

Act Together With Love

Translated by Teresa Chang



Tzu Chi helped establish El Menahil school to give Syrian refugee children a chance to receive an education.

sky and on the same earth. However, under that same sky and on that same earth, people live in very different circumstances. Some live in peace and prosperity, some in areas frequently hit by natural disasters, and some in places where people's misguided pursuits have led them astray and resulted in man-made disasters. Where can people living in areas ravaged by turmoil and instability find a place to live in safety and peace?

I heard the other day that government forces in Syria launched a chemical attack, killing dozens of people with poison gas. Many of the injured and killed were young children. Calls for help and cries of pain could be heard everywhere. When will the man-made catastrophe in this country ever come to an end? Millions of people have had to abandon their homes and flee for their lives to other countries. Even there, they are subject to unfair treatment and must endure many hardships. They don't know where to call home or what tomorrow holds. Their situation is truly worrisome.

For some time, our foundation has helped refugees in countries including Turkey, Jordan, Serbia, and Malaysia. We provide assistance in livelihood, healthcare, and education. In Turkey alone, the Tzu Chi El Menahil school has helped over 3,000 Syrian children receive an education. In addition to helping the kids, we have also provided financial aid or daily supplies to their families to help get them through this difficult time. Over the years, we have aided tens of thousands of Syrian refugees in that country.

Not long ago, Tzu Chi took part in a meeting convened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In addition to the rising number of Syrian refugees, a large number of Rohingya people who have fled the destruction of their homes and persecution in Myanmar are also badly in need of help. Humanitarian organizations are trying to do what they can for these people. While providing long-term material aid for refugees, we in Tzu Chi feel that it is even more important to address their emotional needs help bring peace and harmony to the world.

veryone in this world lives under the same because we know that all suffering originates in the mind. If we nurture kindness, love, and gratitude in the hearts of the children, hatred and antagonism will not have room to grow.

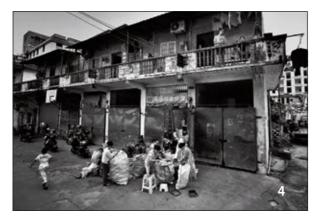
As a charity organization, Tzu Chi doesn't focus on helping the needy alone—we believe it is even more important to inspire goodness in people's hearts and motivate everyone to bring about a better world. Our TV station, Da Ai TV, was established for that purpose. Iib Syarief Hidayatulloh, a teacher of Islam in Indonesia, found programming produced by our DAAI TV Indonesia inspirational. He includes some of its contents in his teaching materials to promote the spirit of Great Love. Since most people in Indonesia practice Islam and we are a Buddhist group, some have raised doubts and criticisms about his approach. Despite that, he believes in what he does because he feels that people should embrace Great Love and not distinguish between religions or nationalities. Over the past 20 years, our foundation has built schools and mosques for Indonesia when the country was hit by natural disasters. We too believe in giving to all without consideration of religion, race, or nationality. Religion itself is meant to bring about peace and help all people live in harmony. We shouldn't discriminate against any person or group and should instead treat everyone with love.

I always urge my followers to take the Buddha's teachings to heart and practice them in their daily lives. The Dharma will guide us in the right direction. When we internalize wholesome principles and put them into action, we will be able to inspire more people to join us in doing good. None of us can relive a single second. Time does not stand still for us. If we allow our minds to be clouded by unwholesome thoughts and afflictions and stop moving forward on the right path, we are not only letting time go by in vain but also adding to the spiritual turbidity in the world. Let's all make the best of our time by doing our best to live out the Dharma and benefit society. Let's all harbor kindness, perform acts of compassion, and

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The Tzu Chi Bimonthly welcomes contributions of personal experiences or reports of Tzu Chi activities. We also welcome letters to the editor containing personal comments or opinions on matters of interest in the Tzu Chi world. We reserve the right to edit the letters for purposes of space, time or clarity. Letters should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.

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International Tourism Island

Hainan is the southernmost province of China, consisting of various islands in the South China Sea. Hainan Island makes up the majority of the province. The island's favorable location and the lack of industries result in a blue sky and clean air—blessings, especially in contrast to the smog that dogs so many places on the mainland. Tourists flock to Hainan Island, especially to the city of Sanya on the island's southern tip, which boasts beautiful beaches and ocean vistas. Resort hotels have sprung up near the sandy beaches to accommodate the influx of visitors.

Seeking to capitalize on Hainan's geography, location, and benign climate, the Chinese government is working to turn the island into an international tourist destination. As we arrived at the provincial capital, Haikou, we could clearly see the government's efforts in this respect. Riding on a city bus, we saw the debris of torn-down old buildings everywhere, soon to be replaced by new construction as the city embarks on the path to a supposedly brighter future.

Even before the government stepped up its efforts to modernize and improve Hainan, some private citizens had already acted along those lines. They took up recycling and recruited like-minded people to join their effort. By reducing the amount of garbage and cutting down on pollution, they help preserve the environment and make their cities cleaner, better, and more inviting. Who are these people? They are Tzu Chi recycling volunteers.





Recycling Is Important

We visited some of these volunteers in Haikou. They told us that five years ago they used to pick up garbage along the street and scavenge garbage cans for recyclable items. Electric scooters helped them move from one garbage can to the next. Then four years ago, the government stepped up its modernization efforts. Since then, city cleaners have regularly patrolled the streets to keep them tidy. There has therefore been less garbage on the street, and the city now appears noticeably cleaner.

However, not all places in the city are equally clean and tidy. People refrain from littering on the bigger and busier streets so that they don't run afoul of the sanitary regulations, but things change significantly in the smaller alleyways. Like many communities, large bins are provided in Haikou for residents to use for recycling. But these are often used by residents indiscriminately for recycling and general garbage. It is an ugly sight.

Adding to the problem is that the public generally lacks the interest, much less the desire or knowledge, to properly sort their garbage. Thus, a lot of recyclable material ends up being treated as general trash.

Tzu Chi recycling volunteers cannot see this and sit idly by. They want to act to make things better for their community and the planet. They pick out the recyclable garbage and prepare it for recycling. They also spread the word and try to convert disinterested people in their communities into recyclers. They realize the importance of recycling and environmental preservation. After all, there is only one Earth. They know that people cannot just think of their own convenience, ignore the negative impact their behavior has on the environment, and leave the consequences up to their posterity.

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A New Storage Site

Local volunteers mentioned that they used to run recycling points in old neighborhoods, many of which were demolished to make room for new construction. Consequently, those recycling points had to be shut down.

With the old recycling points gone, volunteers were pinched for storage space. After all, recyclables take up a lot of storage space—and the stuff kept coming in. Fortunately, after some searching, the volunteers found a suitable place near the home of volunteer Lin Yan (林燕) to serve as a storage site.

Guided by some local volunteers, we visited the place. It's housed in a line of two-story row houses. Residents live on the upper levels, and the first floors contain warehouses. The volunteers have rented one of these warehouses, about 355 square feet, to store the recyclables.

When we visited, a small group of volunteers was sorting garbage in front of the rented space. Children played nearby, while neighbors chatted away on a balcony. A sense of peace and harmony permeated the scene.

There's no telling whether this line of row houses will also be demolished one day since it is also pretty old. If it is, we'll be happy that we captured this precious scene of people working for the Earth.



Old Districts

Demolition debris was piled on the roadside of many main thoroughfares on the modern side of Haikou. Just a few steps away, however, as we followed local volunteers to some alleys tucked off the main roads, we came to witness the older side of Haikou.

Strolling through the older neighborhood, we passed an old-style barber shop where a man was getting a haircut. Outside the shop, a waiting customer chatted with a neighbor. We passed old, tall trees whose shade tamed the hot sun; under the shade neighbors engaged in small talk. We passed vendors drawn to where people gathered, peddling their home-made snacks. My heart warmed with nostalgia for Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s.

Strolling through old neighborhoods is a wonderful way to see how the locals live and to experience the culture of an area. We saw people in some homes, sitting four to a table, playing mahjong. Apparently the game is a popular pastime here. We saw a similar scene—people gathered around a table in the home of volunteer Wu Dirong (吳地榮). However, there were no mahjong tiles on the table in front of them. Instead, they were

doing something with used candles.

Local Buddhists burn candles when they worship the Buddha. At the bottom of a candle is a thin piece of metal to which the wick is attached. The wick goes up through the center of the candle, which is placed in a small, round plastic cup. The cup supports the candle and catches the melting wax as it runs down the side of the burning candle. People discard these used candles with the garbage, but they are not useless to local Tzu Chi recycling volunteers. Since just throwing them away contributes to pollution and garbage, volunteers collect used candles from temples or homes of the faithful and recycle them.

After use, each candle usually contains wax in the plastic cup and the piece of metal at the bottom of the wax. Volunteers scrape the wax out of the plastic cup, remove the metal piece, and sort the recyclable parts into different piles. The volunteers we saw at Wu's home worked intently around the table—no less so than those mahjong players, but for an entirely different reason and more gratifying results. Their labor of love has converted big piles of used candles—otherwise destined for dumpsters—into piles of reusable resources and saved the city from some possible pollution.



A Clothes Marketplace

Located in an old section of Haikou, the Deshengsha marketplace is the largest clothing market in Hainan. With at least 600 wholesale and retail stores over a space of 1.6 million square feet, it is a magnet for shoppers from far and wide.

Huang Peiwa (黃妖娃), with a large plastic bag in hand, shows up at the marketplace after 4:30 every afternoon. She picks up plastic bags and other recyclable items from the floor in front of every store, discarded there by the shop owners. She has done this, day after day, for several years.

Huang lives nearby, and she knows well that space is precious in the marketplace. There is little space available for storing recyclables in or around the stores. After she has picked up recyclables at about a hundred stores, she carries the bulging plastic bags up to some free areas one or two floors above the marketplace for storage. Then she goes back down to the marketplace on the first floor to continue her rounds. To save time, she conducts her rounds at a half trot.

She does the same thing, over and over again, day in and day out, year after year. "If I don't collect the recyclables, they will be disposed of as garbage," she said. "I just can't bear to see that happen."







Gathering After Closing Time

Each Saturday night, after the marketplace is closed for the day, at least 30 Haikou volunteers gather to sort out the recyclables that Huang Peiwa has accumulated. The volunteers used to do the sorting on the fifth floor of a nearby apartment, where the recyclables were stored, but they changed three years ago to do their work in the open square in front of the Deshengsha marketplace.

Those who arrive early first carry the recyclables from the two floors above the marketplace down to the open square. They make one trip after another, and everyone is sweaty when they are finished. If so many people must hustle hard to take the recyclables downstairs, how much more hard work must Huang, alone, have had to do to get the garbage up there to begin with?

Plastic packaging for clothing makes up most of the recyclables, followed by PET bottles. The plastic bags alone weigh at least a hundred kilograms (220 pounds) each time, sometimes as much as 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds). The volume spikes during the end of a season or around Chinese New Year. Sometimes it is midnight when volunteers finish their work for the day.



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Admirable do-gooders

Lin Yan, one of the recycling volunteers in Hainan, was a devout Buddhist even before she joined Tzu Chi. Every day she used to go to a temple in Haikou, where she chanted sutras and worshipped the Buddha to accumulate spiritual merits and blessings. That was the only way she knew how to practice the religion. At the suggestion of Wang Ju (王莉), another volunteer in Hainan, Lin and some fellow Buddhists went to Hualien, Taiwan, in 2012 for a Tzu Chi recycling camp, which thoroughly changed their view on Buddhist cultivation. Lin and the others learned that instead of just chanting sutras and worshipping the Buddha, Buddhists should cultivate themselves by going out into society and giving to others. [You can read more about Wang Ju in the March 2018 issue of the *Tzu Chi Bimonthly*.]

After the camp, Lin changed how she practiced Buddhism. In addition to devoting herself to recycling work, she now takes part in other Tzu Chi work as well, including visiting and helping needy families.

We visited her home during our trip to Hainan. In Hainan, volunteers often gather where there are recyclables to be sorted out. After the work is completed, the host treats everyone to a home-made meal, after which everyone shares their thoughts and feelings about their volunteer work over tea. At Lin's home, we met a gathering of such volunteers.

These and many other recycling volunteers in Hainan express their love for the Earth through recycling. They sweat and toil and do a thankless job for free. They keep doing it because they just can't stand to see garbage make a mess of our Mother Earth. Master Cheng Yen's teachings to contribute to the good of the world have struck a chord with them. We are most honored to have met many of these admirable volunteers during our trip.



Remembering the 16-Year-Old You

By Fan Caiyun Translated by Wu Hsiao-ting Photos by Hsiao Yiu-hwa

Everything has changed. It is almost impossible to find things that have stayed the same over the last decade in the disaster areas. How about myself? How about my classmates who lost their lives in the quake? Do they still live happily with their 16-year-old looks in another world? So many lives were lost on that fatal day. Those of us who luckily survived must live the best we can. It's one way to honor the memory of those whose lives were lost.



Fan Caiyun visits the old site of her alma mater, Luoshui Middle School, where a hospital stands now. The school has been moved to a new site.



en years is a long time, so long that I have become old enough to sprout white hair. Ten years is also a short time, so short that when I hear or read something about Tzu Chi, I feel as if their volunteers left just yesterday. I still have the cards they gave me with their best wishes. My eyes become moist whenever I read their words. As human beings, we have emotions and feelings. We are destined to feel emotionally bound to people who have left marks in our lives.

Why, then, do I never mention the earthquake? Almost none of the friends I have made since the quake know that I am a quake survivor. Does it mean I have forgotten the past?

Last week I accompanied some Tzu Chi volunteers from Taiwan to places wrecked by the quake. My alma mater, toppled in the disaster, has been replaced by a hospital. Houses that once lay in ruins have been rebuilt with a new look. Villages rendered lifeless by the catastrophe are vibrant and full of life again. We could find almost nothing that had remained the same over the past decade.

And me? How have I changed over the last ten years? The student has become a teacher, and the teenage girl is now a married woman. It seems that life has worked out pretty well for me.

I've thanked the heavens above on countless nights for letting me survive that day. But how

A Tzu Chi volunteer looks through a window into a Luoshui school classroom ruined by the Wenchuan earthquake.

about those classmates of mine—those classmates whose lives were brought to an abrupt end on that fateful day? Are they living happily in another world with their eternal 16-year-old looks?

Over the last ten years, I haven't dared to think back to their smiling faces. I haven't dared to remember the sounds of their voices. Sometimes I

en years is a long time, so long that I have can almost convince myself that they are still alive become old enough to sprout white hair. Ten and that we have just lost touch.

Every year on Tomb-Sweeping Day, as I look at their photos in which they flash such bright smiles, I think to myself: "Good for you. You'll forever be young, while we have no choice but to be dragged forward inexorably by time."

Live well

Countless lives were lost on the day of the quake. Those lives, so dear to their loved ones, were snuffed out mercilessly, as if they had no more value than some dried-up roadside grass. Some of my classmates' small, soft bodies were bent out of shape by cement blocks and steel bars as their young lives skidded to a sudden, permanent stop.

Back then, we visited their surviving families to offer our condolences and to try to bring a measure of comfort to their broken hearts. When we met on the street, we greeted each other as if we were family. But gradually some people moved away, or their jobs or lifestyles changed. When we met in public again, they began to avert their eyes or even pretend that we were strangers.

I think I know why they behaved that way they wanted to leave their pain behind and start anew. We, who were once their children's class-

memories. Looking away when we met was easier than the alternative.

I wonder how many nights they burst out crying uncontrollably because they missed their children so much. How strong must a heart be to overcome a grief that great? How much strength did they need to carry on and start a new life? Only people who have experienced such agony know the answers.

How about young people, like me, who survived the earthquake? What did the tragedy do to us? Our youthful days were gone, like the lives of those lost classmates. At the same time, we emerged from the tragedy stronger. We became more resilient, like flowers that grew out of cracks in hard stone.

A girl whose leg was badly injured during the earthquake later married a soldier—maybe out of gratitude for the military personnel who worked tirelessly to rescue people from under the rubble. A boy who had his legs amputated dropped out of school and suffered depression for several

mates, now only triggered their most painful He met a girl who was also wheelchair-bound but who displayed admirable courage toward facing her life's challenges. They got married. He rediscovered his life's purpose through her and was no longer lonely.

> These people have testified to the resilience of life. Come to think of it, we are all very lucky to have survived the temblor. Shouldn't we cherish our new lease on life and live our lives the best we can? When we do that, we honor the memory of the deceased.

Making the most of it

I often ponder the meaning of life. Tzu Chi volunteers once told me that no one gets two mornings each day, meaning that you must cherish your time. Once that time is gone, it's gone for good. Tzu Chi volunteers believe that your time is best used when you give the best you can to benefit society. Your journey in this world will come to an end after just a few short decades. Time passes by very fast. One good way to create meaning for your life is to give as much as years, but he eventually pulled himself together. you can. So I tell myself to do that. I tell myself

A Young Volunteer

Compiled by Tzu Chi Monthly editorial board Translated by Wu Hsiao-ting

On May 14, 2008, in the immediate aftermath of the Wenchuan earthquake, Tzu Chi teers in helping her own townspeople. She helped volunteers arrived at disaster areas to provide aid. They set up service stations, cooked food for victims, distributed relief goods, and provided free medical services.

"Remembering the 16-Year-Old You," lived in one of the disaster areas. She was a student at Luoshui Middle School when the quake occurred. The tremor hit after the lunch break, taking the lives of nearly a hundred teachers and students at her school. Not only were some of her classmates killed, but she also lost relatives and friends.

Despite her grief, she joined Tzu Chi volunmove supplies like bottled water and rice, delivered hot food to elderly people who lived alone, accompanied Tzu Chi volunteers on visits to tent areas, and interpreted for Tzu Chi doctors who Fan Caiyun (樊彩云), the young author of didn't understand the local dialects. She and many other youngsters like her gave visiting Tzu Chi volunteers a lot of help during that time.

Tzu Chi volunteers were stationed in the disaster areas for about three months. Team after team worked in relays to help survivors—after one team left, another arrived to take over. Later, the foundation also helped rebuild schools and permanent housing for survivors.



A much younger Fan Caiyun (front row, second from right) poses with other young volunteer helpers and a Tzu Chi volunteer at a temporary Tzu Chi medical station set up in Luoshui after the Wenchuan quake.

to be a kind person and to try my best to live a meaningful, dignified life. That's how you take responsibility for your life.

After their post-quake emergency aid ended, the Tzu Chi volunteers who had come to our town to carry out relief work left. I returned to school and settled back into the routine of life as a student. When I missed the volunteers, I would visit the places where I had worked alongside them. I remember that one time by a river, a volunteer taught me that our lives are like small boats. We can't carry too much stuff with us. We should learn to let go—we should learn to forget.

Wearing the shoes the volunteers gave me, I have visited many places and seen a lot of beautiful scenery. Material gifts aside, they gave me something even more important: the gift of kindness. Over the years I have learned to face life's challenges with the kindness they taught me. I always remember what they said to me: "Caiyun, when you run into difficulties, remember that we're praying for you somewhere in the world."

Life is like a tapestry woven with threads of tribulation, loss, regret, triumph, happiness, love, and rebirth—a crisscrossed pattern of light and darkness. The warm memories and positive values from Tzu Chi volunteers have comforted and supported me along life's path. They help me embrace the goodness, truth, and beauty of the world with gratitude, and they motivate me to give sincerely. For the remainder of my life, I will strive to be a kind person.

That Summer

By Zhou Feng Translated by Wu Hsiao-ting Photos by Hsiao Yiu-hwa

That summer ten years ago in Sichuan, I witnessed people working together with courage and faith to pull through a difficult time. The experience helped me realize how mutual help, kindness, and goodwill are universally cherished values.

en years ago, I went with a few friends from different colleges to volunteer in Mianzhu, Sichuan. We went there with the purest of intentions: to help survivors of the Wenchuan earthquake. After such a huge calamity, we felt we ought to do something for people whose lives had been upended. Even if all we could offer was a smile or a hug, we felt that would be very meaningful. We ended up helping children at a tent school with their studies.

Because aftershocks were still occurring, my family was opposed to my going there. They assumed that I was just seeking an adventure, that I couldn't possibly help much, and that I would only add to the chaos. Despite their opposition, in the end I decided to go. I purchased a train ticket and set out from my hometown in central Shanxi Province. After traveling for more than 20 hours, I finally arrived in Sichuan.

Ruins were everywhere in the disaster area. I stayed there for nearly 20 days, during which time I encountered people from all walks of life. They came from different areas in China or even from other countries, and they were all there to help. I saw many NGO personnel and reconstruction teams pitching in to help repair roads and build temporary housing for survivors.

I'll never forget how I felt seeing so many people rushing to the aid of the survivors. I was deeply moved...and astounded. Human beings appear man from Taiwan who was a few years my senior. so insignificant and powerless in the face of such devastating natural disasters, but in the aftermath people come together with amazing courage and faith to pull through the hard times. Seeing this in person, my heart was immensely warmed and encouraged.

Since ancient times, the human race has had to deal with all kinds of natural disasters. The civilizations and cultures created by our ancestors fought long odds to survive. Facing the impermanence of the world, I pondered: What is the meaning and value of life? For what do we live? In the greater scheme of things, all my worries about the minor things in life seemed so trifling and petty. Is it worth it to waste our energy and sweat on life's trivialities?

After serving in the disaster area, I began participating in one philanthropic activity after another, volunteering when I could. The more I volunteered, the more I realized that most people in the world embrace core values such as goodwill and benevolence. Peace, kindness, mutual help, and a good life are what people long for. To make our lives more meaningful and our world better, we should help one another head toward that goodness.

Friends from Taiwan

I didn't know anyone from Taiwan before I volunteered in Sichuan. Since childhood, however, I had been very familiar with a song by a Taiwanese singer lauding the beauty of southern Taiwan. I therefore developed a longing for the place.

When I was volunteering in Sichuan, I met a He was a Tzu Chi volunteer. We got to talking about books I loved, such as An Unfinished Song and Dream of the Red Chamber, which, as it turned out, he liked a lot too. We also talked about traditional Chinese culture and what young people in China and Taiwan were like. Although that was a



The heavily hit town of Yinghu shows the devastation after the Wenchuan earthquake. The temblor damaged over 20,000 kilometers of road. Despite the challenging road conditions, volunteers from both China and abroad managed to overcome all kinds of difficulties and reach the disaster area to render help.

decade ago, the two of us have stayed in touch. We drop each other a line from time to time, asking how each other is doing. I always feel very warm inside when I hear from him.

There was another Tzu Chi volunteer, from Taoyuan, northern Taiwan, whom I remember very well. She was in her 60s, her hair was gray, and she was very elegant. She worked nonstop every day in the disaster area, sometimes washing cooking pots, sometimes putting kitchen utensils in order, and sometimes sweeping the ground. I asked her one day out of curiosity why she never rested. "We had to take time off from

work and fly all the way here to volunteer," she answered. "It wasn't an easy trip, so we must cherish our time here all the more and help out as much as we can to make the trip worth it. The more I work, the happier I am." I was really impressed by her attitude of wanting to contribute as much as she could.

One day during lunch break at the tent school, we suddenly heard sounds of gongs and drums. It turned out that some local officials and elementary school students had come to present banners to Tzu Chi volunteers to thank them for coming all the way from Taiwan to help quake survivors. As I looked at the scene before me, my eyes filled with tears. It was a touching scene of aid recipients sincerely thanking their helpers.

As I got to know the group better, I learned that the footprints of Tzu Chi volunteers are not limited to Sichuan, but can be found in many other places in China and across the world. Tzu Chi volunteers use their own free time to visit the



Volunteers put on a skit at a Tzu Chi service station about the difficulties posed by the language barrier when they are trying to provide help to quake survivors. They encouraged local people to come forward and serve as interpreters to facilitate the provision of aid.

needy, establish recipient rosters, and then personally distribute aid. They pay for their own food, board, and transportation on every relief mission. Giving without asking for anything in return is their guiding spirit.

Chi volunteers. Most of them are young people who believe in actively serving society. They have helped broaden my horizon and deepened my

faith in the possibility of a better world. My world has become brighter because of them.

A loving world

I have taken part in a number of local Tzu Chi events over the past decade, first as a student in Beijing and now working in Shanghai. One time I traveled with other volunteers to northern Jiangsu Province to distribute scholarships to students from impoverished families. The trip opened my eyes to the wide gap in living conditions between remote farming villages and big cities like I became good friends with quite a few Tzu Shanghai and Beijing. The students' homes we visited were sparsely furnished and had few electric appliances. Life wasn't easy for these financially strapped students and their families.



Tzu Chi volunteers assess damage in Shifang, an area in Sichuan that was wrecked by the Wenchuan quake. They arrived at the disaster area from Taiwan just 50 hours after the quake.

An education is the best hope for these youngsters to rise and escape from their poverty. However, due to their family's limited finances, they face more hurdles against an education than students from wealthier families. It would be very meaningful if we could help these underprivileged students stay in school. Therefore, as I work for a better life for myself, I do what I can to help them avoid dropping out for lack of financial resources. One person's strength may be limited, but when we all work together, we can make a difference.

Tzu Chi is noted for its high efficiency and internationalization. We have all learned through the media about poverty in Africa and the disaster caused by the Syrian civil war, but the actual conditions there could be even worse. I'm proud to belong to an organization that works to relieve the suffering of people in those places.

Volunteering for Tzu Chi has taught me to reduce my desires, be frugal, love life, and live wisely. I also take part in community volunteer work apart from the work of Tzu Chi. The two kinds of work may be different in form, but they are the same in spirit—we serve others and give our love through them.

Ten years have passed since the quake. Looking back, I feel I made the right decision to volunteer in the disaster area that summer. That experience has done me a lot of good, and its impact lasts to this day. It has helped me learn to face life with a more peaceful, grateful heart. I thank my family, my friends, and the teachers and classmates I had for helping me become who I am. I also thank all those people I do not know personally, but who have helped make our lives better.

A quote by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore comes to mind: "Once we dreamt that we were strangers. We wake up to find that we were dear to each other." Yes, we are dear to each other. Let's cherish one another and together make the world a better place.



Never Too Young to Start Doing Good

By Ye Zi-hao

Abridged and translated by Tang Yau-yang Photos by Yan Lin-zhao

Before he even turned 30, Chen Shi-wen left behind a lucrative technology job and opened a coffee shop. Yet instead of giving full attention to his business, he devoted himself much more to philanthropic work. For him, some things just couldn't wait until he was more financially established.

hen Shi-wen (陳璽文), 33, is not a typical young man. Instead of holding down a good job and dedicating himself to securing a stable future, he spends most of his time doing charity work and serving others. Most people tell themselves that they will dedicate themselves to volunteering and serving society after they retire, but Chen feels that by the time one is financially secure and has free time to volunteer, he or she may not have the required energy or stamina to do so. He epitomizes the spirit of "Just do it."

Chen's resume is impressive. As a student, he displayed a knack for the sciences. When he was in high school, he was chosen to participate in the International Physics Olympiad, a competition for scientifically gifted students. He graduated in sixth place from the Department of Electrical Engineering at the prestigious National Tsing Hua University, northern Taiwan. He even won three international patents while a graduate student at National Chiao Tung University, also in northern Taiwan, from which he earned a master's degree in electronics in 2010. He was conscripted after graduation, but he opted to work for a private company as a legal substitute for his compulsory military

Chen Shi-wen makes coffee for a customer at his coffee shop. This is rather rare, because he spends more time outside his shop carrying out his charity projects or taking part in Tzu Chi activities.

service. His stellar performance as a student attracted the attention of the top three tech companies at the Hsinchu Science Park, Taiwan's equivalent to Silicon Valley. They vied for his service. He picked one of them—United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC)—and began his R&D work in lieu of military service.

When he had served the required three-year term, UMC offered him a full-time job with a substantial salary, but he declined. Instead, he opened a coffee shop. That was five years ago. "Coffee is my hobby," Chen explained, "but I chose to work in the coffee industry because I wanted to help juvenile delinquents. They typically don't have the skills to land jobs after their release from prison. If I teach them to make coffee, they may find work at coffee shops or restaurants."

Tzu Chi Collegiate Association

Chen visited coffee plantations in Africa, Central America, and South America to secure quality coffee beans and to learn coffee planting and processing techniques. After that, he visited coffee farmers in Hualien, Pingtung, and Nantou in eastern, southern, and central Taiwan, to show them how to plant and roast quality beans.

When he buys coffee beans, he prefers products that are environmentally friendlier and sanctioned by fair trade organizations. He runs his coffee shop as a for-profit enterprise out of necessity, but he does so while trying to help former

Chen teaches a workshop on coffee-making at a Tzu Chi facility in Hsinchu.

inmates, support environmental preservation, and encourage fair trade practices.

He is definitely not your typical run-of-the-mill coffee shop owner. He is more like a devotee to social enterprise. He readily confesses that he has not always been so public minded. He was once just like most other young people, busy pursuing activities that would bolster his chances of a lucrative career. He only began to change his mindset after he met a teacher at a cram school.

That teacher was a Tzu Chi volunteer. "He often told us in class what Tzu Chi had done to help the needy," Chen recalled. At the suggestion of that teacher, Chen joined the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA) chapter at National Tsing Hua University during his freshman year there. He got more involved with the group's activities as he progressed in his studies there, and he eventually became a core member of the organization.

He continued his involvement with TCCA when he began his master's program at Chiao Tung University. Despite the heavy burden of his schoolwork in college and graduate school, he actively participated in the work of the association, gaining in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience of what Tzu Chi does.

Environmental appeals

One of the things that Chen did as a TCCA member was to advocate for the reduction of one's carbon footprint. For example, he and his fellow association members called on people to avoid using disposable beverage cups and paper napkins, and to adopt a vegetarian diet.

Chen noticed that college kids were big consumers of drinks that came in disposable to-go cups. These one-use containers left a huge carbon footprint. In response, he started a "One Cup for Life" campaign in 2008, urging students to carry with them a reusable cup for their beverage purchases. Chen and other TCCA members also pleaded with beverage shops to give discounts to customers who brought in their own containers.

After that campaign, they appealed to people ever sprout, but at least I tried." to use handkerchiefs instead of paper napkins.

Chen and other TCCA members also went into traditional marketplaces to promote a vegetarian to get discouraged about. They kept up their diet. As expected, their reception spanned the efforts, and at times they were pleasantly sur-

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gamut: Some people readily accepted the idea while others gave them the cold shoulder. "I considered our action as planting a seed," Chen said. "There was no telling when or whether it would

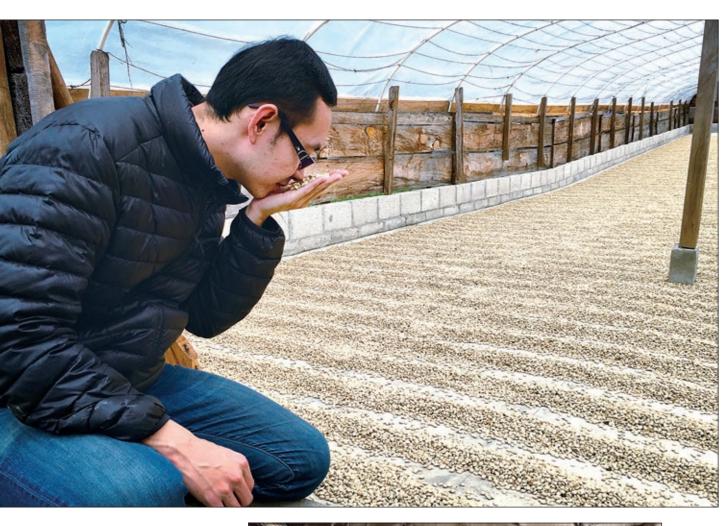
To Chen and the other youths, difficulties in the process of doing the right thing were nothing

prised. "Believe it or not, my counterparts in Chiayi and Yunlin, central Taiwan, won over butchers to support their vegetarianism drive," Chen said. "I had butchers support my drive in the Hsinchu area, too."

It seems incredible that someone whose livelihood depends on meat consumption would support vegetarianism, but Chen believes that some butchers ply their trade more as a way to

make a living than for the love of meat. They are willing to support meatless diets for the benefit of the Earth and as a gesture of compassion for living creatures.

Looking back to his school days, Chen said that he was very happy being a TCCA member. "There were a lot of events to organize. I was under a lot of pressure juggling both schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but that high pres-



Chen (bottom picture, second row, first from right) on a visit to a coffee plantation in Guatemala. COURTESY OF CHEN SHI-WEI



sure helped me grow, so much so that I didn't feel it tough at all after I graduated and started work."

At the tech company

After obtaining his master's degree, Chen worked at UMC, the tech company mentioned above, in lieu of military service. He submitted 30 patent applications for the company during his three years there—a really impressive performance. But work was far from his top priority during that time. He made sure he had enough time off so he could do things to benefit society.

The tech company had started a foundation to do philanthropic work. Yen Po-wen (顏博文) was a senior manager at UMC at the time. He knew that Chen liked to volunteer, so a week after Chen started work at the company, he decided to introduce him to the head of the foundation. "Much to my surprise," Yen recalled, "Chen had already met the head and begun participating in the work of the foundation."

Near the end of 2011, the foundation sponsored a tour of stage play performances by employees of the company, including Chen. They performed in 23 elementary schools in remote parts of Taiwan. They also read picture books to the children during their visits. "I spent much more time on these children and on Tzu Chi events than on anything else during that time," Chen said. "I often worked just three or four days a week. I got paid less than others as a result, but I didn't care."

Give a man a fish or teach him to fish?

In the process of his philanthropic work, Chen came to realize that simply giving the needy help might not be the best way to help them. The question of "Give a man a fish or teach him to fish?" rose in his mind.

When Chen had moved to Hsinchu at the start of his college career, he, his fellow TCCA members, and some other Tzu Chi volunteers in Hsinchu had visited Shih Guang Educational and Nursing Institution, a Catholic care facility for people with disabilities. They helped the residents exercise and entertained them. In due course, Chen and the other college students graduated and began their careers, but the Shih Guang residents remained as much in need of care as when the TCCA members had first started visiting them. Chen realized that they needed to do more for them.

"I asked myself how much longer I could help them. If one day I left and the residents' situations remained the same, was this really helping them?"

As a result, Chen and some friends initiated a plan eight years ago for the institution: They set up an organic vegetable farm and taught Shih Guang residents to plant in the hope that they would grow vegetables to support themselves. Many residents of the institution, though impaired in some ways, were physically capable of working on a farm. They just needed some training.

"To teach them to do things would take some time," Chen explained, "and we also needed to explain the situation to their parents." He and a few enthusiastic friends worked closely with the institution to get the initiative started. Their work involved taking care of some paperwork, holding meetings, and scoping out land for the farm. In April 2010, the farm officially opened.

Residents began working on the farm under the watchful eyes of institution staffers. Surprisingly, the participating residents became emotionally more stable. They became less volatile and less inclined to scream or throw fits. They even harvested enough vegetables to not only feed themselves but to give to others.

"They delivered some vegetables to the Hsinchu police department in mid-2016," Chen said, "and they also gave their labor of love to the Genesis Social Welfare Foundation. They were once care recipients, but now they can help others."

Chen pointed out that if he had not started the vegetable farm project a few years earlier, the residents at Shih Guang would still have been as dependent on others' help today as they were before. "You need to help them move toward self-sufficiency. Only when you can tackle a problem at the root is it possible to see real light showing," he concluded.

Now that Shih Guang residents are better able to care for themselves, Chen has moved on to another project.

Clean and abundant

One Sunday in January 2018, Chen and his team drove about 80 kilometers (50 miles) up into the mountains to the Zhenxibao tribal village in Jianshi, Hsinchu. There they met village elder A-dao at the local church. After warmly greeting the visitors, the elder got down to business. He

told the visitors about the traditional tribal farm- They told him their annual income amounted to ing method

"People here used to rotate three or four tracts of land," said the elder. "They grew crops on one plot for three years. Then they'd plant trees there and move on to another tract of land to farm, and so on. About ten years later, they'd return to farming the first tract again."

But farming in Zhenxibao today no longer bears any resemblance to the old way. The impact of a modern economy and civilization has all but severed the tribal villagers' ties with their Ataval tradition. (The Atayal are an indigenous group of Taiwanese aborigines.) The village looks about the same now as any other town down the mountains, and residents farm in a way that accommodates the needs of buyers from down the mountains too. For example, they use chemical pesticides and fertilizers to increase harvests and improve the shelf appeal of their crops.

is a source of drinking water for residents in some points north of Hsinchu, but the source of the river is in the town of Jianshi, where the village is located. If village farmers use chemicals that drain into the Dahan River, the river can become contaminated for those that rely on it. Chen wanted to do something to help.

Cabbage is a popular crop in the village because Taiwanese love cabbage grown in the highlands. "I can't ask village farmers not to plant cabbage," Chen said, "but I can try to convince them to forego chemical pesticides and fertilizers. To achieve that aim, our project here would need to start with soil improvement."

But how? Chen realized after visiting the area that the solution might lie in the bamboo plants that grow everywhere in the mountains.

Bamboo grows rapidly. "If you cut it down in autumn, come April the place is blanketed again by new bamboo," elder A-dao said. Abundant and quick growing, bamboo plants can be an inexhaustible material for a good cause. Chen figures that they can cut down bamboo plants older than one year and make them into organic fertilizers which can supplant the chemical substances that local farmers are using today to improve the soil.

extended to improve the livelihoods of the villagers. Chen once asked a local farming family how much they earned a year growing vegetables.

roughly NT\$240,000 (US\$8,000), not much money. What's more, the market price of cabbage can be driven pitifully low during times of excess supply, when crops are plentiful. Chen wants to help villagers improve their livelihoods.

He said that they can heat bamboo plants that are less than one year old into charcoal. Adding such charcoal to textile fibers makes the fibers more capable of absorbing toxins and odors. Such fibers can be woven into products such as masks and socks for sale. The process of heating to convert bamboo into charcoal also distills a liquid that can be used as a cleaning or disinfecting agent.

"The important thing is that villagers must be able to sell whatever products they make," Chen said. "Therefore, we must help them create and open marketing channels so that they can produce, sell, and support their families."

Not only does he plan to help them sell their Chen saw a problem though. The Dahan River bamboo goods to outside people, he also plans to use bamboo to attract people from out of town to visit the village.

> "We can build traditional bamboo dwellings of the Atayal people and use them as B&Bs for outof-town visitors," Chen said. "We can organize indepth tours for visitors to allow them to experience life close to nature. This will be a place where man-made things like plastics are absent and all utensils come from the local mountain area." That being said, he intends to make electricity and Internet connections available. The plan is to capture the heat from making charcoal and reuse it to heat water and generate electricity.

> "The ultimate goal of this project is to attract young Atayal people to return to their home village and run these things so that they can carry on their Atayal heritage," Chen concluded, as he explained his plan for Zhenxibao village.

Marching on

Chen's schedule is packed every day. Besides his charity work and his coffee shop, he occasionally has to return to his former employer, the tech company, to help them with some patent and technology issues. "I haven't fallen ill in quite a few years because I just don't have time for that," The use of local bamboo plants can be further said the young man, mocking himself.

In the high-tech circle in Hsinchu, a fair number of people have quit their jobs to pursue philanthropic endeavors, as Chen himself did. But

When he was working for a tech company, Chen and his colleagues put on stage plays for children in remote villages. They also took the youngsters to Hsinchu to visit college campuses. COURTESY OF CHEN SHI-W









unlike him, most of them did so when they were in their late 40s or even 50s—at a stage when they were more financially established. Chen quit before he even turned 30. His decision befuddled his family and friends.

Chen explained his decision. He believes that the best time to do things that you want to do is now, not later when you can financially afford it or when you have the time—because by that time you might not have the energy to do it.

Helping disadvantaged people to become more independent has been Chen's overarching objective. He points out that it takes no less money and energy to initiate a project to help disadvantaged people become more self-sufficient than to start up a new for-profit company. He is also quick to point out that the return on investment for the former is

Chen (left) and a farmer scout land that might be used for an organic farm. Chen plans to help villagers in Zhenxibao farm using earth-friendly methods, without chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

With his brains and expertise, Chen could have easily landed any tech job with substantial paychecks, but he chose instead to pursue charity projects to help underprivileged people. Though others may not understand his choice, he marches forward on his path, sure and confident.

far, far less impressive than for the latter, if your yardstick is merely monetary metrics. But he knows that there are other metrics that such a yardstick cannot possibly fathom. How, for example, do you quantify the joy you feel when a person, with your help, begins to live a better life?

As Chen pushes ahead with his various projects, he does one other thing that may be equally important: cultivate younger people who want to follow in his footsteps. He has delegated smaller projects to younger people on his team in the hope that they may one day strike out on their own.

"The value of life is to contribute what you have to help create a better world," Chen said, summing up eloquently his life's work.

Little Smiling Sun

By Zeng Xiu-yi

Translated by Wu Hsiao-ting Paintings by Guo Zhe-yong

uo Zhe-yong (郭哲雍), a lean 12th grader, speaks slowly, giving people an impression of being circumspect. He likes to paint—and he has a talent for it too. He says he enjoys the peaceful feeling of carefree abandon when he loses himself in a world of lines and colors.

In addition to being a good painter, he excels in school. He graduated summa cum laude from junior high in 2015 and tested into the Architecture Department of Daan Vocational High School in Taipei the same year. Mature and considerate, he chose to study architecture because he wanted to help with his family's finances. Architecture graduates have a better opportunity of landing a job than graduates with a fine arts degree, and he wants to share his mother's financial burden as soon as he can.

Mom is gone

Zhe-yong was diagnosed with Asperger's it a high level of concentration. syndrome (often referred to as a mild form of



acterized by difficulty with social interactions and a restricted range of interests. Because of his disorder, it was hard for Zhe-yong to settle down and focus. However, when it came to things he was interested in, he could exhib-

Zhe-yong's father passed away when he autism) when he was around three. was five. His mother, Zhou Ya-lin (周亞霖), Asperger's is a developmental disorder charwas later diagnosed with bipolar disorder and put on medication. A side effect of this were sent away, one to a temporary shelter medicine was drowsiness. Zhe-yong, in second grade at the time, had to get up and go to school on his own. He also had to call home Ya-lin's condition improved. She was very from school every day to wake his mom so that she wouldn't oversleep and miss work.

"Miss Lin," he said to his teacher one day. "I forgot my coin purse today. May I borrow a coin from you so I can call home to wake my mom?"

"Your mom's been taking medicine again so she has difficulty getting up on her own?" asked the teacher

Zhe-yong bowed his head and mumbled

"Here you go," the teacher said as she handed him a few coins.

"Thank you, Miss Lin." Holding the coins in one hand, Zhe-yong walked briskly to a payphone.

"Hello, Mom," he said into the mouthpiece. "Are you up? Remember to go to work." He also reminded her to pick up his younger brother from the child care center in the afternoon. She said that she would.

One time, in a fit of bipolar rage, Ya-lin was unable to keep her temper in check, and she beat Zhe-yong and his brother severely.

"Mom, please stop!" Zhe-yong cried. "We promise we'll be good in the future. Stop beating us, please." The two brothers knelt in the living room, tears streaming down their cheeks, and begged their mother for mercy. Red welts surfaced on the brothers' tender skin.

Knowing that her emotions had run away with her again, Ya-lin looked at her little boys with deep remorse. Each of them was now hugging one of her legs and sobbing uncontrollably in fear.

Their cries eventually drew the attention of their neighbors, who reported the family to social services. Taipei City social workers listed them as a high-risk family and put Ya-lin on compulsory treatment. The two brothers future," she thought.

and the other to a foster home.

After about a month of hospital treatment, worried about her two children, especially Zhe-yong, since he had Asperger's. Accompanied by a social worker, she visited him at the shelter. Staffers there let the mother and son meet in the reception room.

"Zhe-yong, Mommy is here to see you," the anxious mother said to her son when they met, lightly tugging at his hand. She wanted to hug him, but the boy just hung his head low and played with a toy car in his hands. At times he would raise his head and shoot her a glance, his eyes asking her why she had abandoned him. She felt so guilty and remorseful that tears spilled out of her eyes.

"Zhe-yong," the social worker said to him, "your mom has come especially to see you." She patted him on his head and encouraged him to get closer to his mother.

The boy ignored the social worker and his mom and went to a book case in the reception room. He rummaged around in the book case, seemingly looking for a certain title. After a little while he found the book he was looking for.

"Zhe-yong, you're a good kid. You like reading so much," the social worker praised him. However, she and Ya-lin both fell silent when they saw the book's title: Mom Is Gone.

Positive influences

After Ya-lin's condition stabilized, her two sons went back to live with her, and the family was finally reunited.

Ya-lin made a point of accompanying Zheyong to an early intervention program for autism at a hospital. In an art therapy session there, she was surprised to find that he could sit still and focus on painting for a good 15 minutes. She was so happy her eyes welled with tears. "Maybe artistic creation is in his

no longer take her son to the hospital for the therapy program. Hospital social workers referred their case to Tzu Chi and asked for help. Soon thereafter, Tzu Chi volunteers ings to give to others, Zhe-yong began savtook over from Zhe-yong's mother and ing spare change in a coin bank and donatbegan accompanying the boy to the hospital. They found Zhe-yong a polite, well-man- warmed to see her son paying forward the nered kid, but having Asperger's syndrome love he had received from others. She was he was like a locked door that kept his emo- very grateful for the positive influences of tions in. They could never tell whether he the Tzu Chi volunteers, and her trust of was happy, angry, or sad.

The volunteers did their best to unlock the door. They tried to talk to him about his school life, the books he was reading, or any other topic that might interest a young boy. No matter how hard they tried, his answers to their questions were always very short, as if he were consciously blocking them from tive attitude spilled over to Ya-lin, making catching a glimpse into his inner world.

One time, the volunteers gave him a book called *The Little Sun's Smiles*, which illustrated Master Cheng Yen's teachings with cartoons. Zhe-yong was immediately drawn to the illustrations in the book and even discussed the contents with the volunteers.

Zhe-yong's mother later told the volunteers that her son liked the book very much, so the volunteers brought him more books in the same series.

Zhe-yong put the books on his nightstand and read a few pages every night before going to sleep. He was in third grade at the time. The books' impact on him was obvious. He became a more considerate child, often sharing household chores with his mom, including mopping the floor and doing the dishes. He told visiting Tzu Chi volunteers that after reading the books he rarely quarreled with his brother or classmates any more or talked back to his mother.

The volunteers asked him what words of the Master's he liked the best. He answered: "Nothing is impossible with confidence, perseverance, and courage." When they asked him why, he said, "One should face difficul-

Later, she found a full-time job and could ties with optimism." His mother, a long-time sufferer of bipolar disorder, was very pleased to hear such a mature and wise reply.

> Learning from Master Cheng Yen's teaching it to help the needy. Ya-lin's heart them only grew deeper.

> The Master's teachings were like a window through which the sun shone straight into the family's world. Besides calling home from school every morning to wake up his mom, Zhe-yong often encouraged her to smile more and be happy. Zhe-yong's posiher more upbeat as well.

> Volunteers brought other uplifting and inspiritional books to the family, and they offered their assistance when the two brothers encountered problems in life or school. Volunteers also took the family to Tzu Chi activities.

> When he was in fifth grade, Zhe-yong started participating in a Tzu Chi tutoring program where children from underprivileged families regularly gathered and received help with their schoolwork from Tzu Chi volunteers, including members of the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA). Zhe-yong especially liked to chat with Sun Min-vi (孫敏翊), a TCCA member. He felt at ease in the tutoring class and opened up easily. Now a vocational high school student, Zhe-yong still clearly remembers Sun Min-yi and other TCCA members who gave him a lot of help with schoolwork when he was younger.

> Tzu Chi volunteers have accompanied the family for about a decade now. They have witnessed over the years how the boys have grown. At the same time, their work has helped bring stability to the family.

Zhe-yong showed a talent for painting in elementary school. When he entered junior high, his excellent performance secured him a spot in a class for artistically gifted students. He received special lessons as part of the class in drawing, watercolors, print making, oil painting, and other media. His works stood out and were often entered into art contests, for which he was frequently awarded prizes.

After he tested into the Architecture Department of Daan Vocational High School, he developed a passion for architecture. Having found something he loved and could pursue as a career, he became more confident and cheerful. He now talks easily with Tzu Chi volunteers about what he is studying. He revels in the training he receives at the school, whether it be in theory or practice. His grounding in the fine arts stands him in good stead as he hones his abilities as a future architect.

Master Cheng Yen's teachings have instilled in him an attitude of modesty. He knows that while he need not hide his light under a bushel, being humble is the way to get along well with other people. This is especially important in the field of architecture. Every architectural work is a result of teamwork. You can't have an overblown ego and think only of yourself if you want to work in the field; otherwise you will become a burden to others.

When Zhe-yong was a junior in his school, his class elected four students to volunteer at a project organized by the Association of organization in Taiwan that usually constructs buildings in remote, disadvantaged communities. Žhe-yong was one of the students elected. He was thrilled to be able to participate in the project and go to a far-off too. Her boy had grown to be a young man village in Hsinchu, northern Taiwan, to build a reading room for an elementary school. He greater good of society.



Humanitarian Architecture, a non-profit had received a lot of help from others growing up, and this project would give him an opportunity to give back to society. He was as happy as could be.

His mom was happy and proud of him who knows to contribute his skills for the

From Homelessness to Home of Hope

By Riani Purnamasari and Ruth Putryani Saragih

Translated by Tang Yau-yang

Without the shield of their family or home country, these Afghan youngsters ended up on the streets of *Jakarta, Indonesia.* Now they have a better place to stay.



Joia, a 14-year-old boy from Afghanistan. "I ■ miss my mother very much." He had first met some Tzu Chi volunteers in Jakarta, Indonesia. He and eight fellow Afghan youths were then living on the streets, all having been forced to flee their home country.

Afghanistan, long plagued by war, is a major source of refugees. Countless people from the nation have been forced to seek shelter in other countries. Bismillah Joia's escape started with a flight from his country to India, where he took another flight to Malaysia. He traveled by ship for the last leg of his journey from Malaysia to Indonesia. To board the ship, he had to cross a 30-meter (98-foot) walkway. It was dark and he

> was very scared. "I covered my eyes with a cloth so I wouldn't see the choppy sea below," he said, his eyes welling with tears as he recalled that time.

After the boy arrived in Indonesia with eight other Afghan youths, they camped on the street just outside the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in central Jakarta, waiting to be assigned to a shelter. They slept there for two months, exposed to the elements and relying on the mercy of passersby for food. The sun beat down on them during the day, and the lower temperatures at night were uncomfortably cold. They often starved, never knowing when another meal might come their way.

A home at last

There are currently more than 14,000 refugees and asy-

Refugees camp on a street outside the UNHCR office in central Jakarta, waiting to be placed into a shelter.

got separated from my family," said Bismillah lum seekers living in Indonesia. They are not allowed to work, and there are not enough shelters to house them. Many camp outside the office of the UNHCR in the hope that they may get a bed in a shelter.

> Tjhin Hong Lin (陳豐靈) is a Tzu Chi volunteer and CEO of DAAI TV Indonesia. In May 2016, when he learned that minors were among those camping outside the UNHCR office, he organized some fellow volunteers to visit the youngsters with him.

> The volunteers subsequently rented a house for those nine Afghan youths. They provide them with food and teach them working skills. The youths receive instruction in computers as well as the English and Indonesian languages. The volunteers also arranged for two adult refugees, Kamran Ali, 30, and Hussain Rasooli, 20, to step in as coboarders and caretakers for the boys.

> The house is fondly referred to as the Home of Hope. Life greatly improved for the youth with the new living arrangement, and a stable life no longer seemed so out of reach. Bismillah Joia chose to study mechanics because he hopes to become a good electrician and plumber one day. Others opted for something else to their liking, such as cooking or barbering.

> Volunteers arrange for the boarders to exercise regularly. They play volleyball and futsal (a type of football) and they swim to keep in shape and build up their camaraderie. Volunteers also invite them to Tzu Chi events, which they never miss for anything. For example, they did their best to help with a blood drive in central Jakarta, from the preparatory stage to the very end of the event. They even donated blood themselves.

> "I was scared—that was the first time I had ever donated blood," said Hussain Rasooli. "But I worked hard to overcome my fear, focusing on how my blood would be able to help some sick

> Bismillah Joia and the other boarders also volunteer at a Tzu Chi recycling station. They contribute to the foundation's environmental cause by helping reclaim reusable resources. They have become very good at sorting different types of plastics. Recycling is a sweaty job, but they are happy to contribute what they can.



Preparing for the future

As these boys settled into their new life, learning new things and skills along the way, they gradually started to feel more hopeful and less hateful, sad, and dispirited. To better prepare them for the future, volunteers have invited them to intern at Tzu Chi organizations, doing work in such areas as finance, administration, and cooking, applying the skills they have acquired in real-life situations.

Since these youngsters are all school age, it Moving on would be best for them to attend school. In July Haidari, Shokrullah Ashkari, Bismillah Joia, Arman Haidari, and Reza Rezaie began auditing courses ranging from seventh to eleventh grade at the Tzu Chi school in Cengkareng. Three months later, Yonus, Sayed Hujatullah Azizi, Abdulkholiq Ahmadi, and Zainullah Hajizada joined them at the school to audit grade-11 classes.

The students at the school eagerly helped their new classmates, knowing they had a limited command of the Indonesian language. They translated for them with an online tool and helped them study and assimilate into the new campus and new culture. Most importantly, they taught them to use the Indonesian language.

As young as they were, the Afghan youths had been through many trials in life and had been out of school for years. Life on campus—making new

Boarders at the Home of Hope (the first two rows) pose at a Tzu Chi event.

friends, meeting new teachers, and taking part in new activities—has set their minds free of the agony of being refugees, if only for now. Though they still miss their families, they feel they still have hope for the future.

Indonesia is a country of transition for 2017, when a new semester started, Bismellah Bismillah Joia and the other boarders at the Home of Hope. If all works well, the UNHCR will eventually assign them to another country where they can live permanently.

After living in the Home for almost a year, Hussain Rasooli bid farewell to Indonesia in May 2017 and set off to settle in Australia. By that time, his fellow boarders and Tzu Chi volunteers had become more than friends to him. After all they had been through together, they had become like his family. It was very hard to say good-bye.

"Do your best," Hussain Rasooli said to his fellow Afghans. "Don't be lazy, and don't complain." Those were probably the best pieces of advice he could give them. No matter what the circumstances, it is important to be brave and to never cease learning and improving oneself. A better future might be just ahead.

Doctors at My Home

By Wei Yu-xian

Translated by Tang Yau-yang Photos by Shi Long-wen

Motion-impaired needy people in Zhuolan, northern Taiwan, long for the monthly visits of Tzu Chi medical volunteers.



TIMA volunteers sing for an elderly man before they conclude their monthly visit to his home.

hen 74-year-old Xu, who lives in Zhuovehicles pulling into his front yard, he shouted loudly to let the visitors know that he was inside. The last thing that he wanted was for In spite of her illnesses, Mrs. Xu was able to cook the visitors to turn around and leave because they thought nobody was home. He had wanted to see them for some time, but he was unable to go out that A-kai also came by regularly to help him go to to meet them because he was bedridden. A stroke 18 years before had almost completely paralyzed his left side.

Before, when the visitors called on Xu on their monthly visit, his wife was always waiting for them in the family living room, but she was nowhere to be seen on this day. Followed by a group of Tzu Chi volunteers, Dr. Ji Bang-jie (紀邦杰), head of the Taichung chapter of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA), walked through the open door of Xu's house before entering a dark room in which Xu was lying in a bed. The doctor handed some homemade bread to the old man and asked him where his wife was.

Xu told Dr. Ji that his daughter had placed his wife in a nursing home a couple of weeks before. The news surprised the visitors even though they knew that Mrs. Xu had dementia, diabetes, and Parkinson's disease. Xu explained that she had

Dr. Zhuo Xi-bin (right) leads other TIMA volunteers to their next destination in Zhuolan, where Zhuo has a private practice.

often fallen since their last visit. Concerned about lan, Miaoli, northern Taiwan, heard her safety, their daughter decided to put her in a rest home.

> "Who takes care of your meals now?" Ji asked. for her husband before she was sent away.

> "My friend A-kai does," Xu replied. He added the bathroom and that a government care provider visited him three times a week to bathe him. Xu's reply made Ji feel a little better.

> Xu used his right arm and leg to wiggle himself toward the edge of his bed. Doctors Ii and Zhuo Xi-bin (卓錫彬) and other volunteers immediately stepped forward and helped him into a wheelchair.

> Nurse Su Wei-ling (蘇瑋苓) checked Xu's blood pressure and found the readings to be within the normal range. After recording the numbers, the nurse sat down by Xu and told him to use his right foot to pull his left foot toward himself and count to five. She then held his right leg, straightened it, put the foot flat on the floor, and counted to ten. She repeated the exercises a few times more. All along, Xu did as he was told and he counted with her.

> Su was concerned that Xu's left arm and leg would wither further from disuse and that his right arm and leg might be injured from overuse, so she showed him a few exercises that he could do himself without help.





It is important for stroke patients to avoid a sedentary lifestyle. The more sedentary they are, the worse their blood circulation and the faster their deterioration. Su hopes to help patients like Xu by sharing her expertise with them, and she always encourages them to exercise more. "Our encouragement helps keep them going," said the nurse.

Before the volunteers concluded the visit. Su reminded Xu again to be sure to do the rehab exercises three times a day. Xu said he would do his best. He went on to say that he might no longer be here when the volunteers came back in a month. Now his daughter had found a good nursing home for his wife, she would put him into that same home. "It's better to have people take care of you," said Dr. Zhuo, who had come to this house to see Xu almost every month for two years now.

Zhuolan, a land of fruit

Many residents in Zhuolan are fruit farmers. As the TIMA volunteers traveled by car to the homes of the other people they had come to see, they saw pear orchards all along the road. Many small bags were tied to branches of the pear trees; in each bag was a pear, formed, growing, but not yet harvest-ready. The bags kept the ripening fruit out of the reach of hungry birds or insects searching for their next meal.

Bagging young fruit is but one of the backbreaking tasks that fruit farmers have to carry out. Another task is grafting—inserting one scion onto one stock in the hope of producing one marketable fruit. Performing these and many other needed tasks are hard enough when the farmer can stand Nurse Su Wei-ling (center) uses a towel to dry Huang's feet, even between the toes, after showing her how to soak her legs in warm water.

on a level surface, but some fruit trees in Zhuolan, a mountainous area, are planted on steep slopes. This greatly increases the difficulty of the farmers' work and forces them to distort their bodies into odd shapes in order to hold their footing enough to tend to the trees.

Prolonged hard labor often takes its toll, leaving indelible markings or irreversible consequences on the laborer. Huang, an elderly local woman, had

some such markings. After years of farming in an ergonomically unfriendly environment, she suffered from severe varicose veins in her legs, and her ten toes were bent so out of shape that she couldn't even wear flip-flops without making her toes chafed and bleeding.

Su Wei-ling knelt down beside Huang and carefully examined her feet, which were covered in lesions. The nurse told the old woman to soak her feet in warm water up to her calves every night and dry them with a towel. Because Huang spoke only the Hakka dialect and very limited Mandarin, Su talked to her through an interpreter, volunteer Cai Qin-sheng (蔡欽盛).

Su asked Huang's son, who lived in Kaohsiung, southern Taiwan, but who happened to be home on vacation, to fetch a pail of warm water. Then she asked Huang to put her feet in the pail and expand and contract her toes, counting to ten each time as they went. After Huang had repeated the exercises several times. Su took her feet out of the pail, put them on a stool, and dried them off with a towel. She even held Huang's toes apart so that she could reach and dry the space in between. "If the space between toes isn't properly dried," Su explained, "it becomes wet and warm, a hospitable breeding ground for germs. In a serious scenario it could lead to cellulitis."

Huang's children all lived elsewhere, so they could not help care for their mother. Fortunately, Huang was still quite mobile, so, before leaving, Su urged her to do what she had just taught her every day to help with her blood circulation and ease her symptoms of varicose veins.



Refusing to give up

The volunteers moved on to another home to see Li, who was hard of hearing. Dr. Ji had called her son ahead of time to make sure that she would be home for their visit.

Upon arriving, volunteer Cai Qin-sheng called out loudly in Hakka, but no one answered the door. Cai walked around the house, yelling into every window that he saw.

Li was a farmer for most of her life. Cai first met her three years before. At around that time, she had had a dispute with the county government over A free clinic at the community center her farmland. Consequently, she shunned all contacts with the outside world, including Tzu Chi at their homes, volunteers also conducted a free volunteers, but the volunteers continued to come to her home all the same. One year later, she still would not talk to them, but she was at least willing to let them into her home.

As he circled the house, Cai knew that Li was inside, so he kept calling out for her. Finally, the door opened.

had had a bad cold. They could hear the mucus in her throat as she breathed. Cai sat down next to her and talked into her ear: "Have you taken cold medicine?" She answered in one word: "Yes." Considering her usual reticence, that terse answer went a long way toward making Cai very happy.

Dr. Li Yong-pan (李永譽) examines a patient at a free clinic at a community center in Zhuolan.

"I just know that the passion of our volunteers absolutely can melt down the wall that anyone may have built to keep others out and herself in," Cai said, looking at the old woman. Amid the conversation the volunteers were carrying on, Li finally broke into a broad smile, the hard lines on her face softening. Cai was overjoyed.

Besides visiting people with limited mobility clinic at a local community center where treatments in internal medicine, dentistry, and traditional Chinese medicine were offered. Volunteer Huang Yi-qing (黃億青) provided complimentary haircuts for the underserved there. The event went on for the whole morning and attracted many townsfolk. It was a big change from the The volunteers went inside and found that Li usual quietness in this mountain community.

> Getting medical care is a big challenge for mobility-restricted people who have no family to take them around, especially in a mountain area like Zhuolan. The TIMA volunteers who visit the town every month must be a sight for sore eyes for many local residents.

Three Papaya Trees



friend gave me three papaya saplings, two neighbor. We each planted our young trees in our own front yards. The one my sister planted at her home grew tall and straight and yielded nearly 40 papayas. People who were lucky enough to get a taste of them raved about how yummy they were. The one grown in my neighbor's yard was blown out of shape in a typhoon. Yet despite its bent trunk, the tree bore quite a few fruits too, each of them large and well-shaped.

What about my papaya tree? Well, it didn't end up as well. It received plenty of sunlight, water, and other nutrients, but it still wilted in the end due to the gnawing of snails. When the friend who gave me the saplings visited me again, he confirmed that the tree was beyond hope. He gave me another sapling, and I planted it in the same place where the first one had been. Small and tender, the young papaya tree still couldn't compare with the lead to actions which in turn set forth a whole other two well-grown, robust trees.

I thought back to the time when the three of us were planting the saplings in our yards. My sister's husband said, "We'll take very good care of it." My neighbor said, "I'm sure mine will grow very well." I said, "When this sapling grows into a big tree, it will block the sun and make our living room dark."

Our mindsets affected the growth of the plants. of which I gave to my older sister and a It may seem that the ravages of snails led to the ruin of my tree, but the reason might not be so simple. All living beings in the world can perceive the world around them. They can feel whether the world is hostile or friendly towards them. Since I didn't like the tree's existence, it chose to die.

Master Cheng Yen teaches us to influence the world around us with a heart of sincere piety. A thought is like a seed. Whether we give rise to wholesome or bad thoughts can often determine how things turn out. Alas, foolish me. Confined by my knowledge of the physical world, I ignored the power of my thoughts.

We can learn so much from the living world. There are profound principles in everything around us—this is what those papaya trees taught me. Our thoughts can impact the world around us. Whether or not we are aware of it, our thoughts chain of reactions. While wholesome thoughts result in wholesome behavior, unwholesome thoughts result in unwholesome behavior, with positive and negative impacts respectively. When we harbor good thoughts, we begin to create circumstances leading to positive results. We must therefore be mindful of what we think.

By Zhu Yan-ling Translated by Wu Hsiao-ting Photo by Liu Zi-zheng

Have Your Fruit and Eat It Too



By Ng Hooi Lin Translated by Tang Yau-yang

Diabetics can eat only guavas and cherry tomatoes? They have to avoid fruits that are sweet? Let's hear what a dietician has to say. Proper knowledge of nutritional facts can lead to a healthier and happier life.

I visited an elderly woman not long ago. She was once my patient. We had not seen each other tes have long been outdated. There is no reason in a long time. She brought out a large plate of apple slices for me. "Wow! That's enough for several people," I said.

"You're so skinny, so eat a lot to help me." She explained that her husband often buys apples as offerings to the gods, but he buys them faster than the family can eat them. "So I have a big bag of apples in the fridge. I don't know what to do with eat too many." She is diabetic.

I asked her whether she ate fruit every day. "Sure, but only guavas," she replied.

I believe that if you or someone in your family is diabetic, you can probably relate to the dilemma in fruit choice. In this woman's case, it was based on the perception that guava is less sugary than most other fruits.

I have some personal experience with this too. When I was little, my father strictly avoided sweet fruit because of his diabetes. Back then, people believed that, because of their smaller molecules, sugars in fruits were easier to digest and absorb than those in rice. Thus rice would cause blood sugar to increase less than fruit would. I still remember that some diabetics back then would not touch fruit at all.

However, such beliefs about fruit and diabewhy diabetics should not enjoy the benefit and pleasure of eating fruit. Though fruit does contain some sugar, it also has many other important nutrients, such as vitamin C, potassium, magnesium, dietary fiber, and phytochemicals such as β-carotene and flavonoids. Instead of just avoiding all fruit, diabetics should refer to the glycemic index (GI) to choose food that is them," she said. "Apples are so sweet. I don't dare nutritious and does not wreak havoc on their blood sugar.

The glycemic index

When a person eats food containing carbohydrates, the carbohydrates are broken down into individual glucose molecules. These small molecules then enter the bloodstream, raising the level of blood glucose (blood sugar). The specific type of carbohydrate can vary from food to food, and the human body breaks down different carbohydrates at different speeds. The glycemic index of a food indicates how quickly that food can increase blood sugar.

A high-GI food leads to a quick surge of blood glucose. Therefore, foods with lower GIs are desirable because they help keep blood sugar levels stable.

A balanced diet is a key to controlling our blood sugar.

Eat in moderation.

Don't eat anything excessively just because you like it and it's low in GI.

Portion control is still important.



Generally, foods with a GI of 55 or less are classified as low-GI foods—the body converts them to glucose more slowly. The consumption of these foods does not abruptly raise the blood sugar levels. This is good for keeping blood sugar under control.

On the other hand, foods with a GI of at least 70 are considered high GI foods—the body converts them to glucose rather quickly. High-GI foods are detrimental to maintaining healthy blood sugar levels.

All fruits are not created equal

Three kinds of sugars are found in fruit: glucose, fructose, and sucrose. Of these three, fructose is the highest in sweetness but the lowest in GI. Therefore, sweeter fruits do not automatically mean a high GI score; conversely, less sweet fruits do not necessarily imply a low GI.

If you are diabetic, you do not need to emulate the elderly woman who ate only guava and shunned everything else. My advice is to eat lower-GI fresh fruit and shun dehydrated or canned fruit. The key is to eat in moderation. It is not advisable to eat too much of your favorite fruit simply because it is low in its GI value.

For diabetics, moderation means two servings

of fruit a day, each serving about the size of a fist. You may consider spacing out these two servings between meals, for example, one at ten in the morning and the other at between three and four in the afternoon.

A new way of life

When I teach patients about a diabetes diet, I sometimes see elderly people paying close attention and taking careful notes. I am often touched beyond description by their drive to learn despite their age. They use blood glucose machines at home to measure their blood sugar, record the name and quantity of the food they eat, look for the causal relationships between their food choices and their blood sugar levels, and tweak their diets accordingly. The readers may wish to keep a diary like theirs to find out what fruits to eat and the proper amounts to ingest to achieve the best blood glucose results for themselves.

Nutritional science doesn't advise favoring one particular food—a star food—over another in the name of controlling blood glucose levels. Instead, it advises a balanced, reasonable diet. Any diabetic who wants to better control their disease might want to take some time to learn about the glycemic index. It will be well worth it.



A Musical Angel

Beautiful music flows from the teenage girl's fingers as they glide effortlessly over the piano keys. But a closer look at the pianist reveals that her eyes are different from those of an ordinary person.

By Lai Chih-ming

Translated by Wu Hsiao-ting

Graphics by Yong Zi

Tai Min-xuan (蔡旻諼) cannot see. She was born with a blistering rash which led to her being diagnosed with incontinentia pigmenti, a rare genetic disorder that affects the skin, teeth, nails, hair, and central nervous system. Other symptoms can include eve abnormalities leading to vision loss, which was the case with Min-xuan.

Her parents were devastated when the doctor explained their baby daugh-

face in life. They cried over her, saying in their hearts, "Sweetheart, we're sorry. We didn't give vou a complete life."

Despite the grim fact facing them, Minxuan's parents dedicated themselves to raising her the best they could. Under their loving care, she grew up day by day. It wasn't long before she was ready to start school.

Because she was blind, her parents couldn't decide whether it would be better to enroll her in a special school or to mainstream her at a regular school. They asked around, seeking better for Min-xuan if she could attend school with regular kids. On that counsel, they decided to register their daughter at a mainstream school. Even though this would mean a lot more work for them, they wanted to give her as normal a life as possible.

Min-xuan was the only student in her school who was blind. When she first started, her mother, Chen Shu-ping (陳淑萍), accompanied her around the campus to help familiarize her with the environment, and she especially showed her how to get to very handy, she often had to wrack her brain the restrooms so she could go there on her to come up with devices that would be help-



ter's diagnosis and the challenges she would own. Min-xuan's classmates also helped her get around.

> Before long, Min-xuan was exploring the campus on her own with the help of her white cane. Such explorations helped her learn the layout of the school like the back of her hand. Even without her classmates to accompany her, she could walk from almost anywhere in the school back to her classroom without any problem.

> "That's really amazing, Min-xuan," some classmates marveled. "How do you do it?"

"It's no big deal, as long as you pay attenadvice. A teacher told them that it would be tion," she replied. "For example, when I get to the hallway near the school gate, I can feel a stronger draft there and I hear the sound of traffic."

> How could she learn alongside kids with vision? How did she attend classes and read textbooks designed for children who could

> Luckily for Min-xuan, her mom had a background in arts and crafts, and she made teaching aids for her daughter to facilitate her learning. Even so, even though she was

For example, she made cloth cutouts shaped like different body organs and stuck them to a board with Velcro based on the organs' position to one another to help her daughter learn about the human body. Another example was a modified weighing scale. Min-xuan couldn't see the needle and the little lines on a scale, so to help her understand how a scale worked, her mother removed the glass cover and made the lines three-dimensional so she could feel the needle and the lines.

Before a new school semester began, the team," Min-xuan's mother exclaimed. mother would ask her daughter's teachers for the textbooks they would be using. She would Musical talent review them, design teaching aids, and even was always one of the top students in her from the kitchen and asked Min-xuan's moth-

ful to her daughter. She was very creative. class. She often won prizes in composition writing and speech contests as well.

> To help his daughter, Min-xuan's father, Cai Huan-lin (蔡煥麟), a computer engineer, designed software that could print out normal text and braille side by side to permit reading by both seeing and blind people. That way, Min-xuan had no problem attending classes with kids with normal eyesight.

> If we compare Min-xuan to an angel, her parents are like the wings that help her fly high in the world. "We three make a great

When Min-xuan was not yet three years teach Min-xuan some of the lessons in old, her family discovered her musical talent. advance. With her mother's help, Min-xuan One day Min-xuan's grandmother emerged



er: "Who was playing the toy piano just now?"

"No one," she replied.

"Well, I heard someone playing it," the grandmother said. She turned to Min-xuan and asked, "Min-xuan, were you playing the piano just now? Could you play some more for Grandma?"

But the little girl was so absorbed in playing with her other toys that she paid no heed to her grandmother's request.

The next morning, her parents heard her playing the toy piano too. They were amazed to find that she could play from memory songs that she often

song required multiple notes at the same time, she knew which keys to press. They took her for an assessment and were told that their mance in music and other areas. daughter was highly talented in music.

Min-xuan started formal piano lessons when she was just three years old. Her strong musical sense and remarkable memory for tunes continued to impress people around her. One day, her mother discovered another musical gift of hers when she heard her playing one tune with her left hand and another tune with her right. Min-xuan's teacher said that that was very difficult to do.

"I hear that only very smart people can do that," Min-xuan said. "But I'm not smart. I attribute it to God's grace."

Min-xuan has a creative side as well. Instead of simply playing others' musical pieces, she writes melodies herself as well.

It is said that when God closes one door, he opens another. This is certainly true in Minxuan's case. She was elected a model student in elementary school, and in junior high she her years.



heard. They discovered later that even when a won the 2013 Presidential Educational Award for her positive attitude in facing her life's challenges and for her outstanding perfor-

> When Min-xuan was younger, she once asked her mom if she had ever won a big lottery prize.

"Yes," her mom answered.

"What was it?"

"You," the mother said.

"Me?"

"Yes, because you're priceless."

"Am I more precious than diamonds?"

"Sure!"

"I know why," said Min-xuan. "Because there are countless diamonds in the world, but I'm the one and only person like me in the world."

In saying this, Min-xuan expressed the idea that everyone is unique and special, that everyone can shine in their own way. Apparently, in addition to her musical talent, Min-xuan has a gift of wisdom beyond

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The Buddha says:

Faith is a good companion, and wisdom is a good guide. Seek the light of enlightenment, and avoid the darkness of ignorance.

If you trust in the proper path and methods of spiritual cultivation, you will have no worries, you will attain tranquil contemplation, and you will find freedom from suffering.

When you have no desires, then you have no worries. The Dharma, which teaches us to have no desires, is a state of tranquil contemplation.

Because if you have no worries, then your mind will always rest in contemplation and your spirit will be clear and calm.



Hsieh Chia-hsun, hostess of a television travel program, visited Master Cheng Yen.

The Master said, "As a TV hostess, you can provide in-depth reports on places where people are suffering. You can teach your viewers that indulging in hedonistic pleasures does not mean that they are blessed. True, lasting blessings are found in being able to give to others."

Translated by E E Ho and W.L. Rathje; drawings by Tsai Chih-chung; coloring by May E. Gu

Tzu Chi Events Around the World



Cambodia

On April 28, Tzu Chi Cambodia held a free clinic and aid distribution for impoverished people living around the Dangkor landfill in Phnom Penh, the national capital. This was the third such event the local Tzu Chi chapter conducted at the landfill, after the first two in October and December 2017.

Volunteers in Cambodia and their counterparts from Singapore worked together to serve local residents. Besides treatments in internal medicine, dentistry, and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), daily goods such as rice, clothes, and shoes were distributed. Free haircuts and showers were also offered at the venue.

On the morning of April 28, volunteers arrived at the venue to set it up. Some prepared the site for the free clinic, some set up shower stalls, and some put out clothes for the residents to take their pick. The clothes had been divided into categories for men, women, and children to make it easier for recipients to choose from.

A volunteer teaches some children how to properly brush their teeth at a free clinic and aid distribution event in Cambodia.

Keo Channarith, a manager of the landfill, thanked Tzu Chi volunteers for their extended help to the local underprivileged people. He said that volunteers not only distributed aid to the needy people but also cared for their health and shared with them good personal hygiene habits. He encouraged the local residents to recognize the effort, time, and energy that had to be put in to make the provision of aid possible and cherish what they were given.

At the event, volunteers learned that there was a local resident who needed medical help but who couldn't come to the venue due to his limited mobility. In response, a few medical workers visited the man at his home.

The patient, by the name of Moung Chhao Mum, fell down from an African oil palm tree seven years ago and badly injured his spinal

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cord. Despite having three surgeries already, his condition had not improved much. He had difficulty moving around, and therefore he spent most of his time in bed. His buttocks had, as a result, developed a sore. If he visited a doctor for treatment, transportation alone cost him 25 U.S. dollars, so most of the time he chose to endure the pain and discomfort without seeking help. The visiting medical workers carefully cleaned and dressed his sore. Afterwards, the man said that his pain had greatly reduced. He even got out of bed, walked around with the help of two crutches, and smiled brightly at his family and the volunteers.

The free clinic served about 300 patient visits. Many patients came out of the TCM clinic with a smiling face. Yem Sokhon said happily after trying acupuncture, "My headache is gone and my back no longer hurts so much. I can return to work now!"

Many people used the shower stalls and had their hair cut. The word "orkun," which means "thank you" in the local language, could often be heard at the event. Volunteers thanked the locals for giving them a chance to help them, and the locals thanked the volunteers for helping them. Tzu Chi will continue to care for local residents to help make their lives better.

United States

Hawaii's Kilauea volcano erupted in May, flinging out ash and smoke into the sky and lava into nearby neighborhoods. Many roads and houses were damaged, and thousands of people were forced to evacuate.

On June 2, a team of six Tzu Chi volunteers flew from Oahu, the third largest of the Hawaiian Islands, to the Big Island, where the volcano is, to assess the situation. On their visit to a shelter for evacuees, the team learned that the Salvation Army was in charge of organizing charity groups which could provide meals to shelter residents. When the team told Salvation Army staffers that Tzu Chi could provide shelter residents with hot vegetarian meals, the staffers were happy to hear that since some evacuees were vegetarians.

On the morning of June 3, 14 people, including Emily Kukulies of Hawaii VOAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), several medical professionals, and a number of Tzu Chi volunteers arrived at the Big Island to join the team that had already arrived and some local volunteers to serve vegetarian meals and offer free medical services to evacuees.



A Tzu Chi volunteer prepares desserts for volcano eruption evacuees. The Kilauea volcano on the Big Island of Hawaii erupted in May, forcing the evacuation of many people. Tzu Chi volunteers provided meals and medical services for victims on June 3.

The services were offered at the Pahoa Neighborhood Facility. The menu included sushi made with Tzu Chi instant rice, curry on rice, spring rolls, and desserts with fruits. Volunteers Wu Jing-jing (吳菁菁) and Lin Shu-fen (林淑芬) shared with evacuees the story of how Tzu Chi had developed instant rice for use in disaster situations. Kukulies served lemonade, among other things.

Before the free medical clinic began, Tzu Chi staffer Johan Alwall led the people present in a prayer. Six doctors and one nurse staffed the clinic. They gave health consultations, took blood pressure, measured blood sugar, and gave out prescription drugs. Bob Engler of the Red Cross pointed out that the medical services were very helpful to the victims.

The volunteers brought two boxes of blankets to give to anyone who needed them. Kuava de Poe, an evacuee, was amazed when she heard that these blankets had been made from recycled PET bottles. She expressed her joy at receiving one.

United States

On May 27, 2018, a storm led to flash floods in Ellicott City and Baltimore, Maryland, devastating buildings and property. Tzu Chi volunteers rushed to survey the situation the following day, but they were unable to reach the scene because of road closures. At a disaster response center, they met some Red Cross staffers and were able to acquire relevant information from them.

Four days later, on May 31, volunteers provided dinner to 120 people at two shelters. On June 5, after some roads had been reopened, five volunteers entered the disaster area. They visited six bution that started at ten o'clock and ended at affected families. Four of the families had their basements flooded.

On June 8, Red Cross provided a roster of flood victims to Tzu Chi volunteers, who immediately planned a distribution of cash cards on June 10 at Beechfield Elementary/Middle School in southwest Baltimore.

Thirty-eight volunteers worked together to carry out the event. Six of the volunteers were college students. One of their responsibilities was to verify the identity of recipients, a responsibility that they expertly discharged because of their familiarity with computers.

Volunteers helped recipients fill out the neceshad gotten started and how the foundation is

mostly funded by small donations from many kind-hearted people. Volunteers also listened attentively to recipients as the latter related their terrifying flood stories.

"The pressure was so hard it cracked the side window to the basement," said Brittany Ball, "and there was water pouring into the basement.... I lost everything and today Tzu Chi's help gave us a starting point."

Tzu Chi held a groundbreaking ceremony on June 19, 2018, at San Min Junior High School in Hualien, eastern Taiwan, for the construction of a new school building and a covered playground.

Renee Waller, another aid recipient, told volunteers that what she had needed was somebody that she could talk to and who would give her encouragement to carry on—which, she said, was exactly what she had gotten from the volunteers at this distribution. She said that she had gotten a coin bank from Tzu Chi into which she would start putting money to donate to needy people. She added that though she probably wouldn't be able to contribute much, every little bit helped.

Angela Roberts told volunteers that she and her family had lived in a basement apartment, which now was all gone. The financial assistance Tzu Chi gave them on this day would help them pay for a hotel for another week.

All told, 71 families benefited from this distrifour. Blankets made from recycled PET bottles were also distributed to victims.

On June 19, Tzu Chi held a groundbreaking ceremony at San Min Junior High School in Hualien, eastern Taiwan. The foundation was constructing a new building and a covered playground for the school under Project Disaster Reduction, an undertaking initiated by Tzu Chi to erect new buildings to replace damaged or aged ones at schools in Taiwan to help ensure a safer learning environment for students.

San Min Junior High School was established in sary forms and told them about how Tzu Chi 1968. After half a century, classrooms and other facilities were old and in bad shape. Liu Mei-zhen





(劉美珍), head of the Hualien County government Three student clubs at Chung Cheng University education department, thanked Tzu Chi for helping improve dangerous school buildings in Hualien. Due to the financial constraints of the county government, the foundation has helped build new buildings for six schools in the county. San Min was the seventh. Liu especially commended the buildings already completed by Tzu Chi, which had sailed through a major earthquake that hit Hualien on February 6, 2018, with flying colors. It showed the care the foundation had put in to ensure the safety of the buildings. Taiwan is prone to earthquakes and typhoons, which makes the sturdiness of school buildings especially important.

San Min Junior High is famous for its baseball on five buses for the event. team. To serve the school's athletic needs, a covered playground which can be used in bad weather was included in the rebuilding blueprint for the school.

Taiwan

To raise more students' awareness of environmental issues, some student clubs at National Chung Cheng University (CCU) in Chiayi, southern Taiwan, organized a beach cleanup in Haomei, Chiayi, on June 2.

mobilized 210 people to clean up a beach in Haomei, Chiayi, on June 2. After two hours, they picked up 116 kilograms of garbage from the beach. WANG CUI-YUN

By launching the event, the organizers—the CCU chapter of the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA), the Green Club, and the Student Association—hoped to bring to students' attention the problem of plastic pollution in the sea, and to further motivate them to use less plastic and to sort their garbage properly. Some students from Min Sheng Junior High School in Chiavi also took part. Altogether 210 people went to the beach

The cleanup took place in the afternoon. After the organizers briefed the participants, everyone picked up the tools that they would need, such as scissors, tongs, and garbage bags, put on gloves, and walked towards the beach under the hot sun.

Wu Zi-yang (吳子楊), a core member of TCCA, said that Master Cheng Yen encourages all TCCA members to participate in Tzu Chi work in their spare time, nurture compassion, and work with people of all kinds. "Taking part in today's event

allows us to work with other clubs and strengthen our relationship with them," said Wu. "While cleaning up the beach, we also get a chance to better appreciate the meaning of environmental protection and to further ponder and discuss what we can do for the Earth."

Yang Jing-jing (楊菁菁), a participant, grew up in a mountain area in northern Taiwan, so she did not have many occasions to be so close to the sea. At the beach cleanup, she and a fellow student cut the plastic strings that had been tied to some oyster racks. Many people in the area are oyster farmers, so there were quite a few broken oyster racks strewn on the beach.

After two hours of labor, the event participants removed 116 kilograms (255 pounds) of garbage from the beach. The area was left cleaner, and less trash would end up in the ocean.

Guatemala

Guatemala's Fuego volcano, about 25 miles from the nation's capital, suddenly erupted on June 3, engulfing towns in heavy, thick ash. Rock, ash, and hot gases swept down the volcano, burying communities and blocking roads. Many people were forced into shelters.

Local Tzu Chi volunteers jumped into action to help victims. On June 5, volunteers prepared vegetarian stir-fried rice and deep-fried wonton enough for 250 people—and brought them to a shelter set up at Jose Martí School in Escuintla.

Around 1,000 people from five villages had taken shelter at the school. One carpenter had

safely fled with his wife and four children, but having lost everything he looked gloomy. Another family told the visiting volunteers that everyone in their family had emerged from the disaster unscathed because they had quickly decided to abandon all of their belongings and flee for their lives. This family seemed able to take their loss more lightly.

It was hot on that day, but the hot meals distributed by the volunteers were very popular at the shelter. The survivors' smiles upon receiving the food warmed the volunteers' hearts.

Due to the popularity of the food, staff from the National Coordination for Disaster Reduction, the government agency in charge of coordinating disaster relief efforts, asked Tzu Chi volunteers to serve more food to survivors. Since there was already an abundance of daily goods donated by kind-hearted people, volunteers decided to focus on serving hot meals. On June 14, they distributed more food at Jose Martí School and another shelter. They also gave children balloon toys, which, as could be expected, were a hit with the youngsters.

Brazil

Tzu Chi Brazil has been holding regular monthly free clinics for the underserved since 1996. On April 15, 2018, volunteers went to a school in Itaim Paulista to conduct one such clinic. The venue was about one hour by car from the Tzu Chi office in São Paulo.

At seven in the morning, the office was already

packed with doctors and volunteers who were getting all the needed supplies and equipment ready for the event. Even though similar events had been held many times before, participants went through everything carefully to make sure nothing was missed.

When the Tzu Chi team arrived at the venue, they saw a long queue of people waiting. This meant that they would be busy with treating patients this morning. But, far from being daunted, they

Volunteers distribute hot food to victims of a volcanic eruption in Guatemala.





A long line of people wait for the beginning of a free clinic held by Tzu Chi Brazil at a school in Itaim Paulista. COURTESY OF TZU CHI BRAZII

were very happy because it meant that they would be providing services that the locals needed badly.

The event began at nine o'clock. Volunteers signed the people in and checked their blood pressures and blood sugar.

Entrepreneur Chen Ming-hong (陳明宏) has for years donated prescription lenses for Tzu Chi free clinics to be given to patients. Like many times before, he was on hand at this free clinic to help, such as moving medical equipment.

Josefa Maria d. Silva, 72, had a heart condition. Because she couldn't move around easily, she came in a wheelchair in the company of her daughter-in-law. She saw a doctor at the cardiology clinic and had an electrocardiogram. The daughter-in-law told Tzu Chi volunteers that a doctor at a government health clinic had ordered an electrocardiogram for Silva in November of last year, but she was still waiting for her turn to have that service at a public hospital, for which two years was the normal wait time. Consequently, she and Silva really appreciated the medical services provided by Tzu Chi.

granddaughter Kauony to see the doctor. Cristina taught the Portuguese language at this school. She said she was feeling very uncomfortable because of the rashes on her skin, and her granddaughter had been losing hair abnormally. The doctor examined them and prescribed medicines. Cristina praised the doctor for his professionalism and gentleness.

Adilson, 30, came to the clinic because he felt numbness on one of his hands. The doctor prescribed him a medicine to help with his blood circulation. He and his wife, Cintia Goncalves, had been volunteering with Tzu Chi for half a year. They commended the doctors and volunteers for their patience and great service towards the patients.

Isabel Alves, 17, had had a headache for a while, and she could not see the blackboard clearly at school. She was thankful for the free eveglasses that Tzu Chi gave away at the clinic. With four children, her family could not afford eveglasses for her. While she was choosing a frame for her glasses, three volunteers stood around her to help her pick one. They suggested a gold-colored frame for its popularity this year.

At the end of the day, 11 doctors and 160 volunteers had served 491 attendee visits. That number included medical services and even free hair-Kitty Cristina, 51, brought her 12-year-old cuts, which were also offered at the event.

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Forget our achievements but not our mistakes. Forget the trespasses of others but not the kindness they have shown us.

-Master Cheng Yen

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