug of war. Master Cheng Yen's good heart led her to found Tzu Chi. Michael Pan's good heart helped Zulu women become more independent and resilient. Brenda's and Gladys's good hearts transformed their hatred into love and lead them to help orphans and patients.

This trip to South Africa taught me that I have to watch my heart every second, every minute, especially when good and bad thoughts are fighting within me. We can only convince people to love others if we take good care of our own hearts and work to make this world more beautiful. 🌱



*Tzu Chi volunteers cultivate food to feed orphans. Photo: Jayson Hsieh*



*Despite the hardships all around, there is joy on the children's faces. Photo: Peter Lin*

## The Tzu Chi Transformation

### Dennis Lee

In South Africa, I saw many unfamiliar sights. In the villages and townships, I saw people loitering about all day due to lack of work. In the schools, I saw several children huddling around each textbook, due to the lack of books. These sights showed me my own ignorance: sometimes I forget that in most of the world, people do not have the chance to live like we do in the United States. I became more humble and grateful for the opportunities I get in the United States.

Many of the South Africans we visited have troubles in their lives, but this fact was often obscured by the smiles on their faces and their loving actions. The children still happily play around, no matter how dangerous the location, no matter the hardships they must live through. Our Zulu sisters and brothers continue their volunteer work cheerfully despite their own troubles.

Many of the Zulu volunteers had difficult lives before meeting Tzu Chi. Some had been on the path of revenge after their families were killed or they were injured by attackers. Some still have diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Some have been seriously wounded. Despite the difficulties, they have found ways to detach from the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance, and use their pure hearts to help others.

One Zulu volunteer underwent a horrific ordeal. After her nephews were killed and her daughter raped before her eyes, she was shot several times and left for dead. After she recovered, she remained on the path of revenge with her mind set on just that one goal. After meeting Tzu Chi, she had an extreme change of heart. She left the path of revenge and began to help others with a pure heart. Along the way, she even helped one of her attackers. Tzu Chi helps people discover their inner Buddha.



Michael Pan told us an extremely touching story about one of the Zulu sisters with AIDS. As she was reaching the end, her family was by her bed, chanting to God in prayer that she would go to heaven. Michael Pan was also at the scene, standing beside her. She told him that she knew where she would be going after death: she will be going to Hualien to help Master Cheng Yen carry on Tzu Chi work. Michael then placed his prayer beads onto her wrist. When she passed away, Michael noticed that she died in a different manner than one who has not been touched with Tzu Chi. Most people die screaming in pain due to AIDS, but this volunteer died calmly. There is something magical about Tzu Chi that helps people change their hearts.

When I see the Zulu sisters, I see their inner Buddha. Their hearts are so innocent and pure. They might not be as educated as us college students, but they are full of wisdom. They have learned so much from Master Cheng Yen that it also encourages me to learn and do more in Tzu Chi. Instead of being let down by obstacles and curveballs, they continue to work for the betterment of society. They are some of the best role models we have in this world.

A Tzu Chi volunteer in Durban taught us a phrase that became our motto for the journey: "You must turn your sadness into compassion, compassion into wisdom, wisdom into strength, and then strength into action." This phrase truly showed us how we must help others with our hearts: when you hear a touching story or experience a sad event, you must learn what you can from this experience. But wisdom is not enough, so we must turn it into strength to actively help others.



*Tzu Chi volunteers turn sadness into compassion, compassion into wisdom, wisdom into strength, and strength into action. Photo: Peter Lin*



*Michael Pan shares a story with local and US Tzu Ching volunteers. Photo: Peter Lin*

Though I am studying medicine, there were times when it was hard for me to physically help the patient. There was a patient with a bed sore so deep that it was impossible for anyone without professional medical experience and equipment to heal. I was extremely frustrated at my helplessness. But Michael told me that even though medicine and physical healing is important, it is also important to heal the emotional scars in the heart.

We can connect our hearts with those we are helping and put ourselves in their shoes. This will lead to better understanding of each other. If everyone in this world understood each other, this world would become a better place. Tzu Chi provides such a great environment to allow this to happen.

I knew the journey to South Africa would be a great experience. But I thought that it was meant only to help other people. In reality, I learned more about myself and what I can truly do to help Tzu Chi progress. The journey to South Africa convinced me to stay on the Tzu Chi path even after college. If the opportunity arises again, I will do my best to revisit South Africa. 🌿



Simply being inspired is not enough; one must be an active participant to truly realize the truth.

*Jing Si Aphorism by  
Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

# Bringing Meaning to the Pain

Tsun-Hui Hung | Translated by Colin Legerton

**T**zu Ching from the US delivered the love and affection of American children into the hands of young Zulu children during the book distributions for orphans in South Africa. As we handed out books and school supplies, I saw joyful smiles spread on the children's faces. Nevertheless, many questions arose in my mind: do they understand the stories in the books? Do they know how to hold the pencils? Do they have paper to draw on?

After we passed out all the books, a little girl brought over the book she had just received and asked me to read it to her. I held her on my lap and opened the book. As I did, I very excitedly said, "Look, it's a castle! Inside are the mommy and daddy and also the brothers and sisters." Hopefully, I turned my head to see her expression, but she had none. At first, I was at a loss, but slowly I began to understand: not only could she not have a castle, she did not even have a home. Not only did these children not have families, they had all been abandoned when they were small.

By the time I had finished reading, the little girl was already lying on my lap and had nearly fallen asleep. After I read for this girl, other children also wanted me to read for them. Finally I realized that they did not just want me to read them stories, they really wanted me to hold them. All along, their big dream was just a small hug. Many of us have taken hugs for granted, forgetting that they are not always so easily obtained. While we were trying to learn to be grateful and content with our own lots, these adorable children already knew.

The home visits also deeply shook my heart. The local volunteers used their warm singing in place of cold doorbells, so that these visits brought some happiness to the care recipients, who were ill mentally or physically. Some had AIDS or tuberculosis, others suffered from strokes or external wounds.

One, who may have had both AIDS and tuberculosis, was unbearably thin. The local volunteers



*Tzu Ching volunteers share their compassion. Photo: Peter Lin*



*Several children listen in as the author reads them a story. Photo: Duo-Ren Cheng*

explained that his bruises were inflicted by his sister. People did not like having an AIDS patient in their village, so he had to live all alone in a dilapidated old shack. He was surrounded by smelly and insect-infested food, and urine and excrement that had not been cleaned for many days. A thought immediately came to my mind: if there is a hell, it must be something like this. The local volunteers carefully cleaned everything for him, so that he could sleep well that night. They patiently spread ointment on his body and reminded him to take his medicine on time. Accompanied by US Tzu Ching, the local blue-clad angels did their best to make him feel comfortable in the moment.



Giving is not the privilege of the rich; it is the privilege of the sincere.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

The care recipients were often moved to tears. We could do so little in our brief interactions with them, so how is it that each of them was able to teach us so much about the meaning of life, just like bodhisattvas? They taught us gratitude, respect, and love. They showed us that compassion is the endless secret of the universe.

I asked one of the older volunteers, "Why is the world so unfair?" He explained that this is the karmic law of cause and effect. Though I said, "I don't believe in it," he told me, "It is not important whether you believe it or not. This is life! These care recipients are the embodiment of Buddha, who has come to teach us. Everyone exists for a reason, and all we can do is to take good care of our hearts so that their suffering can be reflected in our lives and become meaningful to all living creatures."

These past few years I have been chasing the education that I desire, and I have always been full of pride. But during this journey, I realized that my heart is empty and fragile. I originally thought that I could help these people in pain; instead, each bodhisattva taught me the meaning of life. 🌿



*An eager crowd gathers around a donated book. Photo: Peter Lin*

# Return to South Africa

Alice Chen with Tiffany Pan

I spent most of my childhood in South Africa: in many ways, it was where I grew up. After eight years away, this journey with US Tzu Ching brought my childhood memories flooding back, and now I miss South Africa more than ever.

I know I am not alone in feeling nostalgia for my childhood—that innocence, that purity, that sense of contentment that came so easily. However, visiting the primary schools in South Africa literally brought me back to my childhood. I was just like the children we interacted with: I wore those same school uniforms and ran around barefoot because the shoes were not very comfortable. My classmates and I also greeted our teacher every morning, sang hymns, and thanked our teacher at the end of the day. We always did this in unison, all together. Such obedience and manners are the norm in South African primary schools; I missed them in high school.

It has been eight years since I emigrated from South Africa to the United States, but it seems like little has changed. Despite all the money the government has invested in development and infrastructure, many still live in poverty. Unemployment is widespread, and many can do nothing but sell random scraps on the streets. Nevertheless, the incredible growth of the Tzu Chi family in South Africa truly gives me hope.

I was so happy to have the opportunity to see my South African Tzu Chi family again. Although it had been many years, seeing those familiar faces brought me right back. I am so grateful that the spirit of Tzu Chi has allowed me to stay connected with this family, no matter the time or distance between us.

It was quite interesting to see my childhood friends from Tzu Chi as adults. Some are married. Some are running their own businesses. Some even have their own children now. This really blows my mind since I still see them as the silly kids they were eight years ago. Even more amazingly, many are now Tzu Chi commissioners. They are not much older than the Tzu Ching and alumni volunteers from the United States who participated in this South Africa journey, but they have already taken over many of the responsibilities that were once held by their parents' generation. This



Local volunteer Tolakele Mkhize. Photo: Peter Lin

group of Tzu Ching alumni in South Africa contacts supporters and partners in their communities, makes arrangements for various Tzu Chi events, recruits new Tzu Chi volunteers, and does charity work wherever there is a need.

The Tzu Chi family in South Africa has really done a wonderful job of passing the torch, not only to the younger generation, but also from the immigrant community to local South Africans. The number of local volunteers has skyrocketed since I was last in South Africa. I was just a child at the time, but I remember only meeting a couple of local volunteers when I was living in South Africa. Today, there are over five thousand Zulu volunteers in the Durban area alone. With all the effort put into recruiting local volunteers, the numbers in both Durban and Johannesburg keep rising. Still, it is of the utmost importance that this trend continues.

Taiwanese immigrants carried Tzu Chi to South Africa. But immigration from Asia has died down in recent years, and many of the founding members have returned home or relocated to other parts of the English-speaking world. Clearly, the future of Tzu Chi in South Africa depends heavily upon the local volunteers. The success that South Africa Tzu Chi has had so far in recruiting and inspiring local volunteers to carry the torch of love brings me great hope for the continuance of Tzu Chi and the future of South Africa. 🌱



Tzu Ching volunteers celebrate their new friendships. Photo: Peter Lin

# A Meeting of Blue Skies and White Clouds

Xianbin Qiu | Translated by Joseph Vincent

I still remember the strong surge of anticipation that I felt as I stood at the Johannesburg International Airport waiting room. From the day I first found out that US Tzu Ching volunteers were coming to South Africa, there was never a time that I was not diligently preparing. All the food, shelters, schedules, and transportation had to be communicated and coordinated. Then, after months of preparation, Tzu Ching volunteers finally arrived in colorful South Africa.

What drove this group of determined young people to leave the United States for the “Dark Continent?” What encouraged them to sacrifice their vacation time and buy their own tickets to fly halfway across the world to serve? I am sure that the price of the plane ticket was a major obstacle for many Tzu Chings, and since only a certain number could make the trip, many were likely turned away. In spite of the obstacles, these Tzu Chings brought their great love and warm hearts to extend a loving hand to the children here. Their dedication is truly commendable.

As the blue- and white-clad figures emerged from the secure door, we immediately stepped forward to greet them. At that moment, the blue skies and white clouds of the Southern and Northern Hemispheres came together.

There were challenges along the way, but the volunteers’ gleaming smiles, kind demeanors, and selfless embraces during the book distributions showed me that the young can also use their hearts and strength to accomplish great deeds, and can even be more dedicated than adults. Any unpolished diamond can sparkle brilliantly given adequate time and effort. The seeds of goodness, if planted in good soil with a steady supply of water, will one day flourish.

I have come to realize that after years in the trials of modern society, nothing remains innocent. Before long, if a child falls down, people hesitate to help him up. Those in need of help hesitate to ask, and others hesitate to provide. But during their journey in South Africa, the Tzu Ching volunteers spread warmth and kindness to the people around them with the purest hearts. They reminded me of my own initial determination when I was young.

Faced with this unexpected flow of love and empathy, I could not help feeling ashamed to have gone so many years without mindfully coming to understand the smiling faces of care recipients and mindfully considering my own transformations. Lack of passion in charity activities shows that our wisdom is like a candle in the wind: in one gust it can blow out. But after several days with the young volunteers, I witnessed their courage, energy, and pure intentions to help others.

The US Tzu Ching arrival in South Africa brought new challenges in conducting home visits because we had never taken such a large group into the villages before. However, it is precisely because of these challenges that we were able to penetrate even deeper into the communities where we work. We did not just distribute supplies, give massages, and talk about Tzu Chi; rather, we had an opportunity to relearn how to spread love to care recipients more humbly, directly, and intensively. Spreading love in these communities is not accomplished by just talking about Tzu Chi, but rather through using sincere and genuine hearts to love these communities, to move ourselves, and to inspire local volunteers and care recipients.

I hope that the next time US Tzu Ching volunteers return to South Africa, they can witness the growth of local volunteers. I am looking forward to their visit, so that we can help more care recipients, recruit more local volunteers, and cultivate the fields of blessing together. 🌱



*The pure hearts of the Tzu Ching volunteers remind the author of his own youthful determination. Photo: Peter Liri*

People who share a common mission in life need to constantly encourage and inspire one another to maintain their kind thoughts.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

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# The Hands that Hold

Emily Chen

*By offering their hands, Tzu Chi volunteers  
cause eyes to meet and hearts to touch.  
Photo: Peter Lin*

During our time in South Africa, I found that I was confronted again and again with a feeling of helplessness. In the townships of Johannesburg, we saw shacks the size of my office desk that entire families called home. In Durban, we met people who had not been in the sun for two years because they lack the strength to move from their beds, people who had been sleeping in their own urine and feces because their families cannot or will not take care of them, and stroke victims who could only “sleep it off.” We saw little girls shivering in the cold winter air with bare feet and summer dresses. We learned that medical treatment remains scarce, and the ability to follow up on medical tips almost nonexistent. We were told that some sick people will not take pills because they cannot afford the food to take them with.

As a volunteer, I felt like a drop in the desert. In such circumstances, what can we give in a way that is both meaningful and lasting?

The answer, I feel, is among the experiences we gained in South Africa. I found it in the physical therapy advice a Tzu Ching was giving to a stroke sufferer while showing him exercises to lift and strengthen his leg. The advice itself was simple: sit straight and, with someone’s hands at your knees and calves, lift your leg. But the man’s wife, who was supporting his legs, misunderstood the purpose and kept lifting his leg for him.

She meant to ease his burden, but if she lifts his leg for him, he will never strengthen his own muscles. Without strength in his muscles, he will not be able to walk. Her hands were meant to be support, to make sure that he did not fall backwards in his small and steady efforts forward, and to provide encouragement to keep up the exercises. But the wife’s natural instinct was always to lift instead of support.

In some ways, I was similar. I had heard Tzu Chi volunteers speak of “spreading love,” but I never really understood. I made the mistake of thinking that Tzu Chi’s “hands” were meant to lift the leg, but instead they are meant to spread love, respect, and kindness. The hands are only an excuse for eyes to meet and hearts to touch.

Michael Pan, a senior volunteer in South Africa, understands this distinction well. When several Tzu Ching were frustrated that there was not enough time for hands-on interaction with the sick care recipients, he advised them that not everything is hands-on. He told them that the help and the medicine we give are almost secondary: the most powerful impact we can make is in meeting a persons’ eyes to see into their heart, clearly, calmly, and with love. We saw that impact in the actions of one care recipient touched by the volunteers of Durban. When he healed from his sickness, he began to devote his time to the same work of spreading love and respect to his neighbors.

In the end, the things we give are only temporary solutions: food is eaten, pencils wear down, clothes become tattered, and even shelters do not stand forever. But in giving, we make a connection and show that we care. Everyone’s path is their own, and they must take their own steps on it and find their own balance to be independent and to be healthy. What we can do as volunteers is to empower them to stand up on their own, to walk beside them instead of constantly bracing them, and to catch them if they fall.

Understanding the meaning of “spreading love,” I now begin to see hope instead of helplessness. I see



*Tzu Ching volunteers spread love one person at a time.  
Photo: Peter Lin*

the Durban volunteers going into their communities and affecting changes in thinking. Local volunteers Tolakele and Mini walked into danger, into the gunfights and tension of a cross-town feud, and stopped the fighting by talking and reasoning with both sides. Another volunteer, Brenda, helped the men of her village recognize that a mentally disabled girl is also a person. The men had been raping this girl for years, but now they have come to understand the wrong they were doing. They have not only stopped, but also apologized. Brenda took the girl under her roof, and these men now offer her food and clothing to atone for their past actions.

Over the years, Tzu Chi South Africa has grown to include more than five thousand local volunteers. As they reach out into their communities, their effect is growing. They are spreading love, empowerment, and hope: family helps family and neighbors help neighbors. Before, I had only understood “spreading love” on the small scale. Now I see that it means bringing long-term change so that eventually no more charity will need to be given from an outside source, because neighbors give each other support, because

there are doctors in the community, because the community itself is educated, wealthy, and thriving. The hands support the legs until the leg muscles are strengthened; then the legs walk on their own and the hands are no longer needed.

I feel that we still need to strive for the same in the US, because there are still places where entire families fall through the cracks, where people are put at risk because they cannot afford healthcare, and where education slips through children’s fingers because of language barriers or because the love of learning has never taken root.

There is still work to be done then, even here. No matter how blessed we are, sometimes we still need those hands to support us, and we all have hands to offer. 🌿

Helping others with the spirit of Great Love and accepting help with gratitude are both powerful forces of humanity.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



*US and South African volunteers together embrace The Power of 5! Photo: Peter Lin*



# The Spirit of Great Love

The Song of Bodhisattvas

普 天 三 無  
pǔ tiān sān wú

Lyrics from Dharma Master  
Cheng Yen's Discourse  
詞：證嚴上人

Music: Hsu Hua Ling  
曲：許華玲

There is no one in the world that I don't love  
普 天 下 沒 有 我 不 愛 的 人  
pǔ tiān xià méi yǒu wǒ bú ài de rén

There is no one in the world that I don't trust  
普 天 下 沒 有 我 不 信 任 的 人  
pǔ tiān xià méi yǒu wǒ bú xìn rèn de rén

There is no one in the world that I can't forgive  
普 天 下 沒 有 我 不 原 諒 的 人  
pǔ tiān xià méi yǒu wǒ bù yuán liàng de rén

All the sorrow, blame, and worry—just let go  
心 中 煩 惱 埋 怨 憂 愁 放 下 了  
xīn zhōng fán nǎo mán yuàn yōu chóu fàng xià le

There is no one in the world that I don't love  
普 天 下 沒 有 我 不 愛 的 人  
pǔ tiān xià méi yǒu wǒ bú ài de rén

There is no one in the world that I don't trust  
普 天 下 沒 有 我 不 信 任 的 人  
pǔ tiān xià méi yǒu wǒ bú xìn rèn de rén

There is no one in the world that I can't forgive  
普 天 下 沒 有 我 不 原 諒 的 人  
pǔ tiān xià méi yǒu wǒ bù yuán liàng de rén

May this Great Love fill the world through all of time  
長 情 大 愛 遍 滿 虛 空 永 無 止 盡  
cháng qíng dà ài biàn mǎn xū kōng yǒng wú zhǐ jìn



Tzu Chi songs are composed based on the teachings of Sutras and Dharma Master Cheng Yen. By singing the song, we are reminded of the way of the Bodhisattvas in daily living. Please visit "The Song of Bodhisattvas" on [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org) to learn to sing this song in both English and Chinese.

Photo: Peter Lin

# For the Sake of a Biscuit

*The mind is insatiable,  
always seeking, thirsty for more,  
thus compounding evil.  
Bodhisattvas renounce such conduct.  
They remain content.  
At peace with poverty,  
they follow the way,  
their actions guided by wisdom alone.*

*Sutra on the Eight Realizations of the Great Beings*

**Dharma Master Cheng Yen**

**Compiled into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team**

We are all born with desire. An infant will suckle without being taught. As we grow older and experience more of the world, our desire extends to all manner of things; we may crave a new car, a bigger house, nice clothes, delicious food.... We desire recognition and praise. But, when our very happiness depends on constant external gratification, we become lost. Even the smallest desire can blind us to what is important.

The Buddha tells a story in the Sutra of Parables about a couple who often worried about their next meal. One day they happened to have three biscuits, so the wife said to her husband, "You can eat one, and I can eat one!"

After they had each happily eaten a biscuit, there was still one left.

"It's mine," said the man.

"No, it's mine," said the wife.

"I am the man of the house," said the husband, "so this biscuit is mine."

"I cook and clean. I do all the hard work around the house. I deserve the biscuit."

They fought back and forth like that until they eventually came up with a plan. "Let's make a wager," the husband suggested.

"Sure!" agreed the wife. "What kind of a wager?"

"Starting now, we must remain silent. The first one to speak loses. The winner eats the biscuit while

the loser must concede defeat and watch the winner eat the biscuit."

"Okay, that's a good idea!" the wife said.

So the couple stopped talking, and just watched the biscuit in silence.

At this time, a thief came up to the house and saw the couple sitting face to face but not saying a word. He entered the house. As he stepped in, the couple made no move to stop him, so he began to look around for valuables. Still the couple did not react, so the thief went around the house collecting things. After packing everything up, he looked at the couple just sitting there. Amazed, he came closer. Still, they sat there not saying a word, staring at the biscuit between them. Noticing that the wife was attractive, the thief moved to molest her. The husband said nothing.

At the last moment, the wife blurted out, "Can't you see that this man is trying to molest me? Are you blind?"

The husband finally broke his silence. "Ha ha! The biscuit is mine!" he cried.

What a silly, senseless couple, prepared to sacrifice what is truly important for the sake of a biscuit. Aren't ordinary people just like this? In pursuing desire we forget what is important. For the gain of a crumb, we may lose a fortune. As spiritual practitioners we must always be mindful. 🍃



◀ Tzu Chi volunteers participated in the Third Annual Queens Interfaith Unity Walk in New York on October 30, 2011. Participants walked around Flushing, one of the most diverse communities in the nation, to visit different places of worship and encourage understanding among all faiths. Volunteers gave a presentation to one hundred people of all faiths and ethnicities at the Tzu Chi office in Flushing, stressing that "Great Love has no boundaries."

Photo: Xi-ming Jiang



▲ September 10, 2011, marked the first anniversary of the only vegetarian food pantry in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. Tzu Chi's high-tech operation benefitted 1,304 households (2,597 individuals) in its first twelve months, of which 191 households are regular recipients.

Photo: Wen-xian Sun



▲ As part of the "It's My Park Day" event, Tzu Chi volunteers in New York were invited to help clean up Bowne House, a 350-year-old building that has become a symbol of religious freedom. On October 15, 2011, nineteen volunteers not only helped clean the Bowne House, but also tended the gardens and planted five hundred flower bulbs in the island divider of Northern Boulevard.

Photo: Ke-lian Lai



◀ On November 22, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers participated in the annual Thanksgiving prayer at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, for the eleventh consecutive year. Followers of many faiths gathered together to pray for peace and harmony in the world.

Photo: Ci-zhang Li



Tzu Chi volunteers in Las Vegas, Nevada, adopted Government Wash, a cove inside the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. They have committed to clean up the cove at least three times a year and to provide formal reports and photos of their activities to the National Park Service. On October 15, 2011, the volunteers collected twenty-three large bags of trash and retrieved many recyclables. Photo: Ru-qing Zheng

When local agriculture shuts down for the winter, many poor residents in the farming town of Watsonville, California, are left jobless. Tzu Chi has been bringing Christmas gifts and winter relief for the past nine years, and has even incorporated the event into the Cupertino Tzu Chi Academy curriculum so that children can learn about kindness and helping others. During a family visit on November 18, 2011, volunteers speak with a family of three living in a one-car garage.

Photo: Ping-yao Li



Wanting to do their part to save the earth, Ohio State University's Tzu Ching (Tzu Chi collegiate members) promoted the vegetarian lifestyle by demonstrating how to make three delicious Chinese dishes in the school's best culinary classroom. Over sixty fellow students signed up for the successful seminar and many decided to adopt a vegetarian diet.

Photo: Bo-nian Qiu



On August 13, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers in Houston, Texas, prepared a special program to enhance the relationship between parents and children at their monthly gathering of Chinese Families with Special Kids. Activities included a veggie-roll-making contest, fruit arrangement display, "How well do you know your kids" questionnaire, and "Find your baby," where blind-folded parents identified their children by only touching their hands.

Photo: Photo: Ping Yi



◀ Dr. William L. Cobb Elementary School has long been under the care of Tzu Chi's Happy Campus Program in San Francisco. On September 20, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers distributed new uniforms to students of low-income families. Principal Matthew Hartford accompanied volunteers to each classroom and stressed to the children the importance of passing on kindness and a helping spirit.

Photo: Yu-zhen Lin



▲ Volunteers from Tzu Chi's Northern California Branch and TIMA (Tzu Chi International Medical Association) drove a Mobile Free Clinic trailer to Boulder Creek, California, to provide free dental care to homeless veterans on September 10-11, 2011. The outreach for these war heroes was part of the South Bay Stand Down operation sponsored biennially by the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System.

Photo: Wen-xian Sun



▲ On October 1, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers in Pennsylvania held their routine quarterly visit to Briarleaf Nursing Home in the outskirts of Philadelphia. The residents joyfully participated in the games, drawings, exercises, and massages that volunteers provided, and especially enjoyed the slide show of their own pictures from previous visits.

Photo: Xi-ming Jiang



◀ To celebrate Thanksgiving, Tzu Chi Headquarters provided lunch, medical care, haircuts, showers, and relief products for the homeless at Charter Oak Park in Covina, California, on November 24, 2011. The considerate volunteers even provided transportation so that more homeless people could participate.

Photo: Mei-juan Chen

# Miraculous Moringa: A Sustainable Hope for Haiti

Patrick Chou & Shirley Tseng  
Translated by Colin Legerton

*The seeds of hope for Haiti: Moringa seedlings and young children. Photo: Patrick Chou*

At ROCA Elementary School in Port-au-Prince, one hundred students sit in eager anticipation as they watch Tzu Chi volunteers chop the tops off plastic bottles and carve holes into the bottoms. The young students, recipients of Tzu Chi's Back-to-School Program scholarships, are brimming with curiosity. They anxiously whisper to one another: "What are we going to use these bottles for?"

One by one, the volunteers pack each bottle with a handful of soil, natural fertilizer, and two Moringa

seeds. With hope and love, the volunteers hand each child a bottle and gently remind them, "Take good care of these seeds and say nice things to them every day so that they can grow strong and fast." Joyfully grasping their very own mini-nurseries in both hands, the children return home unaware that they are part of a new page of history being written by Tzu Chi in Haiti. Just like the precious packages they hold tightly in their hands, these children are the seeds of hope for Haiti.



Tzu Chi volunteers have actively sought long-term solutions ever since they gained first-hand knowledge of the country's trials during a major aid distribution in 2009. After extensive research of potential development projects for the country, volunteers have identified Moringa, the so-called "Miracle Tree," as a promising solution.

The majority of the Moringa tree is edible: leaves, fruits, flowers, seeds, and even roots are filled with nutrients. The leaves are rich in protein, vitamins, minerals, and all the essential amino acids. The seeds can be processed to yield high-quality oil. After the oil is extracted, the remaining seed mash can be used as a water purifier. The branches can be ground into a natural fertilizer. Moringa is such a unique, multi-purpose, and high-nutrition plant that many scientists have taken to calling it the "Miracle Tree."

Native to the Himalayan foothills in northern India, Moringa is suited to tropical and subtropical climates. It grows fast and can withstand both heat and drought. These characteristics make Moringa particularly suitable for Haiti's extreme heat and poor irrigation.

Moringa is already recognized worldwide for its incredible nutritional value: both Moringa leaf powder and Moringa seed oil can be purchased on the Internet, albeit at high prices. Moringa trees also grow freely in Haiti, but it is clear that locals have not yet recognized the many advantages that the tree offers.

When Patrick Chou, a Tzu Chi volunteer from the United States, visited Haiti in February 2011, he introduced Moringa trees and a cultivation plan to local volunteers and representatives of several partnering organizations. Michaëlle Saint-Natus of Haiti Tec was particularly impressed with the idea. In May, with the help of her friends from the United States and Mexico, she established a nursery for cultivating Moringa and other high-yield plants at the Friendship Village in Pierre Payen, about a ninety-minute drive from Port-au-Prince. The Moringa plants grew much more quickly than expected. After just three months, more than 30,000 seedlings were ready to be transplanted, donated, or sold: a promising first step for Moringa as a sustainable hope for Haiti.



*In Moringa, Patrick Chou sees hope for an end to malnutrition, poverty, and deforestation, in Haiti and around the world. Photo: Neuvendal Admettre*

## The Miracle Tree

For many years, Haiti has been plagued by poverty, malnutrition, and deforestation: problems further exacerbated by the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010. The vast majority of the country is now unemployed and most struggle to get enough to eat. Malnutrition then leads to widespread health problems and the quick spread of disease, creating a vicious cycle that envelops the entire country.

## The Moringa Meal

On the morning of September 3, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers Austin Tsao and Patrick Chou arrived in Port-au-Prince. Wasting no time, they drove with Michaelle Saint-Natus in her truck to the Moringa nursery in Pierre Payen. Together with Haitian volunteer Lesly Pierre, they unloaded Moringa seedlings and distributed them to the local villagers. The volunteers' blue uniforms were soaked in sweat as they toiled under the hot Caribbean sun. That afternoon, they took her truck to a nearby banana-farming village and distributed Moringa seedlings to villagers there as well. Later, they gathered wild Moringa leaves, flowers, and fruits at the oceanside and prepared them into a meal.

The next day, the Tzu Chi team held a Moringa promotion event in the Friendship Village Community Center. Michaelle first introduced Tzu Chi to the locals as the inspiration behind the Moringa nursery. Next, Patrick eagerly explained all the nutritional benefits of Moringa to the attentive audience, encouraging them to grow this wondrous plant with the potential to eventually eliminate malnutrition, poverty, and deforestation. He also cautioned the parents, "Many of you have noticed that your children's hair is turning red. This is a sign of malnutrition. Please feed them Moringa leaves."

Patrick observed that many non-governmental organizations in Haiti provide locals with rice, beans, and flour. These generous handouts fill stomachs, but do not provide sufficient nutrition. He explained that mixing in a little Moringa powder with these simple ingredients can significantly decrease malnutrition and disease. Some of the locals who had already sampled Moringa leaves, flowers, fruits, and seeds took this opportunity to stand up and share their experiences with the rest of the locals.

## Localized and Sustainable

On September 5, 2011, the Tzu Chi team returned to Port-au-Prince from Pierre Payen. After sending the ROCA Elementary students home with their bottled mini-nurseries, they traveled to the Saint Alexandra Church for an afternoon event to introduce Moringa to local residents and more Back-to-School Program students. Patrick explained to the locals that they are truly fortunate: in the United States, a small bottle of Moringa powder may cost fifteen dollars, but in Haiti, fresh leaves can be picked straight from the trees. As a gift, the Tzu Chi team presented each attendee with a Moringa seedling delivered fresh from Pierre Payen.

It has been nearly two years since the Haiti earthquake, yet Tzu Chi has never stopped supporting the Haitian people. Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States will continue to visit Haiti to support local volunteers in all their charity and educational activities, including home visits, orphanage visits, Back-to-School scholarships, hygiene education classes, cholera prevention education, After School Program, Bamboo Bank Program, Work for Food, and Cash for Work. In addition, Tzu Chi volunteers will actively promote Moringa cultivation.

The Cash for Work program has already begun to serve as a vehicle for volunteers to experiment with growing Moringa at the Pierre Payen nursery. Volunteers have established four concentrated growing areas where locals are cultivating a total of sixteen hundred seedlings. In the future, it is hoped that Moringa can be grown on a much larger scale, and that a farm and factory can be built to process Moringa products. By bringing housing and employment to local volunteers and residents, over time, Tzu Chi will help forge a sustainable and self-sufficient path for Haiti. 🌿



All useful resources are  
cherished treasures.  
*Jing Si Aphorism by  
Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

*Tzu Chi volunteers tend to the Moringa seedlings. Photo: Lesly Pierre*



# VEGETABLE BIRYANI

Recipe provided by Shiyin Huang (Durban, South Africa)

Photos by Sarah Legerton

Makes approximately 6 servings

## Ingredients:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 2 cups Basmati Rice  | 1/2 cup Yoghurt             |
| 1 cup Mixed Vegetables<br>(cauliflower, potato, carrot, green beans) | 4 tbsp Vegetable Oil        |
| 1 1/2 cups Green Peas  | 4 Cloves                    |
| 3 Onions (finely sliced)   | 1 tsp Red Chili Powder      |
| 2 Green Chili Peppers (finely sliced)                                | 2 tsp Cinnamon              |
| 4 Tomatoes   | 2 tsp Ground Caraway Seed   |
| 3 tbsp Cashew Nuts & Raisins   | 1/2 tsp Mustard Seeds       |
|  | 1/2 tsp Ground Black Pepper |
|  | Salt to taste               |

## Directions:

1. Wash the basmati rice well. Cook it on a stove with 3 3/4 cups water and 2 tbsp cashew nuts and raisins.
2. Cut the mixed vegetables into small thin pieces. Fry the vegetables and green peas in oil, then set aside.
3. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a pan with mustard seeds, green chili peppers, cinnamon, caraway powder, cloves, and black pepper. Stir for thirty seconds.
4. Add onions and sauté for a minute or until they turn pink in color.
5. Add salt and red chili powder. Stir briefly.
6. Add finely chopped tomatoes and fry until they are properly cooked.
7. Add the yogurt and stir well. Heat for about 10 seconds.
8. Add the fried vegetables.
9. Add the cooked rice. Mix gently so that the rice grains do not break. Cook for about 3 minutes.
10. Garnish with remaining cashews, raisins, and green coriander leaves.
11. Serve hot with raita or yoghurt and pickles.



Vegetarianism means disciplining ourselves, cherishing our own lives and respecting all living beings.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



# Coco's Final Wish

Audrey Cheng

Finding herself widowed, unemployed, and all alone in Las Vegas, Coco Du returned home to southwest China in early 2011 to spend Chinese New Year with her family. Though she developed a cough in transit, she figured it was just a cold. After she returned to Las Vegas, her symptoms continued to worsen until she began coughing up blood. Concerned by this turn of events, Coco went to University Medical Center (UMC) for a checkup. She was diagnosed with stage-four lung cancer, and was given just six months to live

Coco had once been a successful businesswoman in southwest China. She started a freshwater turtle farming company in her hometown to sell turtles for food and medicine, and she eventually owned several successful businesses. She was a proud girl who believed she could succeed in anything she set her mind to, and her ventures brought her great success.

In 2008, Coco got married. She and her husband moved to the United States and settled in Las Vegas, where she found a job working as a card dealer. Unfortunately, her husband passed away not long after, and she lost her job in the unprecedented economic downturn in Las Vegas.

Now, with no husband, no job, and her only family across the ocean, Coco was faced with spending her agonizing final months all alone.

## Making a Connection

Tsui-Lin Kao, a UMC nurse and an active Tzu Chi volunteer, met Coco in the hospital and noticed that she was extremely despondent. Learning that she was alone in the US, Tsui-Lin began to visit her frequently. Over the months, they became close friends. Coco confirmed, "I wouldn't be here without her encouragement."

Closing her eyes was the most difficult task for Coco; she was afraid that she would not be able to wake up again. Alone and afraid, she began to depend on this new friendship. One night during Tsui-Lin's visit, Coco had to use the restroom. Upon returning, she noticed that Tsui-Lin was gone. She started to cry, thinking that her friend had left without saying goodbye. But as soon as Tsui-Lin heard Coco crying, she rushed back in. "I had to make a quick phone call. I would never leave without telling you."

Tanya Huang was the second Tzu Chi volunteer to visit Coco. Coco could not stop her tears when she met Tanya for the first time. Tanya told her, "Don't cry. Take a deep breath. You need to wish to become better." Coco took a deep breath, and Tanya realized that breathing was no longer easy for Coco.



*Coco's mother visits her at the hospital. Photo: Grace Wong*

Life is beset with difficulties, but with a determined heart they will no longer be difficult.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



*Coco pays her respects to Buddha. Photo: Audrey Cheng*

When Tanya asked Coco about her old turtle business in China, Coco could not help but cry: "I never did anything good in my life!" Coco could not understand why so many surgeries could not save her life. Tanya explained to her the law of karma, and Coco began to understand that as she went under the surgeon's scalpel time and again, she was suffering what she had put the turtles through. "Everything is the consequence of our previous actions," Tanya explained.

Over time, more and more Tzu Chi volunteers began to visit, taking turns to keep her company. Sometimes, volunteers would visit her three times a day. Coco loved to hold each volunteer's hands while they talked. Their love and devotion brought happiness to her life.

## Coco's Birthday Party

In April, just weeks after receiving her prognosis, Tzu Chi volunteers invited Coco to the local Tzu Chi office for her forty-first birthday party. It was not easy for Coco to travel because she needed to carry all of her medical equipment with her. When she saw forty volunteers and members waiting in the office, tears filled her eyes. The volunteers hugged and comforted her. Tsui-Lin reminded her, "Be happy, this is your birthday."

Volunteers helped push Coco's wheelchair to Buddha's temple, where she paid her respects to

Buddha and cried again. "I wish I had known about Tzu Chi earlier. I hope I will get a chance to become a Tzu Chi volunteer. I want to help people once I recover."

To brighten Coco's birthday, the volunteers filled it with song. The Tzu Chi Las Vegas choir sang "Love Heals the World," while the sign language team performed "Face of Happiness" and "We Are One Family." Coco smiled with tears on her cheeks. In addition, Rashan George, a high school student and friend of Tsui-Lin's son sang Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely?" His voice was so sweet, Coco cried as she listened. Rashan is Indian and a Christian. When he learned about Coco, he wanted to join her birthday celebration to share his care and love. Even though Coco and Rashan come from different cultures and different religions, love overcomes religion, nationality, and race.

Coco made a wish before she cut her birthday cake. Though she kept her wish a secret, she did reveal her promise to Buddha. She promised to listen to Master Cheng Yen's teaching and become a vegetarian.



*At her birthday celebration, Coco is surrounded by her Tzu Chi family. Photos: Audrey Cheng*

Kevin Chang, director of the Tzu Chi Las Vegas office, observed, "Love brought Coco to Tzu Chi. It doesn't matter if she stays here or returns to China, we will always give her our best wishes." Coco was no longer alone because her Tzu Chi family was always by her side. Coco said, "I forgot about my sickness today. Nothing bothered me from morning to night. In my next life, I will come back to Tzu Chi. All of you are my family."

## Her Final Wish

The day after her birthday, Coco was back in the hospital and the doctor said her days might be numbered. She was so weak that she was unable to talk. On April 21, she wrote on a piece of paper, "I want my mom." Tzu Chi volunteers decided to make her final wish come true.

On April 25, Coco's doctor announced that her condition was critical, and that she might have less than forty-eight hours remaining. Bringing her mother from China in time seemed like an impossible mission. But the Tzu Chi volunteers were determined to race against time and make it happen. That same day, Grace Wong, leader of the Las Vegas charity team, sent an email to ask Tzu Chi volunteers in Guangzhou, China, for their support. They agreed to do whatever they could to help.

Having already been refused twice for US visas, Coco's mother and sister now took a twelve-hour train ride from their home to Guangzhou for the third time. Local Tzu Chi volunteers picked them up at the train station and connected them with a travel agent who submitted their special request application on April 26. The following day, their visas were approved.

Coco's mother and sister took an evening flight from Guangzhou and arrived in Las Vegas at midnight on April 28. After twelve hours by train and sixteen

hours by plane, they were finally able to see Coco in the hospital, thanks to the support and dedication of Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States and China.

Despite the dire forty-eight hour prognosis on April 25, Coco was still alive. Her doctor described it as a miracle and told Tzu Chi volunteers, "The patient could not have made it without your support." With her mother by her side, Coco continued to persevere.

## Coco's Final Days

In May, Coco was suffering all the time. Her mother fed her, talked to her, and stayed with her. Mrs. Du had brought a lot of Chinese medicine from China. Refusing to give up hope despite the doctor's prognosis, she told Coco, "Be good, my child. You will get better by taking this medicine." Coco took the bitter herbal medicine to make her mother happy.

One day, several friends were going to lunch in Chinatown and Coco urged her mother to join them. But Mrs. Du would not leave her side: "I just want you to get well. We will eat good food together when we get home to China. I won't leave you here to enjoy food by myself." Coco was in tears at her mother's optimistic words; she knew she did not have much time left.

Coco was in pain all day on May 27: not even morphine could help her. Mrs. Du could only hold her hands to make her feel safe. She watched her daughter take her last breath before the next dawn.

Coco suffers no more. She once said, "I hope I will get a chance to become a Tzu Chi volunteer. I want to help people once I recover." Grateful for the opportunity to fill her final months with love and friendship, the Tzu Chi volunteers of Las Vegas sincerely hope that her wish will come true in her next life. 🙏



Coco's mother (second row center) joins Tzu Chi volunteers for a heartfelt prayer. Photo: Grace Wong



*The author interviews a Remote Area Medical Oakland participant for Da Ai television. Photo: Miettuan Kuo*

# My Tzu Chi

Carey Giudici

**Why become an active Tzu Chi volunteer? It's as easy as 1, 2, 3:** 1) participation 2) education 3) celebration

It has certainly been a no-brainer for this full-time volunteer. Enthusiastic participation, learning, and celebration of new friends' potential have always helped me connect with almost anyone, almost anywhere, and in many languages.

Growing up and then living overseas for thirteen years as a young adult, I loved engaging with people in their own native languages and cultures. Participating in various activities, then learning and celebrating life with new friends made it easy to get along no matter where I was. One of the first Swahili phrases I learned in Kenya, for example, was "I want to work."

In February 2011, I was drawn to the Tzu Chi San Francisco office when Jing Si aphorism bumper stickers on two vans outside piqued my curiosity. From my very first visit, I was convinced that I had found a place where I could now engage in all three: 1) participation, 2) education, 3) celebration. After just one hour, my body and soul were fortified by a vegetarian lunch, a gift book about Master Cheng Yen, and a warm invitation to return. I was hooked. In the first two weeks, I attended volunteer orientation in Santa Rosa and logged twenty volunteer hours by visiting residents at a nursing home, cleaning trash from the streets, and planting trees in a park.

Tzu Chi offers me more than just the main three, allowing me to also 4) engage with others, 5) make myself useful, and 6) grow along a highly relevant spiritual path. Frequently, several activities are even held on the same day. My participation is limited only by my inability to be in two places at once.



*The author participates in education at San Francisco Tzu Chi Academy. Photo: William Paw*

Knowing how many Americans need good medical care, I signed up to spend eleven days volunteering at Remote Area Medical (RAM) events in Sacramento and Oakland. As Tzu Chi volunteers have done every year since Hurricane Katrina, we supported free medical, dental, vision, and traditional Chinese medical treatments for those unable to afford them.

We helped the RAM volunteers set up very elaborate temporary facilities and offered comprehensive general support. We assisted volunteer doctors, nurses, dentists, optometrists, and acupuncturists; registered patients; and even entertained the waiting men, women, and children, some of whom had been patiently waiting in line for up to thirty hours.

In treating over seven thousand patients at the two locations, we volunteers were engaged in almost constant and often very physical labor for as many as twenty hours each and every day. Yet, at the end of the week, exhausted volunteers still found the energy to spontaneously dance along to a popular song before embarking on the journey home.

It takes a special organization to mobilize a hundred people willing to commit themselves like that. Not a typical Western-style hierarchy, Tzu Chi's "adhocracy" allows opportunities for everyone to pitch in whenever and wherever needed. Tzu Chi's unique and effective operational model was even studied at Harvard Business School. The simple design and powerful shared mission make it highly responsive, pragmatic, and agile in emergencies.

Rather than setting up a rigid organization built around plans and budgets drafted far in advance, Tzu Chi's "adhocratic" setup keeps it adaptable to specific needs as they arise. Volunteers who pay their own way decrease the need for administrative costs and bureaucratic structure.

One of Master Cheng Yen's aphorisms reminds us, "Blessed are those who can make good use of their time for the benefit of humankind." Volunteers consider participation a gift, as it encourages us to cultivate our understanding and acquire blessings. We feel sincerely and energetically grateful for everything we are able to do and for everything done for us. Each time we hand out a blanket or a plate of food, we bow and thank the recipient for giving us the opportunity to grow.

Recently, a team of volunteers provided vegetarian "teacher appreciation" lunches at six inner-city schools across San Francisco. The team's dedicated volunteers began working before dawn to cook delicious food and create sparkling flower centerpieces. The ceramic dinner plates, beautiful tablecloths, and cloth napkins made every teacher feel special. The choice to refrain from using disposable goods demonstrated Tzu Chi's dedication to the environment.

Tzu Chi volunteers' ability to transform even the most taxing events into selfless celebrations makes it easy to keep volunteering. After a full day of fundraising in the rain to support Tzu Chi's relief efforts for Japan, everyone returned to the office and began counting money and wrapping coins. All the energy and joyful camaraderie made the whole event feel like a party.

At Tzu Chi we instinctively celebrate our own growth potential, as well as that of our world. This includes our neighbors, fellow community members, and anyone in need of compassion, supplies, or relief. I strongly feel that volunteering for Tzu Chi is the best possible investment of our time and energy.

When I graduated from college many years ago, society seemed to be filled with joyful, informed optimism and powered by a very inclusive desire to help. Over the years, I began to lose hope of finding another community that motivates us to do the right thing while feeling grateful for the opportunity. But that hope is being rekindled, thanks to my Tzu Chi.



*Tzu Chi volunteers and students plant trees at Bret Harte Elementary School.  
Photo: Lulu Yin*



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

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*





## Words of Praise for

# Flowers in the Snow

Several members of the Glendale, CA, club of Kiwanis International – “a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time” – graciously took the time to read and comment on *Flowers in the Snow: Mindfulness in Action*, the newly published collection of US Tzu Chi volunteer stories.

*The Tzu Chi Foundation's principle of "Compassion in Action" is highlighted in Flowers in the Snow. Each story exemplifies a person who has faced hardship, lives a simple life, and finds great satisfaction in helping others. Volunteering helps you appreciate all you have and often take for granted. This is an engaging book for volunteers throughout the world who, despite their own life situations, take time to show compassion and help others in need.*

**Debbie Hinckley**

*What a very heartwarming book to read! What reading these stories has done for me is to reinforce my belief that by helping others, we gain as much or more than the people we help.*

**Judy Seelig**

*After reading the stories of these selfless people I was inspired to search further for the answer to their generosity. The inspiration and lessons taught by the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation are remarkable in their ability not just to transform lives but to instill a passion for helping on all levels on an individual level: one person making a difference.*

**Patricia Phillips**

*I couldn't put the book down. It was an easy read, definitely heart-warming and full of lessons for every reader to put into practice in daily living. The human interest stories are worthy of sharing with the world, and the book should be an excellent vehicle for accomplishing that objective.*

**Victor Legerton**

For those suffering, the world can seem like a very cold, desolate place; however, when other people go out of their way to help someone they have never met before, it is as if a flower pushes up through the cold snow and blooms.



# Review of *Flowers in the Snow*

Shubha Jayaram

**F***lowers in the Snow*, a collection of short stories written by volunteers across the United States, is the Tzu Chi Foundation's first original book in English. It is an ambitious attempt to relay stories and experiences, and share personal reflections on how Tzu Chi has altered the lives of both volunteers and care recipients. The stories are narrated in a simple, candid style, and are touching and inspiring reflections from some of the ten million global foundation members.

As someone not previously acquainted with the Tzu Chi Foundation, *Flowers in the Snow* was my first foray into learning about the mission and model of the Buddhist organization founded by Dharma Master Cheng Yen. Narratives range from introspective reflections on volunteering in Haiti to in-depth profiles of inspiring individuals such as "Mrs. Happy" and Mr. Yang. The sheer diversity in the stories is eye-opening. The last story in the collection, "Home, at Last," is a solid ending point which manages to provide an excellent insight to the origins of the Tzu Chi Foundation and a reflection on the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism through recounting stories of the foundation's work in New Jersey and New York.

The power of this book is that it is filled with gripping, personal stories of individuals and situations. Instead of data and details on Tzu Chi's reach and scale, the stories humanize the organization's impact, as the authors form personal connections with the reader. The authors, previously unpublished volunteers, give the stories raw, candid perspectives, as though a volunteer were sitting with you to share a memory over a cup of tea.

Some of the most memorable stories to me include "Twelve Years of Visits," "Don't Give Up," and "Little Aihua's Miracle." All three poignant tales show the selfless nature of the organization's volunteers and the depths to which volunteers go to comfort those in need. To draw on an aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen, the stories reflect "a tireless dedication to give without asking for anything in return."

A common thread between the stories is the strong connection that forms between long-term volunteers and care recipients; many volunteers have incorporated their charity work into their daily routines. These tight, personal connections are likely what ensure Tzu Chi's continued success and the long-term nature of its various projects and initiatives, including the Bread Rescue Program and the Hot Meal Distribution on Skid Row. Tzu Chi volunteers become second families to some of the care recipients, and the line between 'giver' and 'recipient' becomes increasingly blurred. These deep friendships and bonds bring warmth, comfort, and hope to those who may otherwise have none.

Ultimately though, the power of these stories is that they not only inspire but also provide an opportunity for readers to learn how to make an impact in their own communities. Volunteer organizations rely as much on time and able hands as financial resources, and these narratives do a tremendous job in showcasing the far-reaching impact of a volunteer's time, energy, and passion.







Young Bodhisattvas

# Natural Beauty of Ridgefield Refuge



Photo by  
Jessica Lee  
Age 5 1/2

Jessica Lee, a kindergarten student at the Portland Tzu Chi Junior Academy, took her camera into the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge on the Oregon-Washington border and captured a stunning image of nature's many colors and textures. Jessica's photograph, taken during a visit with her father on March 7, 2011, earned her second place in the youth category of the refuge's annual photo contest. Jessica's second-place finish came in her first ever competition. Only five and a half years old, she was competing with photographers up to eighteen years of age.

As inhabitants of the Earth, it is our duty and mission to take care of our planet.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*





The author helps distribute school supplies in May 2010. Photo: Denis We

# How I Became a Tzu Chi Volunteer

Jonathan Cancoul | Translated from French by Johan Alwall

**M**y name is Jonathan Cancoul. I am seventeen years old and I live in Haiti. I was born in Port-au-Prince. I am very proud to be a Haitian. I grew up with my family in a small green house made of wood and covered with sheet metal. I am the youngest of six members in my household. My mother does not work, but she does her best to support the family. My sister has finished her high school studies and is preparing for university. My brother is in high school. I am in secondary school; God willing, I will graduate from high school in 2015 to go to university.

My family is very humble. My father no longer lives with us, but he helps the family when he wants. My family is not rich but we have dignity. And we all have big dreams. I grew up with a volunteer spirit: I always want to help people. One of my dreams is to become a great doctor or a psychologist. I would like to build an orphanage for all the very poor children.

Children are the future of the country, so I want to give them a stable childhood.

At 4:53 pm on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, there was a big earthquake of magnitude 7.0. It was the first time I experienced something like that. With the grace of God, I did not lose any member of my family and my neighborhood was not strongly affected by the earthquake, but that day was filled with tears and



Tzu Chi volunteers construct temporary shelters in June 2011. Photo: Lesly Pierre

sadness. After a couple of weeks I left the capital to go to Montrouis to stay with a family that is very close with us. My sister went to Benoit to live with another family while my mother and my brother stayed in Port-au-Prince. After a few weeks I went back to the capital to see my mother. While I was there I saw a group of volunteers in blue and white helping the people camped in the Sylvio Cator National Football Stadium.

So, one day I met them. First, I met Lori Chen, dressed in sky-blue and white. She spoke French and was very nice to me and told me about the progress of their projects for Haiti, and I was so happy ever since that first day. When I came home, I told all my neighbors and I compiled a list of the needs in our community.

The next day, I did not have a chance to see Lori again, so I wrote a letter and asked another volunteer to give it to Lori on the following day. I stayed and watched how they did the distribution; it was different from anything I had seen before. They were still looking for volunteers and many young people agreed to help with loading and unloading. They unloaded containers and arranged things for the distribution. There was a team in white and black. That was the medical team. It was really wonderful to see their care every day. I wanted with all my heart to join these activities, but I never had the opportunity.

I continued to go to Sylvio Cator Stadium to see and admire the activities. I was told that I was too young to work but the volunteers would give me some food to eat every day. I had good vegetarian food and they loved me and trusted me as if I was an official volunteer. During break time, all the US and Haitian volunteers would assemble to watch a message from Dharma Master Cheng Yen.

One day, I saw a young man with a vest who was helping to clean the distribution site, and I told the volunteers, "I am as old as him. I can do what he does." They took me to see Curtis Hsing, the person in charge, who was also very nice to me. They organized a home visit to see how I lived, to see my family and my community. They visited our little house and with

the help of my school report they agreed to help me and sent their guard Pierre Joseph Romulus to give me distribution vouchers.

My mother asked me, "After what they did for you, how will you repay their grace?" I said, "By doing volunteer work." Since that day I became a Tzu Chi volunteer. I received a vest and a pair of gloves to clean up, and I was so happy. Sometimes I helped the medical team to direct patients who had little children. Every day I met more volunteers, including Peggy Joh and Patrick Chou who congratulated me on my work. They always told me that in Tzu Chi you need to help with all your heart and without expecting anything in return.

In April they left and promised to return in May. And indeed in May, Curtis Hsing, Peggy Joh, Lori Chen, and Patrick Chou all came to Haiti for other projects since the previous activities were over, but I was still a part of all their activities. And I was still very happy.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Foundation with support of thirty housewives who saved two cents per day in bamboo banks with the special philosophy to help the poor and educate the rich. The words of Master Cheng Yen are very inspiring. They comfort us and tell us that we are not alone. Whenever there are volunteers coming to Haiti to help us, she is with us. I love her words a lot, and I love the Venerable Dharma Master Cheng Yen with all my heart, because the love of Master Cheng Yen travels across borders to reach us.

In Tzu Chi there is no skin color: we are all one big family and I like it that no person is above another. This is the spirit of Master Cheng Yen, lived out and understood in real life. She has great compassion. Master Cheng Yen lets us know that we must have three great ideals when we volunteer: love, gratitude, and respect.

Ever since I got to know Tzu Chi, my life has become more beautiful and creative. I feel responsible and I am very proud to be a young bodhisattva. Tzu Chi has helped my family, my friends, and my neighbors. It has had a big effect on me and on my community. I



*The author enjoys a hearty vegetarian meal alongside Dr. Nadège Sinvil. Photo: Johan Alwall*

love all the activities and the opportunity to get involved in education and charity.

Today we are a local team that always follows the path of Dharma Master Cheng Yen. I am very proud to be part of the team and the youngest volunteer. We help orphanages, churches, and families, and organize local activities at the Saint Alexandra Church. We advance little by little and get more and more volunteers. The team of US volunteers visits us regularly to help us start some projects or hold activities such as the Buddha Bathing Ceremony. Since the local team was started, we have had two Buddha Bathing Ceremonies and Mother's Day celebrations together with the US team, and it is truly marvelous.

I am following in the footsteps of my older Tzu Chi brother Lesly Pierre and I am now a photographer. I am not yet very efficient but I am learning with his help. Because I am the eye of the Master with my pictures, I am very proud.

Every Thursday, the local team organizes a planning meeting. On the twenty-eighth of each month, we hold a small Bamboo Bank ceremony for all volunteers, and sometimes the local medical team led by Dr. Nadège Sinvil organizes a family planning class with the support of nurses Celeste Remelus and Sandra Caidor. To help families, there is a charity team led by Marie Yveleine Bois-de-fer and Immacula Cadet. And there is Jean Denis Petit Pha who is

responsible for education. They have helped many children in several camps by paying their tuition with the support of the US Tzu Chi team. We are all very dedicated in this team; we work with joy, love, and gratitude, and we respect the philosophy and structure of Tzu Chi and the founder Master Cheng Yen.

Tzu Chi is like my second family; I feel happy every day. During the Mother's Day celebration that the local Haitian Tzu Chi volunteers organized, Pierre Joseph Romulus testified how good it is to be a vegetarian, and on that day I became a vegetarian. I have written a song with the inspiration of all Tzu Chi volunteers in the world, called "Love and Gratitude," and my Tzu Chi brother Johan Alwall helped with this song. In Tzu Chi, we are all capable. I have decided to follow the path of Tzu Chi and of Dharma Master Cheng Yen: the path of compassion, education, respect, and love.

In 2011, the US Tzu Chi team came to Haiti in February and June. In the month of June, I participated in building shelters and helping orphanages. I also received many gifts from my brothers and sisters in Tzu Chi, including a book of Jing Si Aphorisms, electronic dictionaries, and books and CDs with songs and sign language to help my mind be more active and full of Tzu Chi songs in Chinese. I also got a special photo of Master Cheng Yen so that the love of the Dharma Master will be with me wherever I am. I have really progressed with love, respect, and compassion. I have grown with the spirit of Tzu Chi and Master to help the poor and educate the rich. And I will continue to grow with this spirit. 🌿



*Standing between Lesly Pierre (left) and Johan Alwall (right), the author proudly holds a copy of Jing Si Aphorisms. Photo: Georges Davis Jr.*

Poverty is temporary; only by having a loving heart can one experience eternal wealth.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*





◀ Tzu Chi volunteers conducted a famine relief distribution in Pyongwon County, South Pyongan Province, North Korea, on November 16, 2011. A total of 13,211 tons of rice, 350,735 liters of cooking oil, and 43 tons of infant formula was shipped to North Korea by way of freighter, boat, truck, and tractor, and was received with deep appreciation by the local villagers.

Photo: Jing-mei Zhang



▲ Incessant heavy rains flooded Guatemala's Santa Rosa province. Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to the city of Chiquimulilla on October 30, 2011, to distribute relief goods.

Photo: Jia-ling Qiu



▲ On September 24, 2011, Tzu Chi held a blood drive together with Singapore's Blood Bank at the Jurong Medical Centre in Jurong District, Singapore.

Photo: Bi-ing Huang



◀ Natural disasters including drought, hailstorms, tornadoes, and excessive rains have left the southern African nation of Lesotho in a serious state of famine. On September 4, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers held a relief distribution in the village of Matamong, outside the capital of Maseru, where they served the residents with love and respect.

Photo: Mei-juan Chen

On October 9, 2011, Anna E. Roosevelt, Roosevelt Institute board chair and granddaughter of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, presented the Distinguished Public Service Award to Dharma Master Cheng Yen in recognition of Tzu Chi's "monumental disaster relief efforts as well as local community services." This is the first time that this award has been given to an organization or individual outside of the U.S. Upon receiving the award, Master Cheng Yen recognized the efforts of Tzu Chi Bodhisattvas all over the world and dedicated the award to them.

Photo provided by  
Tzu Chi Foundation



With the approach of Children's Day in Brazil, Tzu Chi volunteers visited the school of Escola Municipal Ceu Navegantes in Cocaia, São Paulo, on October 2, 2011, to present gifts to the children and wish them health and happiness.

Photo: Shu-hua Chen



As part of the school's vegetarian diet promotion, students at the Tzu Chi Kindergarten in Melaka, Malaysia, prepared vegetarian snacks for their parents on October 14, 2011.

Photo: Xiu-li Yang



On October 8, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers and college students from Auckland, New Zealand, spent the day cleaning Mangere Beach.

Photo: Wen-xin Lin



Torrential storms and annual monsoon rains caused many of Thailand's rivers to overflow, leaving much of the country under floodwaters for months. On November 10, 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers delivered vegetarian meals by boat to victims' homes in Laksi District, Bangkok.

Photo: Ah-ming Xiong

A strong 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit southeastern Turkey on October 23, 2011, causing massive damage and hundreds of casualties. Tzu Chi volunteers went to the Turkish province of Van on October 26 to assess the situation and prepare for relief distributions.

Photo: Zi-cheng Yu



▲ Nonstop heavy rains caused rivers to overflow and flood farms and houses in southern Honduras. On November 10, 2011, while preparing for relief distribution to be held two days later in Marcovia, a local volunteer carefully picks up spilled beans from the ground to save every bit of the precious resources.

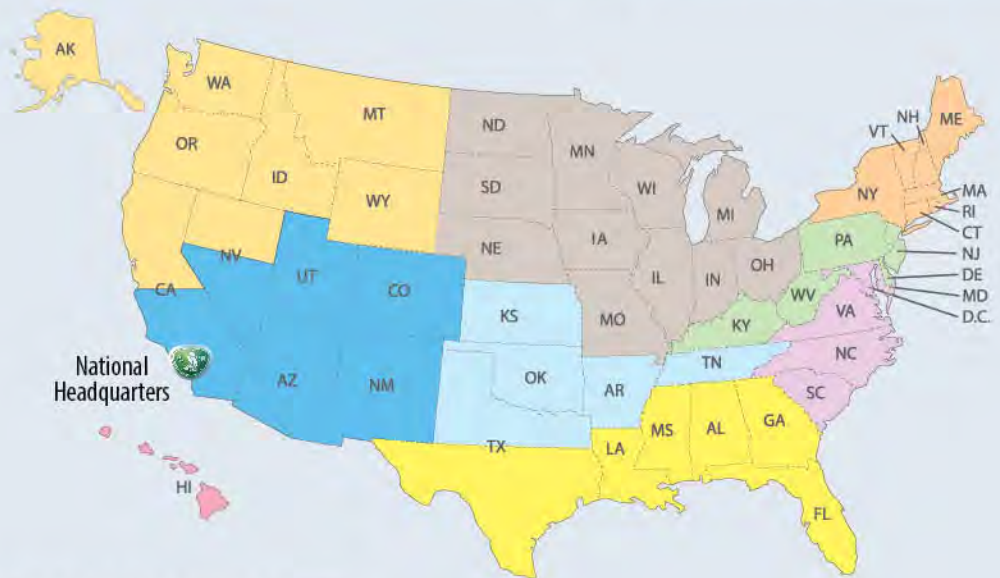
Photo: Ting Fan



▲ On October 6, 2011, a fire destroyed twelve homes in the district of Bantar Gebang, Bekasi, Indonesia, leaving many locals without homes. Tzu Chi volunteers arrived the following day to provide loving care and emergency supplies.










Photo: Juliana Santy

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# TZU CHI

A BRIEF HISTORY...

**O**n April 14, 1966, Venerable Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Merits Society in Hualien with the support of 30 housewives who each put aside 50 NT cents (about two US cents) of their grocery money every day to establish a charity fund. Their objective was to provide assistance for the poor.

During the first five years, they helped a total of 31 elderly, ill, or poor people from 15 families. As word spread, more people participated and the program gathered strength. It spread beyond Hualien across the island.

Today, Tzu Chi Foundation is a non-profit organization with nearly 10 million members worldwide. The international headquarters remains in Hualien. The United States headquarters in San Dimas, California, oversees nine Tzu Chi regional chapters with more than 80 offices across the country. In keeping with its goal of inspiring volunteers to heal the world, foundation members and a network of medical providers can be found assisting in relief work all over the world. Tzu Chi provides assistance to victims of both man-made and natural calamities.

The foundation hopes to instill in each of its members a heart filled with kindness, compassion, joy, and unconditional giving. For 45 years, Tzu Chi has concentrated on its missions of charity, medicine, education and humanistic culture. Over the decades, the foundation has also expanded its activities to include bone marrow donation, international disaster relief, environmental conservation, and community volunteerism.



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## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Please make your check payable to **Tzu Chi Foundation** and mail to your nearest Tzu Chi Office. Thank you!

Name : First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Address : Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

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If you would like to make a credit card donation, please call the direct line 1.888.9TZUCHI (1.888.989.8244) or make your donation online at [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org).

If you would like a free subscription to the magazine(s) listed below, please check the corresponding box(es):

US Tzu Chi World (Chinese quarterly magazine)       Tzu Chi USA Journal (English quarterly magazine)

For a free digital subscription to these magazines and the monthly e-newsletter, please visit [enews.us.tzuchi.org](http://enews.us.tzuchi.org).

If you would like to become involved with Tzu Chi, please contact the local Tzu Chi office in your community. Please refer to pages 56-58 for contact information, or visit us at [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org).

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One cannot grasp  
the true meaning of joy  
without suffering.  
What's important  
is knowing how to  
transform suffering into joy.

*Jing Si Aphorism by  
Dharma Master Cheng Yen*