

COMPASSION & RELIEF

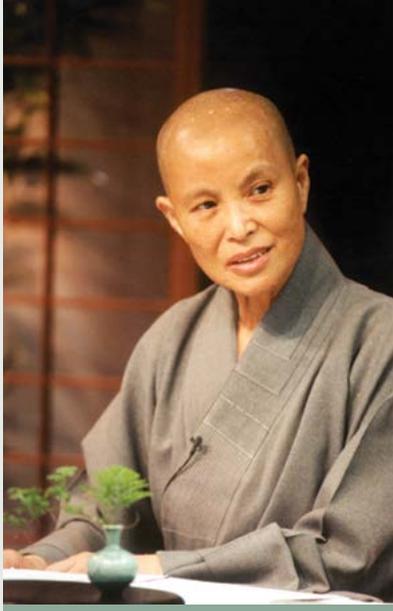
TZU CHI USA JOURNAL

Remember Our Initial Aspiration *30 Years of Tzu Chi USA*

From Big Business to Great Love
One Team, One Dream, One Mission
From Community Partners to Family



ISSUE 55 | WINTER 2019



CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

Thoughts for meditation, contemplation,
and reflection

Dharma Master Cheng Yen
Founder of Tzu Chi Foundation

Inspiring Joy in Others

In our relationships,
some people just inspire great joy in us.

Why is this?

It is because in our past lives,
we took joy in everything they said.

They helped untie the knots in our hearts
and never caused us afflictions.

Therefore, when we see these people or hear their voices,
we give rise to joy.

If we want to always bring joy to others,
we must constantly reflect on ourselves.

Have we created obstacles for others?

Have we complained about others?

In everything we say and do,
we should bring joy to others.

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 Dharma Master Cheng Yen

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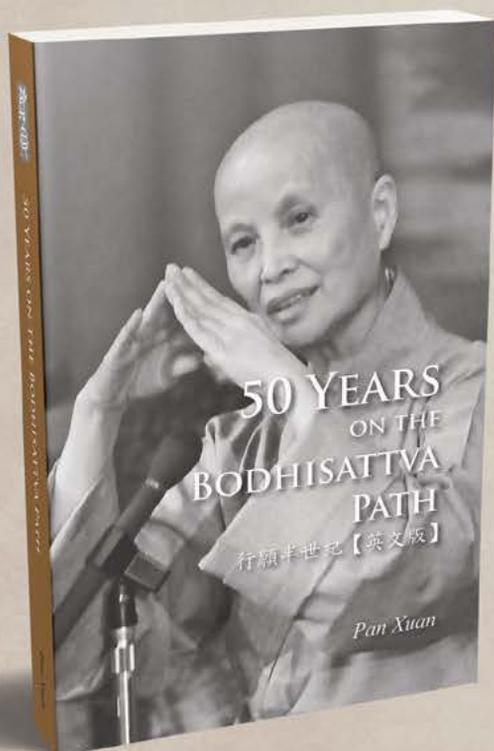


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50 YEARS ON THE BODHISATTVA PATH

行願半世紀【英文版】

Tzu Chi Merit Association, founded in 1966, was the starting point of Tzu Chi's charity work. With the mission of working "for Buddha's teachings, for sentient beings," Master Cheng Yen has resolutely led Tzu Chi volunteers to serve society throughout the past half-century.



50 Years on the Bodhisattva Path takes us on a journey through Tzu Chi's history, sharing with us how Master Cheng Yen encourages her disciples to persist in diligently walking the Bodhisattva-path, take the Buddha's heart as their own, take their teacher's mission as their own, and help all sentient beings.

 靜思人文
JING SI CULTURE





Auspicious Month
celebration in
Houston, Texas.
Photo: Frank Wu

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Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

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The Chinese philosopher Confucius said, “At thirty I stood firm.” Thirty years is considered a major milestone in a person’s life, and the same holds true for an organization. Now in its thirtieth year, Tzu Chi USA is standing firm. Yet, as volunteers continue to grow and develop the organization to better serve those in need, it is also important that they do not lose sight of its origins. This year, Dharma Master Cheng Yen has been constantly reminding everyone, “Let us not forget that year. Let us not forget that person. Let us not forget that aspiration.” Through this reminder, she encourages the volunteers to constantly reflect upon their own journey in Tzu Chi and hold on to their initial aspirations and always remember what inspired them to do the work they do.

In this issue of the Tzu Chi USA Journal, we bring to you the stories of volunteers who became involved in the organization at different points in time over the past thirty years, and we follow them on their journeys to explore what keeps them moving forward. You will read the story of Stephen Huang, who is best known for his role in helping to establish Tzu Chi USA. You will also read stories from Kevin Chiang and Jean Hsu, who joined Tzu Chi at a young age and have now become role models who inspire the younger generation to join them. Then, there is the story of Mei Hwa and Yuanliang Ling, and Nakia Douglas. With a relationship built on gratitude, respect, and love, they are more than community partners; they are members of a Dharma-family who support each other in their personal journeys in life.

For Tzu Chi USA, without the volunteers who formed the initial aspirations, held on to them, and took the lead thirty years ago, the organization would not be here today; without the people who continue to work in carrying out Master Cheng Yen’s missions, Tzu Chi will not be here in the future. As we continue to move forward in our lives, it is important for all of us to constantly revisit that moment of initial inspiration, for it can serve as a powerful force to help us move ahead. Let us take this opportunity to remind ourselves to always remember our initial aspiration to do good and help others; let us seize that moment and sustain it forever. 🌿

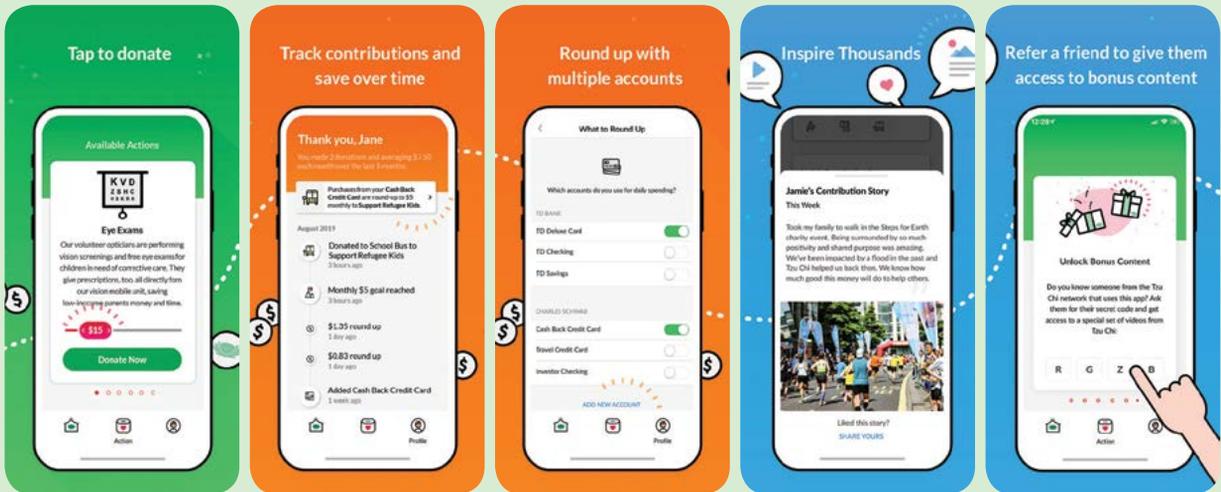
Allen Chung

Editor-in-Chief

We Spring the Power of Our Bamboo Bank into the 21st Century



Tzu Chi Connect
Small Change, Huge Difference



With **Tzu Chi Connect** you have the power to directly fund critical supplies and services that offer relief to families wrestling with disaster, poverty, illness, and more. Browse through and give to the specific causes you care about

most, save and donate your spare change over time, and connect with people whose hearts are as big as yours. With the **Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation**, it's never been so convenient to put compassion into action.



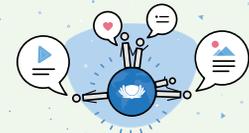
Small Change, Huge Difference

Pledge a few dollars a week by rounding up purchases from a bank account or credit card. For example, a coffee you buy for \$2.75 will round up to an even \$3.00. The difference will be saved here in the app for future donations.



Share the Word

Tzu Chi lends help to millions world wide. To do so, we rely on supporters like you to get the word out to friends and family. The more people that know about our app, the greater the impact.



Inspire Thousands

Have you volunteered or received help from Tzu Chi? We would love to hear from you! Share a short story or matching image about your experience and we may publish this right in the app.

For more information, visit TzuChi.US/APP

“Be self-sufficient and utilize local resources. Source your resources locally and use them locally.”

These were the words that Master Cheng Yen gave Stephen Huang, who founded Tzu Chi USA along with other volunteers thirty years ago, in 1989. Looking back, it was a year that set the foundation for Tzu Chi USA to grow and develop. I can't imagine how difficult it was for volunteers back then to establish a Taiwan-based organization in a place with a completely different culture, language, and faith traditions. Yet despite the challenges, they persevered, and furthermore, they were able to pass down the spirit and principles from Master Cheng Yen. To this day, we still raise our own funds to carry out our daily operations, provide services to communities across the USA and beyond, and spread the spirit of great love.

Over the past thirty years, Tzu Chi USA has demonstrated the principle of unconditional love. Tzu Chi is a Buddhist organization, but Tzu Chi volunteers hail from all kinds of backgrounds, faiths, and cultures. Furthermore, Tzu Chi volunteers all work together as a team and reach out to help people in need, unconditionally. Just recently, we have completed the reconstruction of a Catholic church in Canoa, Ecuador, working closely with local residents and the Catholic sisters there to rebuild their community faith center. Volunteers across the USA have also been making trips to Ecuador, Mexico, and

other countries, and we have worked with the local volunteers in those places to provide long-term service and care to those affected by the disasters that had taken place. Tzu Chi's efforts in all these countries are excellent examples of how volunteers put the teachings of the Buddha and Master Cheng Yen into practice and open their hearts to embrace all people, regardless of their differences.

Looking forward to the future, I hope that everyone in Tzu Chi can continue to uphold the Tzu Chi spirit and the Dharma and put them into practice. Furthermore, I hope that we can continue to recruit more volunteers and inspire them to practice compassion and relief through different programs and services. As Master Cheng Yen constantly reminds us, “Let us not forget that aspiration.” We should never forget the people and events that have inspired us to walk on this Bodhisattva-path, to help others, and bring love and joy to others. We should never let our doubts stop us from accomplishing what we wish to accomplish – to bring purity to people's hearts, to bring peace to the society, and to free the world from disasters. We can all tap into the infinite pure love and compassion within us. As Master Cheng Yen tells us, “Just do it.” By working hand in hand together, nothing is impossible. 🌿

Stan Huang

CEO, Tzu Chi USA

Forming Pure Dharma-Affinities with Sentient Beings

In this world, when we see and hear sentient beings in suffering, we can go to them, extending our helping hands. However, the journey can truly be very complicated and difficult. Living Bodhisattvas come together and work persistently to overcome many difficulties. They are unafraid of long journeys, and they do not seek personal benefits; they only want to save people. They use the Dharma to guide sentient beings and transform the ground of everyone's mind into fields of blessings.

This is not just an ideal state described in the sutras, but the true Bodhisattva-path among people in the world. We must cherish the karmic conditions we have in this life and seize the time to grow our wisdom-life.

The Bodhisattva-path is a long path. The best spiritual training ground is to be among people, because going among people is what causes us the most afflictions. It is in these conditions that we experience all kinds of situations and

feelings. When we resolve to walk on the path, do we wholeheartedly advance, or do we deviate once we encounter a fork in the road? Some of us may say, "Even when I gave so much, others are still unsatisfied. Should I continue doing this?" "Even when I try to help people, there are obstacles. I am very tired from working. I want to stop," They have these kinds of thoughts. Yet, we should mindfully contemplate whether taking a break in this way actually benefits us.

If we are not confident in ourselves, we are unsure of right and wrong. As time passes, we will still be walking in place. It is said, "Forming aspirations is easy, but persevering with them is difficult." As our thoughts come and go, they can hinder us. We must eliminate old, negative karma whenever we encounter obstacles, and accept adverse conditions with equanimity. We must not take issue with people and instead give way to others. The more we give way, the wider our road will become, and it will be easier for us to walk the path. Not only should we all avoid

causing disasters, we must also form aspirations to give as much as we can, doing so lifetime after lifetime.

The goal of spiritual practice is to awaken ourselves, understand life, and understand the principles. Afflictions and ignorance lead to interpersonal conflicts. When we become endlessly entangled in conflicts and karmic conditions accumulate, they become sources of suffering. If we do not understand the principles, we are in a state of ignorance. Once we are clear on the principles, we must heighten our vigilance and refrain from creating negative affinities with others. Our interpersonal relationships should be as clear as pure water.

As Living Bodhisattvas, we form the resolve to benefit sentient beings. When others are experiencing difficulties in life, even if we have to climb over mountains, we are willing to help. We give of our time, physical strength, and material wealth to help others regain their livelihood. If sentient beings have physical illnesses and are without medical care or medicine, we quickly provide these things to relieve them of their suffering. When we help sentient beings eliminate their afflictions while

remaining free of attachments and obstructions, our minds will all be very pure.

After we relieve the suffering of others, they may feel gratitude and form aspirations to follow us. As we give without expectations and are filled with Dharma-joy, we are forming a blessed affinity. This virtuous and blessed affinity will help us in our future spiritual practice. When we have pure Dharma-affinities with sentient beings, we can walk on the same path, pave the path, and gather to do good deeds together. Spiritual companions who form Bodhisattva-aspirations together are companions on the Bodhisattva-path.

When those who receive help also want to lend their strength to help others, they are part of a cycle of passing on love; this is truly a virtuous thing. I encourage everyone to practice the virtuous Dharma by helping those in suffering and promoting goodness. In this way, the world will be freed from suffering. Everyone, please always be mindful! 🌿

Master Cheng Yen's Teachings

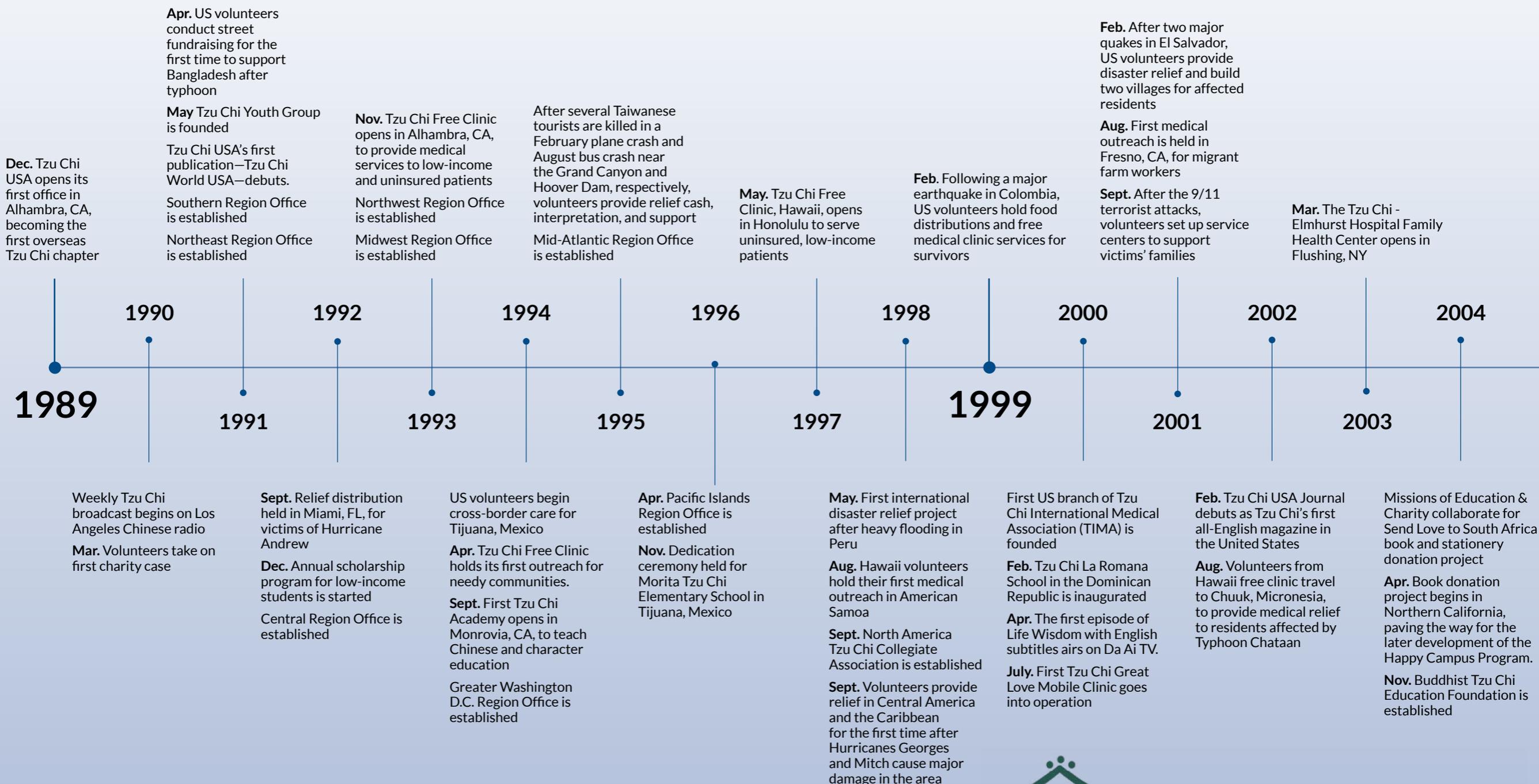
March 1-15, 2019

Compiled by the Jing Si Editorial Team





Tzu Chi USA Timeline



30 Years of Compassion & Relief

Aug. Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation is established

Sept. Volunteers begin Hurricane Katrina relief for evacuees in Texas and other states

Sept. Tzu Chi Community Clinic opens in South El Monte, CA, later adding dental and acupuncture services

Tzu Chi begins providing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and continuing education courses in several states.

Jan. The first two Jing Si Books & Café locations open in California and New Jersey

Feb. First of several medical outreaches is held in New Orleans, LA, for Katrina survivors

Feb. Tzu Chi's first public school character education classes begin at Lytle Creek Elementary in San Bernardino, CA

US Tzu Chi 360°, a weekly television program about Tzu Chi USA, begins production

The Happy Campus Program grows out of earlier book donation projects and relationships with needy schools

After a devastating tsunami hit Samoa, volunteers from Hawaii provide cash relief and medical care to survivors

Dec. Volunteers begin providing twice-weekly dental care for a winter homeless shelter in Southern California

Apr. Tzu Chi and Remote Area Medical (RAM) hold an eight-day medical clinic event to serve thousands of patients in Sacramento and Oakland, CA

May. Time Magazine recognizes Dharma Master Cheng Yen on the TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people

Oct. The Roosevelt Institute presents Dharma Master Cheng Yen with the 2011 FDR Distinguished Public Service Award

Mar. Volunteers hold the first annual Healthy Fresno free clinic event in Fresno, CA

Apr. The White House recognizes Tzu Chi USA as a Champion of Change for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts

May. Dedication ceremony for three Port-au-Prince schools built by Tzu Chi for the Sisters of St. Anne

May. Tzu Chi USA is named NVOAD Member of the Year

Dec. Copies of Jing Si Aphorisms and Tzu Chi USA Journal are sent to prison inmates across the country, building on hotel donation project that began in 2011

July. Dedication ceremony for a kindergarten rebuilt after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti

June. Dedication ceremony for 244 houses in Choluteca, Honduras for people living in makeshift shelters

Sept. Disaster relief following Northern California wildfires

Provides relief to flood and tornado survivors in the Carolinas, Texas, and Illinois

Aug. Disaster relief aid for almost 13,000 families affected by Hurricane Harvey and Irma

Oct. Provides immediate and long-term relief for the Northern California Wildfires

Sept. Financial aid to over 10,000 households in Mexico following the earthquake

Mar. During the 2019 TIMA Global Forum, a ribbon cutting ceremony is held for 2 new mobile vision vans, bringing the total number to 9

July. Grand re-opening ceremony of La Parroquia San Andres, a church in Canoa, Ecuador, which was rebuilt after the 2016 earthquake

Sept. Groundbreaking of The Morelos Institute in Mexico, which was destroyed in the 2017 earthquake

Oct. Grand opening of Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief in Manhattan, New York

Dec. Tzu Chi USA 30th Anniversary

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

June. Tzu Chi officially joins National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)

Sept. The first Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten opens in Monrovia, CA

Apr. Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten opens in Dallas, TX

June. Tzu Chi and American Red Cross sign a Memorandum of Understanding

June. After Midwest flooding, volunteers provide relief and medical care in Iowa

Jan. After the Haiti earthquake, hundreds of volunteers provide emergency relief and medical care, before transitioning into long-term care projects

July. Tzu Chi is granted Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council

Sept. Tzu Chi Food Pantry goes into operation in Cedar Grove, NJ

Nov. Tzu Chi Community Clinic opens in Wilmington to serve southern Los Angeles

Apr. Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic office opens in Fresno, CA

June. Tzu Chi holds the first annual Care 4 a Healthy I.E. (Inland Empire) multi-day clinic in San Bernardino, CA

Nov-Dec. After Hurricane Sandy devastates the Northeast, volunteers provide blankets, food, and \$10 million in emergency aid to the affected

Oct. Tzu Chi Education Campus opens in Walnut, CA

Nov. 4th Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool in US opens in Houston, TX
Medical foundation officially starts the Tzu Chi Medical Group, expanding its services to the general public who have health insurance

Jan. Introduces the first Ethical Eating Day, January 11

Apr. Tzu Chi USA provides relief following the Ecuador Earthquake, and launched the Cash-for-Relief program across five of the hardest-hit cities

Nov. Launches the Mobile Food Pantry program in Southern California
Tornado, flood, and fire relief in Texas, Missouri, West Virginia, Louisiana, California, North Carolina and Indiana
Provides help to Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone

July. Disaster relief in Hawaii after the Kilauea volcanic eruption and Kauai floods

Nov. Camp Fire disaster relief in Butte County, CA
Launches Hurricane Maria Long Term Recovery Project in Puerto Rico

Medical outreaches in Mexico following the 2017 earthquake, serving 15,500 patients

Disaster relief following hurricanes in Panama City, Florida and New Bern, North Carolina



*From **BIG BUSINESS** to **GREAT LOVE:***



*The Story of **STEPHEN HUANG***

by Allen Freese

It is better to have a big heart than a big house.

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Stephen Huang interacts with the local volunteers in Mozambique.
Photo: Ken Tsai

“If you have so much, why are you so busy?”

This was the poignant question that Master Cheng Yen posed to Stephen Huang more than thirty years ago, around the time he first decided to become involved with Tzu Chi. Stephen Huang is very well-known throughout the world of Tzu Chi for his role in establishing Tzu Chi USA in 1989. Today, he is also recognized in his current role as Director of Global Volunteer Affairs. Prior to joining Tzu Chi, Stephen was a highly successful businessman living in California. But despite the abundant wealth he had accumulated for himself, he found that all of his time was spent working continuously to make more and more money. Caught in the endless pursuit of material wealth, he knew there had to be a more meaningful purpose for his life. After learning about the work Master Cheng Yen and Tzu Chi Foundation had accomplished around that time, including the construction of the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, Stephen was very moved and decided that he had to meet this remarkable woman. From then on, Stephen's life would be transformed in unimaginable ways.

Shortly after learning of Tzu Chi, Stephen made the long journey to Taiwan to meet Master Cheng Yen. Through his conversations with her, he came to realize that the material wealth he had worked so hard to build was far more than he needed to live comfortably. Once Master Cheng Yen helped him realize that he could live on far less than he was currently earning, he began the process of gradual retirement and

Stephen Huang (right) with Dharma Master Cheng Yen (left) in Hualien, Taiwan 1997. Photo provided by: Jing Si Abode ▼



devoted his life to the work of Tzu Chi's missions. It was as if he had been reborn to a new life of spiritual practice. Thus, founding Tzu Chi USA as Tzu Chi's first overseas branch became both his personal cause and also his initial aspiration, which has carried him to where he is today. The persistence and hard work that previously characterized Stephen's approach to his career in the world of big business served him well in his endeavors with Tzu Chi. Like a bodhisattva from the Buddhist sutras, Stephen traveled far and wide to spread the humanistic spirit and ideals of Tzu Chi. He used the affinities he previously had formed with other wealthy businessmen in the US and elsewhere to begin hosting "tea parties," where he invited potential new members and donors to learn about Tzu Chi's opportunities for altruism. Eventually, after touching the hearts of hundreds of people in dozens of cities with this message, Stephen was able to secure a solid

foundation for Tzu Chi USA to begin its work.

Unlike the world of business that Stephen was used to, growing Tzu Chi USA from the ground up presented a great challenge. Stephen explained, “In business, if you want to expand, you can simply buy a space in another location and set up a new franchise.” However, in order for Tzu Chi USA to expand, many compassionate people were needed to participate in the effort. Fortunately for Stephen, having taken Master Cheng Yen’s mission as his own, he was able to rely on her words for support throughout this process. By embodying the values of patience and diligence, he gradually began to form strong connections with many people, all of whom later became instrumental in establishing their own chapters of Tzu Chi throughout the US. Even in the face of occasional criticism, Stephen had the realization that, “These were simply opportunities to reflect on my own character and to adjust my approach

accordingly.” Thus, the success that Tzu Chi USA enjoys today has grown directly from the roots of goodness that Stephen so lovingly cultivated all those years ago. Of course, founding Tzu Chi USA was far from Stephen’s final endeavor. His previous life in big business showed him that growth is one of the key elements of success, and with this in mind, his focus shifted from the US to the world. Today, Stephen serves as a director in charge of volunteer activities around the world, as he continues along Tzu Chi’s Bodhisattva-path.

Recently, Stephen has found himself spending a substantial amount of time in the African nation of Mozambique, where the catastrophic aftermath of Cyclone Idai was greatest. In this region of Africa, Tzu Chi has undertaken the work of rebuilding the physical spaces the people there once occupied and healing the emotional trauma this devastating event inflicted on them. Short-term aid provided by Tzu Chi in the weeks



Stephen attends the grand opening ceremony of the newly opened Greater Washington D.C. Region Office in Reston, Virginia in 2007. *Photo provided by: Greater Washington D.C. Region*

directly following the storm, which occurred in mid-March, 2019, saw 15,000 families helped by the foundation's medical mission. Now, with longer-term objectives in mind, Stephen Huang is working closely with government officials to obtain approval for plans for three Tzu Chi Great Love Villages in the poorest and most devastated areas, along with between 10 and 20 schools for children throughout the country. Stephen notes that because so many of Mozambique's people live in extreme poverty in the first place, they are exceptionally vulnerable to natural disasters like Idai. In order to genuinely improve the living conditions for these vulnerable populations, Stephen hopes to be able to get these plans approved so that construction on this type of permanent housing can begin.

These projects, of course, are not the first efforts that Tzu Chi has made in Mozambique. Stephen credits Denise Tsai and her husband, Dino Foi, with truly paving the path for Tzu Chi to begin the work of helping the Mozambican people. From the time that Tzu Chi's efforts first began in the country, Stephen finally feels that the goal of establishing a much better quality of life for the people there is finally within reach. Having taken the time to learn about the ways that Mozambicans live and the difficulties they face, Tzu Chi's volunteers, under the guidance of Stephen Huang, have been able to offer

meaningful and impactful solutions. Stephen echoes Master Cheng Yen's belief that education is crucial for bringing new opportunities to Mozambique and all the African nations where Tzu Chi's seeds of goodness have begun to give rise to new Living Bodhisattvas. As part of this effort, not only are new schools needed, the issue of hunger must also be addressed. According to Stephen, "Many children are unable to attend school due to hunger. So, beyond providing high-quality buildings for classes to take place, simply providing meals to Mozambique's poorest children gives them the strength and nourishment they need to learn and grow." Thus, using his acute business sense, Stephen has been able to harness the power of many people's loving donations to create genuine improvements in the lives of some of the world's poorest people.

As anyone could imagine, serving as the Director of Global Volunteer Affairs and heading such major projects and initiatives is both stressful and taxing. Stephen admits that there are occasions when even he becomes frustrated and discouraged. Yet, when he thinks of Master Cheng Yen and the aspiration she inspired in his heart all those years ago, he is able to focus on the immense success he has had in bringing the spirit and ideals of Tzu Chi to fruition in the lives of so many people, both in the US and abroad. The joy of these successes is what enables Stephen



Together with local volunteers, Stephen passes out bags of rice to disaster relief aid recipients in Mozambique after Cyclone Idai. Photo: Lin Weiyang

to keep his eyes ahead and focus on the task at hand. As he envisions what the future holds for Tzu Chi, he dreams that the foundation will be able to maintain this same level of success for years to come. His background in the business world has given him the acumen to know what it takes for an enterprise to remain successful in the long-term. Stephen has taken his affinity for business and applied these insights to his present work in developing Tzu Chi. Looking to the future, Stephen believes that it will be through learning from other well-established charitable organizations and adapting accordingly that Tzu Chi's continued success will be possible. "As long as we remain focused on our mission, we will be able to succeed," he asserts confidently.

Stephen Huang has high hopes for the future of Tzu Chi, as well as for the foundation's current projects such as those he has been coordinating in Mozambique. With the selfless dedication of Master Cheng Yen as his greatest inspiration, he has faith that the Great Love and continuous, diligent efforts of Tzu Chi's members and volunteers will continue to pave the way forward. Just like in the business world, Stephen is focused intently on promoting Tzu Chi's growth and development into the future. Stephen says, "As long as we can remain confident and focused on the work that we do, I believe that the Great Love Tzu Chi has to offer will be able to continue to take root in places around the world." For Stephen, this mindset is more important than ever, especially for people living in the United States where the divide between the wealthy and the impoverished has been growing for decades. Despite this growing income disparity across the US, Stephen serves as a role model for other wealthy business people as he carries out Tzu



Stephen gives a motivational speech to the attendees at the 2019 TIMA Global Forum. Photo: Yue Ma

Chi's work to "educate the rich and help the poor." Stephen cites Master Cheng Yen's statement, "Only if the US is able to awaken will the world know peace." Fortunately, Stephen Huang and all of the other Living Bodhisattvas who sustain Tzu Chi's missions in the US and around the world are hard at work applying the power of selfless Great Love to build a better quality of life for all. 🌿

Allen Freese is a translator for Tzu Chi USA's Dharma As Water Development Department, based in Honolulu, Hawaii. He has an M.A. from University of Hawaii Department of Religion, with his thesis focused on the roots and teachings of the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism.



Steven Voon and his family volunteer together at a Tzu Chi winter distribution in the rural area of Caruthers, Fresno County, California. Photo provided by: Steven Voon

One TEAM, One DREAM, One MISSION

by Isabelle Tseng

*When those who are suffering cannot come to seek aid,
those who are blessed must meet them where they are.*

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

“If \$25 can help a child see and have a better future, will you help?”

A unanimous, energetic “yes” echoed inside the Gratitude Hall at the 2019 Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) Global Forum. Behind a wooden podium, ornate with fresh flowers, Steven Voon’s warmth and open-heartedness permeated the room from the moment he started speaking. To someone new, his persona—his soft Malaysian-accented voice, his kind visage, his approachable aura—may not exactly give the impression that he is a person with outstanding accomplishments. Yet as Steven beamed his signature big smile, his audience was mesmerized, hanging on his every word. Suddenly, the bright, happy face of an African American girl in sparkling new glasses, with her teary-eyed mother by her side, appeared on two large screens. Steven shocked forum attendees with her story. Her grades improved from D’s and F’s to A’s and B’s, simply after getting a pair of Tzu Chi glasses. The cost was barely equivalent to a meal for two at a restaurant. Within an hour, the girl could finally see the once blurry writing on the whiteboard that had hindered her learning. The photo captured the moment her sight was restored through the kindness of strangers.



▲ Steven gives a presentation on the “See 2 Succeed” vision project during the 2019 TIMA Global Forum.
Photo: Liao Shuchao

Steven’s latest school-based vision project, “See 2 Succeed,” is a labor of love that prescreens over 16,000 underprivileged children annually at Fresno schools in California, providing free glasses to those who need prescriptions. With low pay from working in grape fields, their families often cannot afford eye care. Steven’s thoughtful acquisition of colorful Tzu Chi brand frames have won the hearts of many, even students who resisted wearing glasses. These life-changing stories are what have fueled Steven’s deep dedication to selfless service over the past seventeen years.

“If it is the right thing to do, just do it!”

Steven’s journey with Tzu Chi began in 2002 with his wife, Olivia Chung’s, suggestion to join. His first event was a small medical outreach in an unfamiliar rural area. Standing in a cramped room inside an old smelly trailer that served both as living room and bedroom, he was pained to find that five or six people shared the small living space. At that instant, he pledged to help others instead of watching football. But resources were scarce then. In order to host dental events, Steven drove twice a month on a sixteen-hour round trip between Fresno and Tzu Chi headquarters in southern California to borrow three dental units. People questioned why he made such tiring trips. Undeterred, he replied that without dental equipment, Tzu Chi

could not serve patients in need, even though volunteer dentists were available. He persevered for two years until Tzu Chi Fresno had the money to buy its own equipment. In 2009, Steven left a stable career in corporate finance to follow an aspiration to become full-time Tzu Chi staff. He first began by coordinating Fresno’s health outreaches. Steven had found his calling and path in life, a miraculous thing at any age. A few years later, he was appointed Executive Vice President of the Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and its COO in 2014. However, Steven’s service to humanity came with unavoidable sacrifices early on, as he was often away from his wife and his two toddlers. While such situations could have easily caused tension and disconnect within a family, his loving family instead followed his footsteps. Steven’s infectious enthusiasm infused with spiritual insights empowered many others to join his team.

“Teamwork can make an impossible dream come true.”

Leading by example, Steven emulates Master Cheng Yen’s vigor, compassion, and wisdom. He serves with his whole heart, and with integrity. I first met him at a Healthy Fresno event, where long lines of patients began at 4 a.m. I quickly spotted a very calm person carrying materials to different stations, greeting people along the way with his big comforting smile. I could not tell he was the leader. Unlike typical COO’s who manage operations behind their desks and through meetings, Steven is always in the field working alongside volunteers, whether it is moving equipment between storage and service sites during setup, or cleaning up at the end of events. He has filled in to take on many roles, including mobile clinic driver, when there was a lack of

Steven gives some remarks during the ribbon cutting of the Great Love Vision Mobile vans.
Photo: Dennis Lee





manpower. He exemplifies that much can still be accomplished with less. In 2018, with Steven's hard work, Tzu Chi earned the recognition of Kaiser Permanente with a \$650,000 grant. With the grant, Tzu Chi will be acquiring a new mobile dental clinic. Steven credits the strong teamwork of volunteers. He fondly recalls, "Master Cheng Yen says that harmony is most important. She says that all of us need to have a simple mindset, make things simple, and just do it." When everyone has their own opinions, he emphasizes letting go of ego and divisive hierarchy. Using these principles,

▲ Steven helps a patient try on a newly made pair of glasses. *Photo provided by: Steven Voon*

◀ Steven teaches his younger daughter, Brianna how a pair of glasses are made. *Photo provided by: Steven Voon*

Steven has built a strong and harmonious team. To recruit busy health providers, Steven helps them experience another side of their profession's impact that they may not get with their regular work. His work ethic follows Master Cheng Yen's teachings. His motto is, "If you like it, you do it. Since you do it, make sure you do it right. It is part of enjoying life and creating blessings. The enjoyment will show on your face."

"Always be mindful."

Steven's affinities with Master Cheng Yen run deep. When he first met her in 2005, he felt a special connection, as if they knew each other. Though their face-to-face interactions are rare and there is a bit of a language barrier, he lives diligently according to her direct advice to him,

Steven and his family visit the Jing Si Abode in Hualien, Taiwan. Photo provided by: Steven Voon ▼



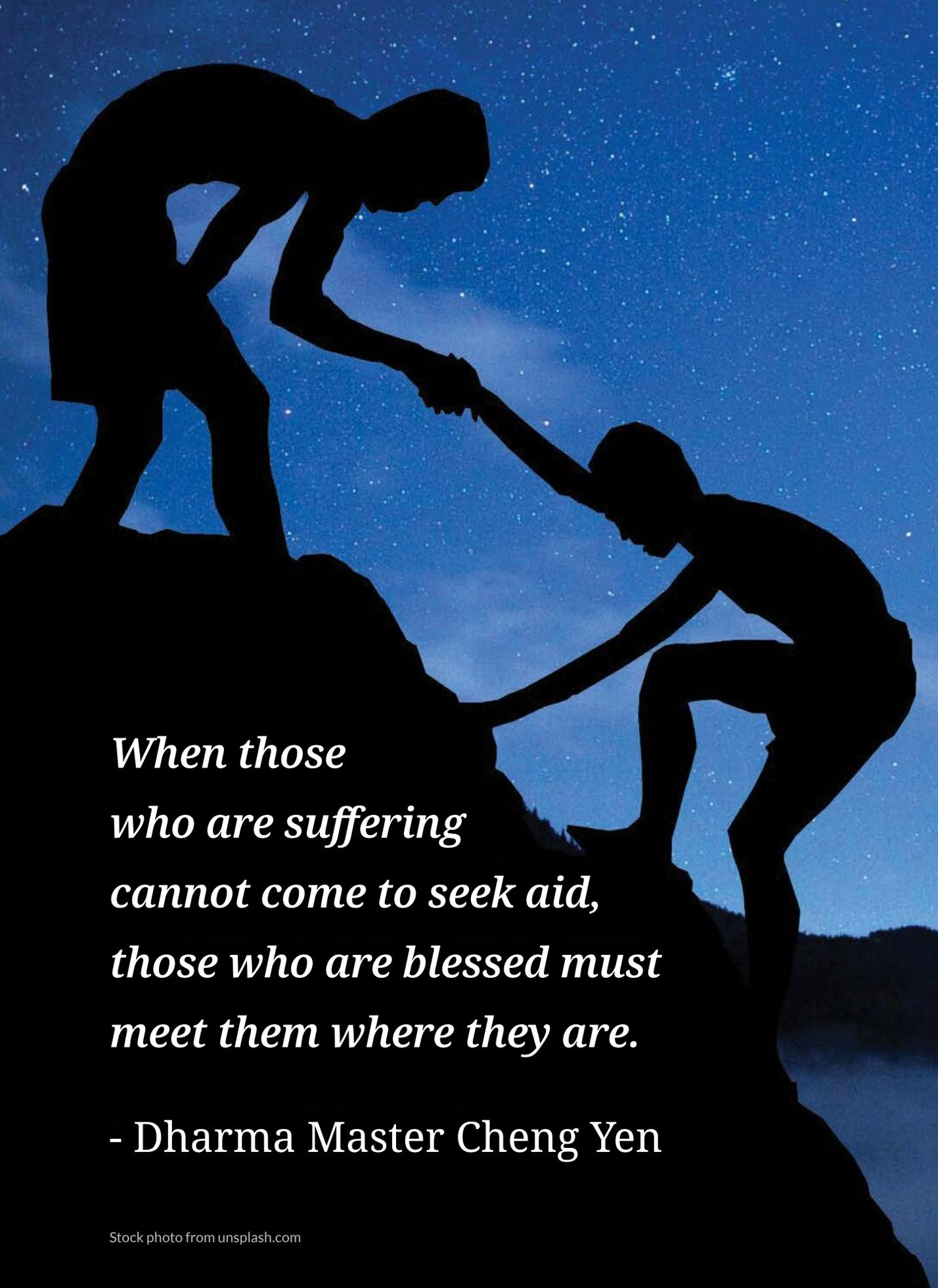
“If you’re mindful, you’ll know what to do.” She often says to volunteers that by being mindful, one can become an expert. Steven believes that anything can be done as long as he is mindful. Trained in finance and not healthcare, he learned to order the right tools dentists requested by going through dental tool catalogs, page by page, and memorizing them. Early on, Steven devoured health assessment reports. One of his discoveries was that seniors’ malnutrition doesn’t always result from their diet, but often from their inability to chew food due to dental problems. With attentive observations, he also noticed that many seniors hardly got their dentures cleaned. Thus, his team purchased sonic equipment for volunteers to clean dentures while giving seniors free dental services. This additional customer service is a way to further bond with the elders, enhancing Tzu Chi’s patient-centered humanistic culture. As COO, he ensures high standards and sanitary mobile clinics and outreaches, which assures medical professionals that their patients are safe from infections. Low-income patients feel highly respected by the outstanding quality of care and “glamorous” environment at outreaches.

Steven’s vision is to provide a “Wow experience” for patients and volunteers so that both groups are happy with their experiences at Tzu Chi.

“Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things.”

Steven’s Tzu Chi work is endless and challenging. Each day demands mindful planning and execution, with barely time to rest. He is always striving to improve. In the face of obstacles, he applies even more vigor, mindfulness, and calmness. Steven is a humble, visionary leader and an extraordinary individual with a long-standing record of selfless service. Focusing on the growth and well-being of people and communities, he has made impressive contributions. At the end of his presentation at the 2019 TIMA Global Forum, Steven’s message of unity along the Bodhisattva-path came into focus. No one can do it alone. He invites everyone to join hands and hearts in “One Team, One Dream, One Mission.” 🌿

Isabelle Tseng is an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University. At Tzu Chi, she is a member of TIMA and Tzu Chi Collegiate Association. She has volunteered at various dental outreaches including Healthy Fresno. Serving patients in need as a dental assistant is her favorite thing to do so far.

A silhouette of two people on a rocky outcrop at night. One person is on the left, leaning over and holding the hand of the other person who is on the right, climbing up. The background is a dark blue night sky filled with stars. The overall mood is one of compassion and assistance.

*When those
who are suffering
cannot come to seek aid,
those who are blessed must
meet them where they are.*

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Building Connections, One Person at a Time

by Devin Makizuru

All human relationships are reciprocal. When we are sincere and loving, we become genuine and open in everything we do. Then, everywhere we go, our lives will be filled with truth, goodness, and beauty.

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

“Wenli is so direct.”

“She does have a point, but I wonder if the person she is talking to can accept what she’s saying...”

These kinds of thoughts characterized my first impressions of Wenli. At the time I met her, I had little knowledge of her background, either within Tzu Chi or beyond. However, as a member in our department, Wenli was frequently in the same meetings I was in, calling in, working on the same projects, and planning the same events. Because of her directness, I was admittedly more than a bit intimidated when interacting with her. But over the course of the past three or so years, I came to learn Wenli’s story, her approach to working, and the aspects of her personality that make her the person that others seek to work with whenever something needs to be done.

Wenli’s journey in Tzu Chi first began in 1997. Living in Cleveland, Ohio, as a young housewife, Wenli’s daily routine consisted of dropping her kids off at school, going to the gym, dining, shopping, and socializing. At that time, Wenli’s lifestyle was relaxed and carefree. Through her social connections, Wenli was introduced to Tzu Chi and started to volunteer at Tzu Chi’s Cleveland office. At the time, her close circle of friends consisted of five people, and as Wenli recalled, “We just wanted something to focus on.” Tzu Chi provided opportunities for her to do things. At that time, Wenli’s perspective of Tzu Chi was just as a place of social gathering, and thus, when she moved to California several years later, she decided that Tzu Chi was not going to be a part of her life. However, her path would soon bring her back to Tzu Chi. In seeking a good Chinese-language school for her children to attend, Wenli came across Tzu Chi Academy, and from there, she made her way to the San Dimas office. Although initially reluctant to volunteer, Wenli again began to take on different tasks in order to support her children in Tzu Chi Academy.

◀ Wenli Tseng (right in blue uniform) exchanges a high-five with a volunteer as they prepare to start the Tzu Chi Mobile Food Pantry operations for the day. *Photo: Michael Tseng*

Once she became involved, Wenli's nature of helping people quickly became apparent. She would help whenever she was asked and do whatever task people requested. Moreover, Wenli would do things well. She didn't think about the difficulty of whether she wanted to do the task, she just did whatever needed to be done. If she didn't know how to do it, she would learn. In this way, she soon found herself attracting many people; it seemed that everyone went to her when they needed assistance. Soon, she was invited to volunteer in Tzu Chi USA's Culture Development Department in San Dimas. From coming in once per week, to twice per week, to three times, then to full-time, Wenli just followed wherever the conditions led her. In 2004, they led her to become head of Tzu Chi USA's Culture Development Department.

Wenli's strengths, including her sharp intellect, also sometimes set her at odds with others. Through helping people, she developed strong relationships with them, but in giving feedback, she was also described by some as very direct in her speech. Wenli would be able to quickly point out the problems and issues she recognized in something, and at times,

some people would not know how to respond to it. Perhaps it was this disposition that Master Cheng Yen saw in her when she gave Wenli the Dharma name Tzu Pei, meaning, "compassion" and "admiration." Wenli remarked, "I think she gave me this name as a way to tell me that I need to recognize others for their good qualities, and that I need to respect everyone around me. I need to take everyone as a teacher and a role model to follow. This is the true meaning of my Dharma name."

In recognizing how her qualities are a source of strength but also a strong force for others to handle, Wenli has become better at working with people over time. After years of experience, she has developed her wisdom in understanding the dynamics of interactions with people, especially in an organization where there are often differences in opinion. She knows how to work with people to bring out the best in them and will not allow herself to be fazed by challenges. Wenli explained, "In order to stay in this organization, people need to be able to let go of a lot of things." Over time, Wenli has learned to listen first, and she strives to learn from those around her before offering her own opinion.



Wenli helps interview an attendee after the screening of the *On The Bodhisattva Path* film series. *Photo: Wesley Tsai*

Although still very direct, Wenli is not attached to her opinions. Wenli knows if something needs to be said, but once she says it, she does not have any expectations of others to go along with it. She explains, "I will be honest in stating what I think, but once I say it, I let it go."

Recalling the work she has done in Tzu Chi, Wenli is especially proud of the Great Treasury Sutra project, a project to set up a media archiving system for volunteer activities. This project is her legacy from the time she served as head of Tzu Chi USA's Culture Development Department. Through this framework, volunteers from across all nine regional offices of Tzu Chi USA can report and document volunteer activities through photos, videos, and articles. It was through this effort that Wenli reached out more than ever to create lasting personal and professional connections with people in Taiwan and across the United States. She met with Master De Chen and staff from Da Ai TV in Taiwan to learn from them. She also visited almost every Tzu Chi office, whether a regional chapter or a small service center, to meet with people, talk with them, and work with them. Even in 2019, over ten years later, people still remember Wenli and the time that she dedicated to teaching them. One of the volunteers, Shu Lin, expressed that because of Wenli, she and others were inspired us to become documentation volunteers, and they continue to write articles for Tzu Chi to this day. Wenli's close friends also describe how whenever she travels to Taiwan, her lunch and dinner schedule is completely full, as everyone wants to invite her to eat with them.

Once, Wenli explained to me how she is able to connect with so many people:

“What is a good connection? It is not necessarily seeking to be someone's best friend. To me, making a good connection doesn't mean you have to chat every day or connect every day, or even every month. But when there is something you need and you reach out to someone, that person will respond. This is what a good connection is to me. It comes from being easy to work with. You need to share what you have and give to others. You need to put your own time, effort, and energy to help. And you cannot expect anything in return. People do not want to be used by others. But if you help them and devote your time and energy, the connections you established with them will grow in their hearts. People will come to trust you because they know your abilities and that you will follow through with what you say. That trust is important. Your sincerity and trustworthiness are most important.”



No matter what event it is, Wenli is always ready to help out. Here, she carries a box of supplies during the 2019 Tzu Chi USA Walk in Los Angeles, California. Photo: Wesley Tsai

Over time, I have come to understand and appreciate Wenli and the disposition she has. I can see why people admire and rely on Wenli, and how she has cultivated strong relationships with others. And over time, even in the short span of three years, I have seen how she has softened, becoming a person who will often quietly listen, carefully consider the thoughts and feelings of others, and then offer input. Continuing her work at Tzu Chi USA's headquarters at San Dimas, Wenli has found her place in the organization that she has been part of for so long. Her days are long, and her life is busy. The last time I heard her in a conference call, it was 8 p.m. PST, and Wenli was still working in her office at Tzu Chi USA headquarters. But despite the busyness of her life as a volunteer, Wenli has gained a lot from

her experiences. She explained, "My life used to be narrow and limited, but joining Tzu Chi has opened many doors. Tzu Chi gave me a chance to learn, meet, connect with people, and in doing so, it has broadened my vision and aspirations in life." Wenli's next step is to serve as a volunteer lead, to provide support for volunteers on the ground. In doing so, she will continue to build connections, one person at a time. 🌿

Devin Makizuru has been volunteering in Tzu Chi since 2012. He worked as a teacher before becoming a staff with the Dharma as Water Development Department in Hawaii.



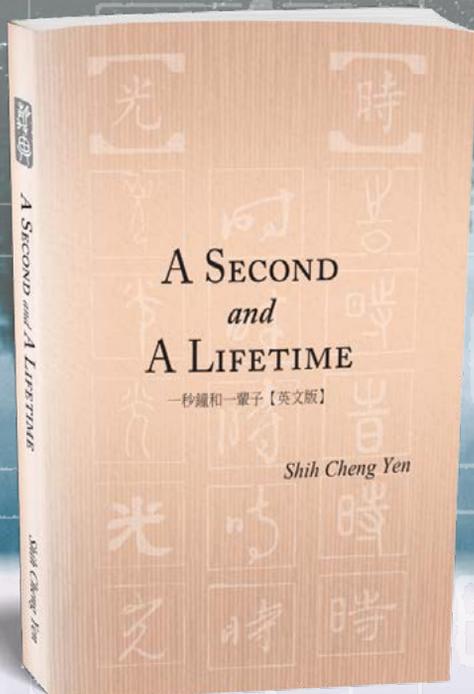
Due to her well-rounded skillset, Wenli often participates in organizing large-scale events and thus has the opportunity to make good connections with various public figures. Here, she meets Taiwanese actress Yang Kuei-mei. Photo: Wesley Tsai



靜思人文
JING SI CULTURE

A SECOND *and* A LIFETIME

一秒鐘和一輩子【英文版】



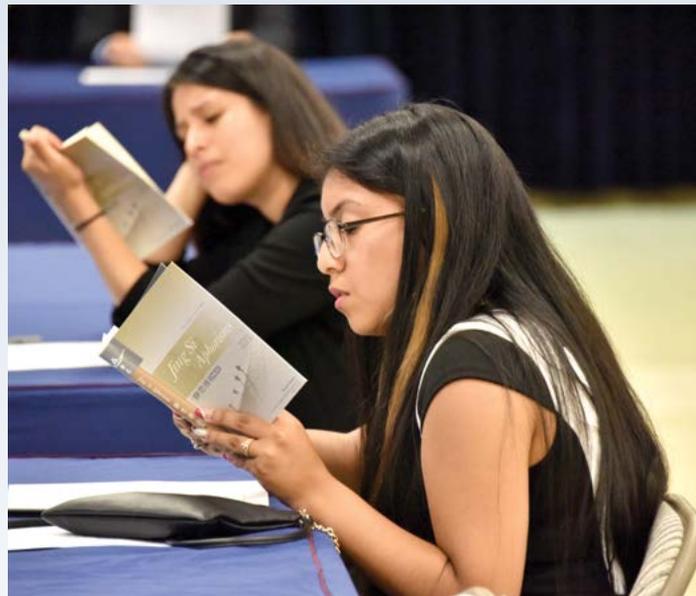
This book gathers many stories told by Master Cheng Yen that describe situations we may encounter in our daily life. These stories are also examples showing us how we can polish the most precious mirror of our minds so that we can all return to our pure, intrinsic nature.



Tzu Chi Central ▶
Region Office held
its ninth graduation
ceremony for the
Tzu Chi Great Love
Preschool and
Kindergarten on
June 7. The graduates
served tea to their
parents to show their
appreciation.
Photo: Shirley Wu



▲ For the first time, Tzu Chi volunteers from the Austin Service Center went into the public sphere to introduce Tzu Chi on June 29. Fangwen Huang (right) introduces the spirit of the bamboo bank to the store attendants. Photo: Li San Hor



▲ On June 8, Tzu Chi Mid-Atlantic Region Office held a scholarship ceremony for financially disadvantaged students. Here, scholarship recipients choose a Jing Si aphorism to share with everyone. Photo: YaoChong Hu



◀ On June 19, at a side event of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), Dino Foi from Mozambique (left) described how Tzu Chi volunteers helped disaster survivors in Mozambique recover, with the commitment of being the “first to arrive and last to leave.” Photo: Hannah Whisenant

On August 17, to celebrate Tzu Chi USA's 30th anniversary, Tzu Chi USA National Headquarters hosted the Steps for the Earth Walkathon at the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, in association with the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis. The event served as a call-to-action for people to join hands to love and protect the earth. Photo: Luo Shuli



▼ August 16-18, participants from across the United States gathered together in the Mid-Atlantic Region Office to attend the 2019 Tzu Chi USA Spiritual Retreat. During one of the sessions, senior volunteers and participants shared their experiences with each other. Photo: Wendy Tsai



▼ On July 14, Tzu Chi volunteers in New York City held a street cleaning event in Brooklyn to create a cleaner and better living environment for the community. Photo provided by: Tzu Chi Northeast Region Office



On August 4, Tzu Chi ► volunteers from the Pacific Islands Region held a hot meal distribution at the Institute of Human Services for the homeless. At the family shelter, volunteers prepared an activity at the arts and crafts table that was set up for the children who came. Photo: Nora Wang





◀ On June 30, volunteer Chen Qiongyao (first from the right) from Seattle holds the hand of Rosa, a 103-year-old senior, while singing songs and swaying with the music. While enjoying music in the moment together, they share smiles of joy. Photo: YeeJu Wu



▲ At the tornado relief outreach in Dayton, Ohio on June 29, Tzu Chi volunteers led everyone in sign language for the song, "One Family," to send their love and care to the disaster survivors. The disaster survivors responded warmly, sweeping away the shadow of the disaster. Photo: Kuang Lizhong



▲ On June 14, the Orange County Service Center hosted a medical outreach clinic in the city of Santa Ana. Around ninety percent of the attendees speak only Spanish. Tzu Chi collegiate volunteer, Dayana, who was originally from Mexico, used Spanish to introduce the spirit of Tzu Chi's bamboo banks to attendees. Photo: Victor Rocha Jr.

Gratitude, Respect, and Love

Lyrics: Shih De Yin | Music: Ji Haishan

Translation: Dharma As Water Team, Tzu Chi USA

*Cherishing our blessings, we give with gratitude
Cherishing ourselves, we pass on great love
With respect in our hearts, we make no distinctions
In a world of love, we are all as one*

*Fountains of thanks, streams of respect,
A boundless ocean of love,
It strengthens life so there's no sorrow*

*Fountains of thanks, streams of respect,
Open our arms, embrace the world with love*

Gratitude, respect, and love are three of the most important concepts in Tzu Chi volunteers' spiritual practice. When Tzu Chi volunteers give, they give with a bow of respect and a "Thank you!" to the recipient, before giving them a hug or an encouraging word. According to Tzu Chi's founder, Dharma Master Cheng Yen, by giving without expectations and keeping gratitude in our hearts, we bring value and lasting joy to our lives. When we see everyone as equal, without prejudice or distinctions between religion, ethnicity, or cultural or national background, we can embrace the entire world with love. 🌍

Music, like love, can form connections between people, no matter when or where. Tzu Chi volunteers will often sing Tzu Chi songs with people to bring hope and joy in troubled times. Please scan the QR code on this page to enjoy the music video for this song.





Guiding People through Skillful Means

As we walk the Bodhisattva-path, we must also reach out to others. But how can we inspire others to join us? In this story, Master Cheng Yen shares with us how guiding others requires skillful means and using our body, speech, and mind with wisdom.

Once, the Buddha led his disciples to the kingdom of Magadha. After receiving offerings from everyone there, they found a quiet place in the grove where they could eat. After everyone had finished eating, the Buddha began speaking to the group. “I have reasons for bringing us here at this time. The first reason is to promote the spirit of the Buddha-Dharma in the kingdom of Magadha. The second reason is to help the neighboring kingdom of Kashna.”

The Buddha explained, “The people of Kashna lack education; they constantly quarrel and fight and do not know the principles. We have come here to guide the people in Kashna.”

At this time, the Buddha’s disciple, Maudgalyayana, stepped forward and confidently said to the Buddha, “I believe that if I go, I will be able to guide them.” Maudgalyayana did not think it would be at all difficult to teach the people in Kashna. Thus, he set off.

When Maudgalyayana arrived in the kingdom of Kashna, he saw many scenes of

chaos. A man ran past him, clutching a chicken to his chest as he fled from a woman chasing him with a kitchen knife. Two naked young men rolled around in the dirt nearby, fighting violently. Everyone seemed to speak in loud voices and gesture rudely.

As Maudgalyayana walked through the city in a very dignified manner with a smile on his face, people’s eyes were drawn to him. The citizens of Kashna had never seen a person like him in their kingdom before. Out of curiosity, they began to follow him. When Maudgalyayana reached an open space, he turned around to greet everyone. Then, he spoke. “My goodness, you are all so rough and crude. You are doing this wrong, and you are doing that wrong.” In this way, he continued to point out their mistakes.

The longer the citizens of Kashna listened, the more people left. In the end, some of the more angry individuals surrounded him and began shoving him around, saying, “We’ve always lived like this! Why is it so wrong to



live this way?" They chased him out of the city and shut the city gates behind him.

Having encountered this setback, Maudgalyayana returned, utterly devastated. Sariputra, another senior disciple, came up to him and asked, "Maudgalyayana, why are you so dispirited? What happened to you in Kashna?" Maudgalyayana told Sariputra what had happened and how he had spoken to the people there. Sariputra said to him, "Maudgalyayana, do you think you can transform them this way? Your way simply does not work. I will go there myself."

Thus, Sariputra went to see the Buddha with Maudgalyayana. After Maudgalyayana told the Buddha about his journey, Sariputra said to the Buddha, "Venerable Buddha, I will go."

When Sariputra arrived in Kashna, he too witnessed many chaotic scenes. When the people saw Sariputra, they thought, "This person is like that guy from yesterday. What could he possibly want?" Again, they followed him. Sariputra then began to speak and said, "Human life is full of suffering. We must change our temperaments."

Once again, the people of Kashna became angry at Sariputra, and he faced the same result

as Maudgalyayana. When Sariputra returned and told the Buddha what had happened, the Buddha just shook his head.

The Buddha's closest disciples went, one after the other, and all returned with the same result. Finally, the Buddha said to them, "Now is the time for Manjusri Bodhisattva to go." Manjusri agreed to take on the Buddha's mission, and he set off for Kashna.

When Manjusri arrived at Kashna, he first encountered a fisherman. Manjusri began to praise him and remarked, "You are so skilled at fishing!" When he saw a hunter shooting his arrows, Manjusri praised the hunter as well. As he made his way around, he continued to praise people he encountered according to whatever trade they engaged in.

Manjusri finally met with the king and spoke with him. "Of all the kingdoms I have been to, your kingdom is the most courageous of them all. Everyone is an expert in their trade. This must be due to your brilliance as a leader. You really have a great way of leading them." Hearing Manjusri's admiration made the king very happy, and he replied, "To hear that my subjects are like this because of me

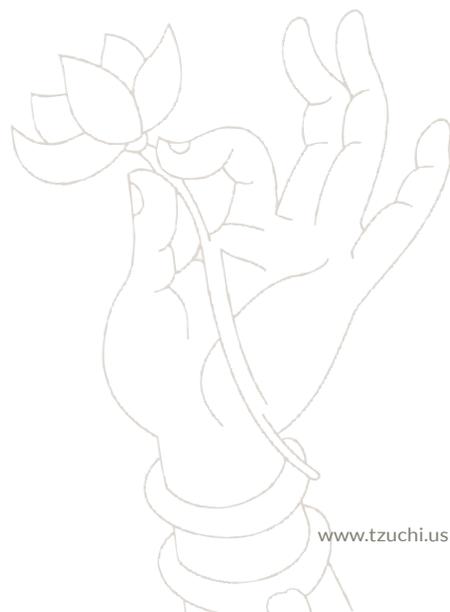
makes me so happy. Everyone, come listen to this person speak! He has so much to teach us. He has visited many other kingdoms. Let us listen to what he has to say!”

The people of Kashna all gathered together, and Manjusri shared with them many of the things he had seen and heard during his travels. He never mentioned discipline or rules; he only spoke of how earnest, successful, and hardworking people were and how they had been able to improve their own lives. They listened to Manjusri, then praised him and made offerings to him. Manjusri then told them, “You should make offerings to my master.”

Manjusri told them about Sakyamuni Buddha’s story, from his lavish life in Kapilavastu to how he engaged in spiritual practice and attained Buddhahood, and how he had taught so many people and won the admiration of so many kings and ministers. After hearing him, everyone in Kashna yearned to see the Buddha. They implored Manjusri, “Take us to meet the Buddha!” Manjusri then led the king, his ministers, and the people of the kingdom to see the Buddha. He had completed his mission.

When the Buddha began to teach, everyone listened to the Dharma he expounded, and they came to faithfully accept and practice it. Once he had taught the people that had come to see him, he went to the kingdom of Kashna to inspire all the people there. In the kingdom of Kashna, the Buddha-Dharma spread far and wide, flourishing throughout the country.

In our daily lives, if we aspire to help others, we also need to use skillful means. Only by using gentle and loving speech can we help everyone attain peace and joy and bring benefit to everyone. Then, eventually, our whole society will be able to live in harmony. 🌿



Jew's Mallow Cake

Text by Nora Wang | Photos by Cynthia Chi

"The four treasures in life are: sleep soundly, eat happily, laugh joyfully, and work healthily."

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Did you know that Jing Si products include soaps, teas, and grain powders? The nuns at the Jing Si Abode in Taiwan are the ones making these organic and natural products. Jing Si nuns carry a tradition of being self-sustaining, never asking for offerings from the public. The products are grown, harvested and made with love. "These teas, soaps, and powdered foods are not merchandise," says Jingyi Lee, the head of Jing Si Culture in Tzu Chi USA. "We are not in the business of making money. What's most important is that we can spread good messages and kindness to other people through these items."

As Tzu Chi USA celebrates its 30th anniversary, here is a vegan cake that is both delicious and eye-catching. This cake recipe calls for the use of Jew's Mallow powder. Jew's Mallow from our Jing Si shop is organically grown and harvested by the nuns at the Jing Si Abode in Taiwan. Also known as Egyptian Spinach, Jute Mallow, or molokhia, Jew's Mallow is a nutritious leafy vegetable high in antioxidants, vitamin C, calcium, and potassium. With a slightly bitter taste, Jew's Mallow is used commonly in Egyptian dishes. Rumor has it that Jew's Mallow is the secret superfood that enabled Cleopatra to maintain her beauty and youthful looks. 🌿

Nora Wang is a Tzu Ching alumnus who joined Tzu Chi in 1999. She is a vegan and dog lover. In her spare time, she enjoys volunteering with Tzu Ching and finds baking and cooking to be very therapeutic.



Jew's Mallow Cake Recipe

Yield: 6" cake, 8 servings

Total time: ~45 minutes + cooling time

Ingredients:

For Cake:

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons Jew's Mallow powder
- 3/4 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 3 tablespoons applesauce
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 6 tablespoons melted coconut oil

For Decorating:

- 2 cans chilled coconut milk
- 1/4 cups powdered sugar
- tapioca starch (if needed)
- mixed berries

Jew's Mallow Cake

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Place all dry ingredients together in a bowl and set aside.
3. Place all wet ingredients, except melted coconut oil, in a large mixing bowl and mix until incorporated.
4. Slowly add the dry ingredients into the wet mixture.
5. Add in melted coconut oil and incorporate.
6. Grease a 6" cake ring with coconut oil and pour cake mixture into the cake ring.
7. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes.
8. Remove from the oven. Test by inserting a toothpick into the center of the cake. If it comes out clean then your cake is done. If not, bake for another 5 minutes and test again.
9. Let the cake cool completely before frosting.

Coconut Whipped Cream

1. Place 2 cans of coconut milk in refrigerator overnight.
2. Place metal mixing bowl and beaters in the freezer for at least 20 min.
3. Carefully open the cans of coconut milk without shaking and scoop the cream solids from the top of the can into the cold mixing bowl.
4. Beat the coconut cream until stiff peaks form. *If needed, add 2 tablespoons tapioca starch to help thicken the cream.*
5. Add powdered sugar and beat until smooth.
6. Frost the cake with coconut cream and top with fresh mixed berries.



From June 25 to ▶
June 27, the Tzu Chi
Great Love Hospital
in Indonesia was
evaluated by the
Hospital Accreditation
Board and earned a
five-star rating. Hospital
Superintendent Dr.
Tonny Christianto (third
from the left) shared
this honor with his staff.
Photo provided by:
Tzu Chi Indonesia



▲ On July 20, thirty Tzu Chi volunteers and city staff went to the East Tamaki Reserve in Auckland, New Zealand, for a tree planting event. Together, they planted 500 small saplings and 20 large saplings into predetermined spots. Photo: Zhang Yuancong



▲ On July 10, a team of environmental protection presenters traveled to Tzu Chi's Changfeng Service Center in Shanghai, China, to network and exchange ideas with volunteers there. Volunteer Chen Zhelin explains the poster on environmental protection and shares about recycling. Photo: Yang Jian

▼ On July 13, Zimbabwe Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to Hatfield to hold a material distribution event, distributing rice and soap from Taiwan. The local residents were excited to receive the materials. Photo: Hlengisile Jiyane



▼ Tzu Chi Singapore held a Happy Parent-Children class on June 23. Parents and their children visited Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve to learn the importance of protecting the environment. Photo: Li Fumin



◀ On July 1, Master De Rang and Master De Ge, from the Jing Si Abode, arrived at the Tzu Chi Kedah Branch Office in Malaysia. They visited the Jing Si Hall, the Jing Si Bookstore, and the Dialysis Center. They also used the opportunity to meet with the Tzu Chi volunteers, sending Master Cheng Yen's blessings. Photo: You Jingbei

On July 6, the alumni ▶
of the Da Ai Kindergarten
in Penang, Malaysia,
held the second annual
parent-child sports
competition for the
humanistic culture class
in hopes of increasing
the interactions children
have with their parents.
Photo: Wang Ronghai



▲ On July 6, Tzu Chi Primary School in Tijuana, Mexico, held a graduation ceremony. Tzu Chi USA volunteers happily came to the ceremony to celebrate and gave out gifts and blessings to the graduates for the next steps in their journey.
Photo: Jaime Puerta



◀ On July 14, Richmond Tzu Chi volunteers went to clean up Minoru Park, which they had adopted. The many leisurely activities and gatherings taking place in the park during the summer months left behind significant amounts of trash at the rest areas. Tzu Chi volunteers helped the city clean up the park and used this opportunity to raise awareness on waste reduction. Photo: Guo Liangjun



▲ The Tzu Chi Clinic of Traditional Chinese Medicine and TIMA Canada volunteers worked together to hold a Sanfutie medical clinic at Cham Shan Temple. They provided Sanfutie patch treatment and traditional Chinese medicine treatment to improve symptoms of chronic illnesses and allergies. Photo: Zeng Weiyuan



▲ Tzu Chi volunteers in Guatemala have been providing long-term care for low income families and students in San Jose Pinula. In order to recruit more new volunteers, current volunteers prepared a one-day retreat. Here, the participants practice sign language. Photo: Peggy Chiu

A common sight in the audio-visual control room, Kevin Chang and his team of AV volunteers are on standby for any stage changes. Photo: Emerald Hsu



Enrichment through Giving

by Allen Chung

We enrich our lives by helping others. We grow our wisdom-life by attaining realizations.

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

“Brother Kevin, the presenter for the next class needs to use his own computer. Can you set it up?”

“Brother Kevin, I need to go over the rundown with you for this afternoon.”

“Brother Kevin, the outdoor speaker isn’t working. Can you go take a look?”

Facing a series of questions from the volunteers seeking help, Kevin Chang kept his smile and told them, “Okay, one thing at a time. Just give me a few minutes.”

Since I first began helping out in the AV control room with my mom, Kevin has been there almost every time. Usually, if he’s not in the AV control room, he’s running around Gratitude Hall with spare microphones in hand or a computer for speakers to use at the podium. Occasionally, I’d find him manning one of the cameras somewhere in Gratitude Hall pointing it at the enthusiastic speaker on stage or at an unsuspecting audience absorbed in the story that the speaker is sharing. During big, full-day events, I’d often find him disappearing for an hour or two, coming back with his two kids and then hopping right back on his post after settling the kids down. Seeing him so dedicated to all the work that he does, I can’t help but wonder to

myself, “What keeps him going and inspires him to do so much?” Recently, I had the chance to have a conversation with him, and I was finally able to catch a glimpse of his motivation and his volunteer journey with Tzu Chi.

Kevin has found great meaning in volunteering since his college days. Back then, he was involved in a service organization that works with children with disabilities, and he even went on to become the vice president of the club. “It always makes me happy to help others,” said Kevin. Naturally, this desire to help others extends beyond just his service organization, and he’s always happy to lend a hand to his family and friends. “But I felt that in the past, I always had some kind of expectation when I did things for others,” he said.

“When I first joined Tzu Chi in 2008, it was during the global financial crisis; my sister was having some financial difficulties, and I was helping her out. So, at that time, I thought that perhaps by doing good, I could earn some merits for myself and my sister.” But unfortunately, nothing really worked out the way he had hoped. He fell into debt himself, and his sister got sick and eventually passed away. While mourning for his sister’s passing, he also realized that he shouldn’t really do good for the sake of gaining merits. “Doing good is part of our responsibility as people. The more we seek, the more we may lose. However, when we don’t have such intentions, then we start gaining much more,” said Kevin.

In fact, he did gain something that he was not expecting by joining Tzu Chi. Initially, he was drawn to the organization by his experience when he first attended the Buddha Bathing Ceremony in 2008. But it wasn’t until later that he came to realize the dedication of the volunteers and the true impact volunteers have on those in need.

In November 2008, he took part in the distribution efforts after the Sylmar Fire and saw the volunteers in action. The distribution he participated in took place on a weekday. Being an IT consultant, he had quite a lot of flexibility with his work time and was thus able to come and participate. When Kevin saw another volunteer he knew that had to work on weekdays, he asked, “Hey, do you not have to work today?” To his surprise, the volunteer replied, “Oh, I do, but I had some time-off, so I just took today off to come and help.”

In the past, Kevin had heard about how Tzu Chi volunteers are not paid and would spend their own time and money to volunteer, but it was this conversation and distribution experience that made him realize how true it was. There were many volunteers there who used their own time and money and drove their own cars for an hour to go to the distribution site. Some of the volunteers even prepared food at home to bring over and share with the other volunteers so they didn’t have to rely on other organization to provide food for them. “Only then did I really see how volunteers dedicated themselves to provide comfort and relief for people,” said Kevin. “When the people there received the blankets and cash



▲ Kevin can often be seen with his wife and two sons at all kinds of Tzu Chi events. *Photo provided by: Kevin Chang*

cards, they cried because they really had nothing left. In addition to material things, we also gave them spiritual support,” he recalled.

In addition to seeing volunteers in action, Kevin also saw how the affectees were touched by the distribution experience. “During the distribution, we also explained to them the story of our bamboo bank. People went back with bamboo banks, and they actually went around the stores in the area to share the story and collected money in them. Since we were at the distribution site for several days, some showed up a few days later with filled bamboo banks ready to donate to us.” The dedication of volunteers to help those in need and the way that the cycle of love was passed on really resonated with Kevin. This was when Kevin began to understand the meaning behind Master Cheng Yen’s Jing Si Aphorism, “We enrich our lives by helping others. We grow our wisdom-life by attaining realizations.” He realized

that the more he did to help others, the more opportunities he had to grow his wisdom. From that point on, he became even more committed in his involvement with Tzu Chi.

Since then, Kevin has taken on many different roles, with a major focus on audio-visual control. Much like how he found his interest in volunteering during his college days, his knack for AV control also traces back to those days when he would help out at different concerts and performances at school.

“I’m very glad that after so many years, I am able to turn this hobby of mine into a semi-profession,” he said with a laugh. But despite his lightheartedness, he was not joking when he said that AV control is a “semi-profession” for him. During the time when Gratitude Hall was undergoing major equipment upgrades, Kevin was spending about two to three days a week there working with the equipment providers to do installation and testing. He was there so often that some volunteers and Tzu Chi staff even asked if he was working for Tzu Chi. “I’m just a volunteer,” he clarifies. “My customers happen to be very understanding and have no problem with me helping them remotely on the phone or waiting for me to go over after I am finished at Tzu Chi. I’m very grateful to them for understanding that I am doing good for others.”

Over the years, Kevin has dedicated himself to training new volunteers for the AV team while striving to make technology easier for people to use and lowering the learning curve. He admits that during activities, the AV team is the least noticeable and are always in a dark room, but he always reminds everyone, “Although we may not be the star in an event, we are a key group of people to make sure things will go smoothly. Without us, there will be no light in the event at all, literally.” He also often shares with the AV



Kevin concentrating on capturing the finest moments of the event for everyone to remember. *Photo: Wesley Tsai*



Aside from AV-related work at Headquarters, Kevin also actively participates in community events. Here he works at the registration station at a medical outreach in San Bernadino, California. Photo: Victor Rocha Jr.

team volunteers that it is actually quite a nice thing to work in the AV room, despite often being the “forgotten group.” “You get to learn about Tzu Chi’s missions because you are in all kinds of classes and activities, and you get to interact with volunteers and speakers with a wealth of experience.”

Having learned a great deal from his own volunteering experience, Kevin very much hopes that the volunteers he works with will learn a lot as well. In addition to being present with them every step of the way as they navigate their way through learning the complicated-looking equipment, he also always reminds them the importance of learning the Dharma while they work in different events. “The Dharma is not about how much stuff you do. It is about growing in wisdom through doing good. When we have the Dharma as our foundation, we can walk on the Bodhisattva-path for a long time.” After Kevin has worked with the other AV volunteers in this way for a few years, they have become very capable in handling events on their own whenever Kevin is away or needs to work on something else. Furthermore, they have become

very dedicated in their work with the AV team and in Tzu Chi, continuing together on this journey on the Bodhisattva-path.

For Kevin, volunteering for different Tzu Chi projects has become a part of his life. But more importantly, the wisdom and experience he gained from these activities have allowed him to continue on his path. They have inspired him to help guide and encourage others to walk on the Bodhisattva-path as well. In this way, not only has he brought enrichment to his own life, but he has also continued this cycle of inspiring others to grow their own wisdom and help even more people. 🙏

Allen Chung is a Tzu Ching alumnus who graduated from UCLA in 2016 and currently works as a senior editor in the Dharma As Water Development Department in Honolulu, Hawaii. Having been involved in Tzu Chi for eight years, he has had the opportunity to get to know and work with many volunteers and always enjoys hearing their stories and experiences.



Jean Hsu (left) discusses how to set up a window display to promote Tzu Chi at the Clear Lake City-County Freeman Branch Library in Houston, Texas. Photo: Jong Wu

A person is seen from the side, wearing a dark blue shirt, reading a book. The background is a blurred library or study area with bookshelves and a window. The title 'A Deep-Rooted Affinity Blossoms' is overlaid in a large, blue, serif font.

A Deep-Rooted Affinity Blossoms

by Allan Tian

*It is never too late for a deep-rooted affinity to blossom.
Do not worry over a distant journey as long as you find the way.*

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

It was 1994 when Jean attended her first Tzu Chi event, a summer camp in Taiwan. Before then, Jean had heard about Tzu Chi from her parents, but she had not participated in any Tzu Chi activities. At that time, Jean was sent to attend on her mother's volition. She recalls, "I had no clue what I was going to do there I just went."

Unexpectedly, the experience of attending the summer camp left a deep impression on her, deep enough to lead her to become a lifelong Tzu Chi volunteer. The camp, a week-long event at the Jing Si Abode, was similar to many others, with the intense daily schedule that began with the morning call at 3:50 a.m. Along with the other camp attendees, Jean helped the monastics sweep the floors and clean the restrooms around the Abode until breakfast. The attendees then continued with a full day of volunteering at the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, where they shadowed experienced volunteers to conduct case visits, providing comfort and support to those in need of care. After having dinner, the attendees finally returned to the Abode and listened to Master Cheng Yen's Dharma talks before bedtime.

Although Jean came to the camp without any expectations, she left feeling a strong connection to the lifestyle and daily habits of serving others. In addition, the teachings from Master Cheng Yen's Dharma talks were deeply meaningful to her, and after the camp, she purchased two volumes of Master Cheng Yen's *Jing Si Aphorisms*, books that are still close to her heart.

A Sprouting Seed

Upon returning to Canada, Jean wanted to continue volunteering with Tzu Chi, but found it difficult to find and connect with anyone

from Tzu Chi. At that time, before the internet, people, places, and things seemed much farther away. Although she was unable to find any Tzu Chi volunteers near her, Jean would search for Tzu Chi throughout college, even occasionally doing Tzu Chi work by herself. Her Tzu Chi spirit continued to live on, even without a close community to support it. After completing her Ph.D., Jean moved to Houston, Texas, to do her post doc fellowship in 2006. Finally, the conditions were right, and she made her way to the Tzu Chi USA Southern Region Office in Houston. Jean was able to attend her first event there in the summer of 2007, thirteen years after her first encounter with Tzu Chi.

"I still remember it was a chanting ceremony on a Sunday!" said Jean excitedly, as if reliving the moment when she reconnected with Tzu Chi again. Even after being unable to serve with

Jean working together with media volunteers to produce reports on the successful 2019 TIMA Global Forum.
Photo: Dennis Lee (left), Victor Rocha Jr. (below)



other Tzu Chi volunteers for so long, she was overjoyed to find that she could still follow along with the chants and activities; everything felt familiar to her, and she had found a place where she belonged. From that point on, Jean came regularly to the office to volunteer.

When asked, “Why did you come back to Tzu Chi?” she replies, “The seed of Tzu Chi was planted in my heart. Research and school are a lot of work, but these things are not all that life is. The opportunity to volunteer in Tzu Chi is what I was looking for. It empowers me. If I’m not at work, I am here at the Tzu Chi office. Tzu Chi is my Dharma-family. I may be by myself in the US, but the Tzu Chi volunteers here are my family.”

Learning through Volunteering

Jean became an avid volunteer at the Southern Region office and was certified as a Tzu Chi commissioner in 2010. In 2011, the Houston office was looking for someone to manage the Jing Si Bookstore. This was a huge task that required a serious commitment of time and effort, and it required skills in handling a wide array of different tasks such as doing inventory, compiling sales reports from all locations in the Southern Region, and arranging shift schedules for the Houston bookstore. The office had hoped to find a full-time volunteer to take on the duty, but soon, they realized that most of the volunteers weren’t able to work with the necessary technology. Jean, who felt she could handle it, willingly stepped into the role of managing the bookstore.

Since that time, Jean has continued to serve in that role as bookstore manager. Due to her job outside of Tzu Chi, she is present at the store only on weekends, yet she is able to manage



Jean proudly standing next to the booth she helped set up during a Jing Si product promotion event.
Photo: Wang Xiuzhen

logistics remotely while finding and recruiting volunteers to operate the store onsite. Though it has been difficult at times, Jean feels like she’s learned a lot from the experience. “I don’t have a financial background,” Jean explained. However, Jean takes care of the quarterly reports and all other financial duties for the bookstore, and she is supported by other volunteers.

“This role has taught me how to deal with people. It helps me at work too, since I have to deal with lab technicians, patients, volunteers, nursing staff, and so on. Through Tzu Chi, I’ve learned how to work with people of different backgrounds with respect, and how to work together as a team instead of just giving out orders.” Apart from the challenges of managing the store, Jean has also persevered through difficulties with other kinds of volunteer work. “At volunteer camps, for example, there are a lot



Jean (far right) and fellow Jing Si Bookstore volunteers take a group photo with Taiwanese actor Eli Shih, who was visiting to help promote Jing Si products. Photo: Shin Chen

of curveballs where you have to quickly resolve the issues. I can apply all these skills at work and in life,” Jean explained.

Sowing New Seeds

This year, Jean was nominated to be Deputy Director for the Tzu Chi USA Southern Region. She hesitated on taking on the role. “I feel too young, I feel like I’m still learning.” Yet Jean stepped up again to take on the responsibilities of leadership because she has come to recognize the importance of having younger individuals play a more active role in Tzu Chi. Jean hopes that through serving, she can inspire a new generation of young people to become more deeply involved and engaged in the work of the organization. “As Master Cheng Yen said, ‘Life is most fulfilling when we are able to do our best to help others at every moment.’ I really hope that everyone can seize their lives to do good.”

From being a solitary volunteer for thirteen years, to Deputy Director of a regional office, Jean has been through a long journey, yet her story in Tzu Chi is just beginning. Now in a position

of leadership, Jean hopes to branch out so that Tzu Chi USA will be able to reach more people in need. To do this, she feels that Tzu Chi USA must connect with mainstream American society. Many Tzu Chi volunteers hope that the younger generation who grew up in American society will be the ones to bridge the generation and cultural gap. Jean is a part of that younger generation who hopes to connect to the emerging generation of volunteers. She hopes that more people will have an opportunity to truly understand Tzu Chi’s philosophy and Master Cheng Yen’s teachings, and see how that wisdom can be applied in daily life. Reflecting on her own experience over the past years, Jean explains, “Even if someone only comes into contact with Tzu Chi as a child, perhaps in the future that person will come back to Tzu Chi. We must plant those seeds in people’s hearts and help them to grow.” 🌱

Allan Tian is a Tzu Ching at Texas A&M University. He is pursuing a Master’s degree in Visualization. In his free time, he volunteers, and he hopes to inspire more people to join Tzu Chi.



*It is never too late for
a deep-rooted affinity to blossom.*

*Do not worry over a distant
journey as long as you find the way.*

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

A HAPPY VOLUNTEER

by Stephanie Shao

*A life may be long or short,
but virtuous deeds carried out with genuine sincerity
create beautiful melodies of life.*

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

May 12, 2018, 8:06 PM

ding ding A text appears on my phone screen. Message from Kevin Chiang: “We still on for 8:30?” I pull into the parking lot of our regional office in Reston, Virginia, park, then pick up my phone to reply. “Yep!” I shoot back. It’s Friday night; the night before Greater Washington D.C. Region’s 2018 Buddha Bathing Ceremony. I’ve come to the office tonight to rehearse for the event. Several nights earlier, I reached out to Kevin, who graciously agreed to come help. The sky has already darkened as I walk into the office. The lights are off. Our office volunteers have already returned home for the day.

I flick on the lights and walk downstairs to the main lecture hall. Shortly after I set up, Kevin appears. He turns on the projector and pulls up my slides. We go through the flow several times together before he takes a seat in the audience. Nerves begin to creep over me as I read through my lines. But every time I anxiously look up, Kevin’s face is warm and bright. It’s nice to see an encouraging face at the back of the room. Rehearsal that evening lasts for several hours. By the time we leave, it’s nearly midnight. Though I’m still anxious for the big day, Kevin’s presence



Kevin Chiang (right) with Stephanie (middle) and her mom (left) after a successful 2018 Buddha Bathing Ceremony at the Greater Washington D.C. Region office in Reston, Virginia. Photo: Wendy Tsai

has reassured me. As always, I am incredibly grateful for his unfaltering support.

I’ve known Kevin for five years now. Kevin is originally from Los Angeles, but relocated to the Washington Metropolitan area for work. In the course of several years, he has become an indispensable asset to the Greater Washington D.C. Tzu Chi family. Straightforward and honest, diligent but unassuming, Kevin will always speak his mind to ensure things are conducted effectively and efficiently.

When you ask Kevin who his greatest inspiration is, he will undoubtedly refer to his mother. As a single parent, Kevin’s mother balanced three jobs while caring for Kevin and his older sister. At the time, they had just moved to the United States and were making a life of their own. Though her time was limited, Kevin’s mother remained a devoted Tzu Chi volunteer. When she could visit the office, she always spent

time preparing food for volunteers as a means to exhibit her gratitude. As a result, Kevin and his older sister grew accustomed to attending various local volunteer activities alongside their mother. Tea parties, sign language classes, and recycling activities all became part of their everyday life.

For many years, this was the extent of Kevin's involvement with Tzu Chi—accompanying his mother to the office, and helping out wherever there was a need. Over time, he became a recognizable face at his local office. So when Tzu Chi USA Headquarters opened the Tzu Chi Academy in San Dimas in 2006, Kevin was recruited to teach Kung Fu as an extracurricular activity. At first, Kevin adamantly refused. However, when the Academy was pressed for a teacher, he reluctantly agreed. Kevin recalls, "Little did I know this turned out to be one of the hardest challenges of my life. At this point I had been practicing Kung Fu for five to six years, but I had no experience as a teacher. Even as a teacher's assistant, I never had more than five students under my care. All of a sudden, I was responsible for teaching twenty-four kids

between five to fourteen years old, with only two weeks to prepare." Daunting as it was, this experience instilled confidence in Kevin that would give him the courage to overcome future challenges.

Throughout our lifetime, we are shaped not only by the experiences we encounter, but also by the people we meet. What has touched Kevin the most throughout his journey in Tzu Chi is the kindness exhibited by those around him. Though he has not always believed in himself, he has always felt that those around him believed in him. When Kevin was initially recruited as a Kung Fu teacher, he had no teaching experience. Because of this, he was reluctant to accept the position. Kevin explained, "These complete strangers had such a positive outlook on me. At first I didn't believe it, but it became something good to hear. It felt genuine. They want to see you do well and believe that you can." This encouragement from other volunteers not only led Kevin to eventually accept the teaching position, but also begin volunteer training and become a Faith Corps member. After moving to the Washington metropolitan area,



Kevin visiting his mother's (left) night market booth during the 2018 US Tzu Chi Collegiate Association Leadership Conference in San Dimas, California. Photo provided by: Jolin Chang

Kevin worked closely with local volunteers on a number of projects. He was later nominated by local volunteers to lead the hospitality team for 2017 US Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA) Leadership Conference, held in Washington, D.C. Soon after, he was recruited to be the coordination lead for Tzu Chi USA's 2018 and 2019 Spiritual Retreats. Kevin has undoubtedly grown through each of these experiences. While challenging, he has approached each opportunity with an open mindset. He shares, "All these aunties and uncles have brought so much positivity into my life that I can't help but be grateful for their compassion and faith in me. I can be stubborn, but their faith in me inspires me to be better."

Years ago, Kevin was simply a young boy who accompanied his mother in her volunteer work with Tzu Chi. However, as Kevin became more involved, his affinity with Tzu Chi deepened, and over time, it has become a part of his identity. Many years have passed, and Kevin has paved his own path in Tzu Chi. With every step forward, he

has become more resolute in his mission as a Tzu Chi volunteer. Inspired by his mom's genuine joy in giving and the kindness he has received from volunteers along his journey, Kevin now hopes to pay this love forward. He hopes to make a positive impact on others around him, including his fellow volunteers.

As Tzu Chi USA celebrates its 30th anniversary, Kevin emphasizes the importance of accompanying the younger generation. He explains,

"I am constantly inspired by the creativity of younger folks. It's cool to see them become more involved."

Kevin points to his own experiences, noting, "Young people should have more chances to experience success and failure. I haven't always succeeded, but I have learned a lot through each of my experiences." Though he may not realize it, Kevin has consistently served as a source of encouragement and support to young volunteers around him. Back in 2017, several of Kevin's previous Kung Fu students, now collegiate volunteers (Tzu Ching), attended the TCCA Leadership Conference hosted in Washington, D.C. Upon seeing Kevin, the students enthusiastically greeted him by reciting the first aphorism they learned from him many years ago: "Treat others the way one would like others to treat oneself." Similar to these students, I also feel grateful to know Kevin and to have learned from him. He encourages me to trust myself and believe in my own potential, regardless of how challenging a situation may be.

Kevin has certainly accumulated a multitude of experiences along his Tzu Chi journey. When asked about his fondest memory, Kevin shares, "When Tzu Chi bought the San Dimas campus years ago, the land had been vacant for a very

◀ Kevin gives a sharing on how he practices the Dharma in his daily life at the 2018 US Tzu Chi Collegiate Association Leadership Conference, hoping to inspire more young leaders to learn the Dharma. *Photo: Pohan Chen*





Kevin discussing check-in details with Wendy Wu for the 2019 Tzu Chi USA Spiritual Retreat in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. Photo: Wendy Tsai



◀ Despite being busy during retreat, Kevin remembers to have fun and destress by being silly. Photo: Alex King

long time. At that time, nothing was set up yet; not even the kitchen. Volunteers gathered every day and worked tirelessly to help clean up the property. Whether it was watering the grass or patrolling the campus, every person had a role to fill. One day at lunch, the head of culinary set up an outdoor propane stove and cooked up delicious freshly made noodles for volunteers to eat. Everyone sat outside together, eating these noodles, sweating up a storm. It was the best meal I have ever had.” Though this moment may seem insignificant, these are the kinds of memories that Kevin cherishes most. He explains, “Being able to step into a position of leadership is nice because it allows you to affect change. But

I don’t want or need any titles or recognition. What I love most is being able to experience the small moments; the human moments.” Kevin has certainly come a long way from his early days as a young volunteer. Throughout his journey, he has met many volunteers who have exhibited sincere faith in him, which have presented him opportunities for growth and learning. Moving forward, Kevin hopes to continue working with others to do virtuous deeds. Above all else, what Kevin treasures most are the moments that he can share with others, moments where he can simply be a happy volunteer. 🌿

Stephanie is a Tzu Ching alumnus from the Greater Washington, D.C. area. She recently completed Commissioner training and will become a certified volunteer later this year.



From Community Partners to Family

by Vivian Wang

A fulfilling life is not preoccupied with material objects, prestige, or power. It is a life that is filled with true friendships, sharing, and caring for each other.

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

On a warm July afternoon, an elderly Taiwanese couple waves enthusiastically at a man stepping out of his car in the parking lot of the Tzu Chi Central Region Office. Seeing them, the African-American gentleman in his 40s returns their greeting with the same enthusiasm. “Hi Mom! Hi Dad! How are you guys?” He walks over and gives them a warm embrace.

At lunch, the man tries the food in front of him, and the couple urges him to eat more, filling his plate with his favorite dishes. “I can’t stand cabbage unless it’s in coleslaw,” he says, as the couple load up his plate with “Chinese-style” coleslaw and the rest of his favorite dishes. After a few more bites of his food, the younger man seems to remember something and pulls up photos from his recent family vacation on his phone. “They are getting so tall!” the Taiwanese woman exclaims, marveling over the photos of his children. Beside her, her husband vigorously nods his head in agreement.

This is the relationship between Tzu Chi volunteers Mei Hwa and Yuanliang Ling, and Nakia Douglas, the executive director of TRIO and Precollegiate Programs at the University of North Texas at Dallas. This relationship, built on gratitude, respect, and love, started almost two decades ago, in 2002. It all began when Tzu Chi Dallas was taking the first steps in developing its character education program within the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD).

At that time, Tzu Chi Dallas was making its first forays into education through its Mission of Charity. Working with Dallas ISD to identify schools in need, Tzu Chi volunteers visited schools one by one to provide students with school uniforms, school supplies, and health checkups. Volunteers let principals and teachers know that Tzu Chi was ready to help at any time. One of the very first schools that Mei Hwa worked with was Maynard Jackson Elementary School, with its newly appointed principal, Nakia Douglas.

Recalling their first encounter, Mei Hwa laughs, “Back then Nakia wasn’t even married yet! His hair was all black!” From their first visit

◀ Mei Hwa Ling (second from left), Yuanliang Ling (far right) and Nakia Douglas' family support Nakia (middle) as he is awarded the 2016 Luminary Award at the SMU's Umphrey Lee Center in Dallas, Texas. *Photo provided by: Nakia Douglas*



▲ Yuanliang is welcomed by Maynard Elementary School and exchanges a bow of respect with one of the students. *Photo provided by: Tzu Chi Central Region*

with the students, Mei Hwa and Yuanliang knew that they had found a great school to work with. Mei Hwa recalled, “They made us a huge welcome banner which was really heartwarming.”

After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, an influx of refugees from New Orleans arrived in Dallas, and a wave of new students arrived in Dallas ISD. This brought renewed opportunities for Tzu Chi to expand its Mission of Education and its Mission of Charity. Maynard Jackson Elementary School was transformed into Maynard Jackson Middle School to support the burgeoning student population, and thus, Nakia Douglas went from being an elementary school principal to a middle school principal overnight. Mei Hwa and other Tzu Chi volunteers continued to regularly visit the school to provide uniforms, school supplies, and health services like dental exams and annual physicals. By the time Nakia was given the opportunity to be the founding principal of the Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy (BOMLA), he had spent several years working with Mei Hwa and Yuanliang.

In 2010, Nakia sent an email to Yuanliang to tell him about the new school, inviting Tzu Chi to become a board member of BOMLA and asking

for advice on how to nurture true global leaders. As part of his plan for the leadership academy, he wanted to make sure that he instilled the values of dignity and community in his students. In response, Mei Hwa and Yuanliang proposed to set up Tzu Chi's character education program at BOMLA. Mei Hwa recalls starting the character education program at BOMLA with Nakia, holding workshops with the teachers and using Jing Si Aphorisms to express the concepts and integrate the teachings into the daily curriculum. Nakia even asked Tzu Chi to give a presentation to the faculty and staff before the school opened to help the teachers learn about the main principles taught through the character education program. To Nakia, when the principal has trust for an outside group and the teachers have trust for the principal, they can overcome many difficulties.

From lessons on self-control to lessons on trust, the core teachings of the character education program emphasized developing upstanding, trustworthy students. Nakia and his team even refused to have metal detectors installed at the school entrance, breaking years of long-standing district policy, in order to show faith in the students. “I will trust you as long as you allow us to trust you,” Nakia explained to the students. To this day, BOMLA still does not use metal detectors at the school entrance.

Mei Hwa and Yuanliang brought Nakia and a small group of students back to the Jing Si Abode in Hualien, Taiwan, to meet Dharma Master Cheng Yen, whose teachings they had been following. Mei Hwa laughs as she recalls a story about the train ride from Taipei City to Hualien. “I told them to rest, and when I opened my eyes, they all crowded over and wanted to show me the sign language they practiced!” The students told her they wanted to practice sign language to show Master Cheng Yen because they knew it was an important part of Tzu Chi's humanistic culture.

“They didn’t understand all the Mandarin lyrics, but they still practiced.” Mei Hwa and Nakia both recalled his first time meeting Master Cheng Yen in 2012. Usually well-spoken and eloquent, Nakia found himself at a loss for words. Later, Nakia told Mei Hwa that Master Cheng Yen has the ability to impact the world with her soft-spoken words.

With so many shared experiences, the relationship between Nakia, Mei Hwa, and Yuanliang gradually deepened. Mei Hwa thinks back to words of wisdom she learned from Master Cheng Yen. “Tzu Chi has come so far, not just because of respect and courtesy, but because Master teaches us that we must let love guide our actions.” Nakia’s respect for Mei Hwa and Yuanliang is like that of a son toward his parents, and Mei Hwa and Yuanliang love and care for him as a son. When introducing Mei Hwa and Yuanliang, Nakia affectionately refers to them as his other mother and father. Nakia remarked, “That’s the beauty of the relationship. It takes on many forms. It is like water; no matter what container you put it in, it just fits; it just exists.” He recalls the time when his adopted children met Mei Hwa and Yuanliang for the first time after he and his wife brought them home. “The kids didn’t ask; they just knew that this is Grandma and Grandpa.”

Nakia says that his relationship with Yuanliang and Mei Hwa has helped him develop a strong connection with Tzu Chi, beyond just being a project partner.

“It has become a relationship beyond a partnership. It is pure family.”

Nakia has also made it a point to be present at as many events as he can to support his Tzu Chi mother and father. Mei Hwa remembers a moment when Nakia unexpectedly drove several hours to support her at a troubling time. She asked him why he came, and he replied to



▲ Mei Hwa proudly attends a ceremony where the Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy (BOMLA) is recognized by the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Photo: Heidi Li

her, “Did you expect me to be somewhere else? No? That’s why I came.” Through personal and professional struggles, Yuanliang, Mei Hwa, and Nakia have been there to support each other.

This past spring, Nakia once again made the trip to Hualien with Mei Hwa, Yuanliang, and several of his peer educators from Dallas. The night before their sharing with Master Cheng Yen, the group stayed up late into the night, practicing, revising, and laughing with each other. Meeting Master Cheng Yen is what inspired Nakia to keep walking the Tzu Chi path: “When you see the Master, each time, you feel that you can continue the struggle. You feel, ‘This is what I should do.’ No one is forcing you, but you know, ‘This is what I need to do.’”

“Returning to Dallas is when I am tested,” Nakia says. “Character is who you are when no one is looking.” On the bookshelf in his office, next to the Bible, books on being an effective leader, and a book about Master Cheng Yen that Yuanliang gave him when they first met, is a book of Jing Si Aphorisms. He reaches over and flips

to the aphorism he returns to again and again, marked with a sticky note: “Without hardship in life, we cannot fully understand the truth, nor develop our full potential.” When Nakia is frustrated or upset, he thinks back to the feeling he had when he first met Master Cheng Yen all those years ago. “No matter how hard the road is, you need to keep walking.” Each time, he remembers how Mei Hwa and Yuanliang would come to ask him, “Are you okay? What do you need?” He remembers the feeling of being cared for, and the feelings of growing, learning, and maturing together. For Mei Hwa, the example she thinks about in tough times is the moment when Master Cheng Yen watched the groundbreaking of the first Tzu Chi Hospital. “Thinking of the hardships she endured and the struggle to reach that moment, how can our troubles compare?” she says simply. She returns again and again to Master Cheng Yen’s favorite words, from the Sutra of Infinite Meanings, “With minds tranquil and clear, vows vast as the universe, Bodhisattvas remain unwavering for countless kalpas.”

Five years from now, ten years from now, and beyond, Nakia, Mei Hwa, and Yuanliang vow to remain dedicated to the spirit of Master Cheng Yen’s teachings and stay connected as a family. In 2017, Tzu Chi held a weekend teaching workshop for local teachers in Dallas, showing them how to add character education to their classroom. In visiting the various schools that have started character education programs with Tzu Chi’s guidance, the teachers have taken character education to heart. They bring the lessons home and teach them to their own students, and in turn, the students take their wisdom home and share them with their families. “This is how we can create a lasting, positive impact in the community,” Nakia says. Mei Hwa sums it up: “It’s not just about respect, it’s about love.” 🌿

Vivian Wang encountered Tzu Chi by chance while moving, and she joined to volunteer a few months later. She is usually found taking pictures with Tzu Chi’s 3-in-1 documentation team. Vivian loves learning new sign language performances and hearing stories from other volunteers.



After taking refuge with Master Cheng Yen, Nakia and his fellow educators from Dallas show off their prayer beads that she personally gave to them. Photo provided by: Nakia Douglas

A fulfilling life is not preoccupied with material objects, prestige, or power.

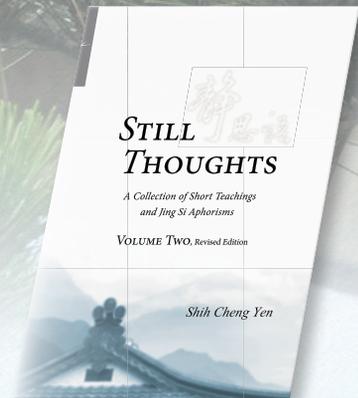
It is a life that is filled with true friendships, sharing, and caring for each other.

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Dharma Q&A

Dharma Master Cheng Yen responds to questions from visitors, volunteers, staff, and disciples



Tzu Chi's Practice

Q: "Tzu Chi has become such a large organization, admired by tens of millions of people. Isn't this a sort of breakthrough in reforming Buddhism?"

A: "Many people say that I am reforming Buddhism, but in fact, I am just going back to its roots. During the Buddha's lifetime, he taught in response to the way the people of India lived, the afflictions they felt, and the problems in their society. With those examples, he showed people how to live peacefully and happily, treat each other kindly, and make contributions to their society out of love. That was all he did! What we are doing now is the same. So, I am not reforming Buddhism. Rather, our practice is following the Buddha's original intent."

The Method of Management

Q: "Master, what is your method for managing Tzu Chi?"

A: "Actually, it is not necessary to manage people too closely, nor is it really possible, as people do not like to have someone looking over their shoulders. The most important thing is to inspire everyone to manage themselves."

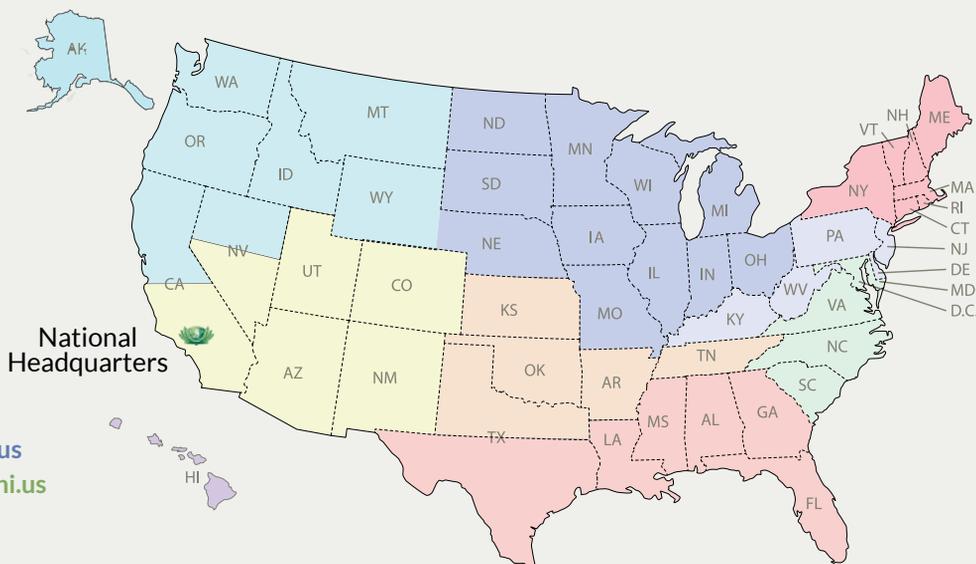
Plans for the Future

Q: "Master, what are your plans for the future?"

A: "I have set a goal in the distance, but I have to focus on doing everything I need to do each day. I seize every moment and always remain attentive. Every day, I must make good use of each of the 86,400 seconds that pass."

Excerpts from Still Thoughts Volume 2 compiled by Jing Si Editorial Group (Jing Si Publications, 2016). For more information, please visit Jing Si Books & Cafe (directory on pg 62-64) or jingsi.shop.

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TZU CHI

A BRIEF HISTORY...



In 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Merit Association in Hualien with the support of thirty housewives who each put aside 50 Taiwanese cents (around 2 US cents) of their grocery money every day to establish a charity fund. In the first year, they helped a total of thirty-one elderly, ill, and poor people from fifteen families. As word spread, more people participated, and the initiative gathered strength. It spread beyond Hualien: first across the island of Taiwan and then around the world.

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

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

Whenever disaster strikes at home or abroad, Tzu Chi volunteers deliver cash aid, hot meals, and emergency relief supplies directly into the hands of disaster survivors. Over the years, US Tzu Chi volunteers have actively provided relief after major disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and tornadoes. Internationally, volunteers have provided relief in earthquakes and other disasters in Haiti, Japan, Nepal, Ecuador, Mexico, and many other countries.

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



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In celebration of Mother's Day, Tzu Chi Academy in Seattle designed activities for students to express their gratitude toward their parents. Here, a mother gives her daughter a warm embrace after receiving a rose from her. *Photo: Li-Chia Chang*



*Practice gratitude,
reverence, and love for life*

*Form blessed affinities
with harmony and respect.*

- Dharma Master Cheng Yen

