

Tzu Chi Missions

Written by
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In 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen established the Tzu Chi Foundation in Hualien, on the east coast of Taiwan. With the spirit of self-discipline, diligence, frugality, and perseverance, Tzu Chi set out to help the poor and relieve suffering. Over time, the foundation's mission started with Charity and extended into Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture. Tzu Chi originated in the remote Hualien area and expanded to all five major continents of the world with chapters and offices in 47 countries. Tzu Chi provides aid to over 69 nations. Its volunteers selflessly contribute through a mindset of gratitude, expressing their sincerest care and support to each and every individual in need.

The shared goal of Tzu Chi volunteers is to cultivate sincerity, integrity, faith, and honesty within while exercising kindness, compassion, joy, and selflessness to humanity through concrete actions. Transcending the bounds of race, nationality, language, and religion, they serve the world under the notion that “when others are hurting, we feel their pain; when others suffer, we feel their sorrow”. Not only do the volunteers endeavor to promote the universal value of “Great Love,” they also fully employ the humanitarian spirit of Chinese culture to its utmost. Tzu Chi Foundation's “Four Major Missions” consist of Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanity. Furthermore, considering ongoing efforts in Bone Marrow Donation, Environmental Protection, Community Volunteerism, and International Relief, these eight concurrent campaigns are collectively known as “Tzu Chi's Eight footprints”

Mission of Charity

“Educating the rich to help the poor; inspiring the poor to realize their riches”

Tzu Chi pays attention not only to the effectiveness of its aid and assistance; it also focuses on bringing out the good in everyone. By helping the poor, the rich get to feel the happiness of giving and find the true meaning of life. Likewise, the poor are motivated to harbor love abundantly and help out those less fortunate than themselves, so that they break away from perceived helplessness and despair. Consequently, more people become willing to help out others while enriching themselves through contribution.

Mission of Medicine

“Patient-centered medical care that respects patients as teachers”



Among the four sufferings of life, illness is the most painful. During her charity visits, Dharma Master Cheng Yen realized that many families became poor after following some major illness. Therefore, she founded the Tzu Chi Free Clinic for the Poor in 1972, which began Tzu Chi's mission of medicine. In 1986, the Hualien Tzu Chi General Hospital opened, and its guiding principles were “respect life” and “Patient-centered”. Tzu Chi Taiwan's medical network was completed by the openings of additional hospitals in Yuli, Guanshan, Dalin, Taipei, and Taichung. The medical staff, supported by large teams of volunteers, aim to perfect the “Four

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Entireties” of patient care: the entire treatment process, the patient’s entire body, the patient’s entire family, and the entire medical team. The goal is to ensure proper care of the body, mind, and soul of the patient. From city to countryside, from the mountain to the sea, Tzu Chi’s comprehensive medical network provides the people of Taiwan with top quality medical service that consists of the latest technology and the warm human touch.

Mission of Education

“Educating children to be moral and upright”

To foster outstanding and compassionate future medical professionals, Dharma Master Cheng Yen established the Tzu Chi Nursing College in 1989. The Master also wanted to address the lack of education and employment opportunities confronting aboriginal girls of Eastern Taiwan. In July 2000, Tzu Chi completed the establishment of its education program offering a well rounded curriculum and runs the full curriculum from kindergarten, elementary school and middle school to high school, college, and graduate studies. The shared objective of Tzu Chi schools and universities is the delivery of superior education where “kindness, compassion, joy, and selfless giving” is the school motto, “Respect for Life and Faith in Human Nature” is the guideline, and “Education of Virtue, education of life, and education of the entire person” is the goal.

Mission of Culture

“Recording the examples of goodness and integrity for future generations”

What is “Culture?” It consists of shining examples for the human character that becomes revered legacy in recorded history. Every one of Tzu Chi’s missions takes the individual human being as foundation. Each person is expected to behave in a moral way with proper manners and to have respect for Mother Nature. Each person is also expected to cultivate his inherent integrity and to maintain appropriate demeanor in interacting with others. When Tzu Chi first started its mission of charity, the seeds of humanity were planted deep. Later, the Mission of Medicine and the Mission of Education also carried integral connections with humanity.

The calling of the Mission of Humanistic Culture is to purify the human mind, to pacify our society, to help those who suffer, and to rectify frenzied and chaotic acts. The Mission of Humanistic Culture bears witness to historical eras, creates new history for mankind, and establishes cycles of love and goodness.

International Relief

“Caring for people in suffering in the global village”



“Bodhisattvas exist to relieve the suffering of mankind”. With providing help to flood victims of Bangladesh in 1991, Tzu Chi marked the start of its international relief efforts. International Relief not only provides emergency materials like food, clothing, grain seeds, and medical materials, it goes further to rebuild houses and schools, set up water supply systems, and offer free clinics. Though the aid projects vary, the ideal of “respecting life” is adhered to all the same. From its beginnings as a local charity in Taiwan, Tzu Chi has become a broad-based

international humanitarian organization. In recognition of its global aid programs across five continents, Tzu Chi became the first Non-Government-Organized charity group in Taiwan to attain association status with the United Nations Department of Information in 2003.

Bone Marrow Donation

“Donating your marrow to save a life without harming yourself”

The sight of patients suffering from blood diseases is unbearable for Dharma Master Cheng Yen. Therefore, after confirming that bone marrow transfer can save lives without harming the donor, the Master started the Tzu Chi Marrow Donor Registry in 1993, which was renamed in 2002 to The Buddhist Tzu Chi Bone Marrow Stem Cell Centre. On top of its original marrow data bank functions, this institution has evolved to include ongoing stem cell research and gene therapy, as well as the establishment of an umbilical cord blood repository, all of which serve to usher in new hopes in human medical treatments. Through all out campaigns and enthusiastic participations by Tzu Chi volunteers, many kind hearted people have been motivated into taking the blood tests required for marrow matching. In every single case, the volunteers were there to encourage and support the donor, and their efforts demonstrate the intricate levels of compassion present in Taiwan. The contributions of Great Love from the generous marrow donors are a Great Love pure and pristine. It is a “love pure like clear water”.

Environmental Protection

“Practicising environmental protection to live in harmony with Mother Earth”



In a 1990 speech, Dharma Master Cheng Yen called on the public “to carry out environmental conservation with applauding hands”. Since then, Tzu Chi volunteers have been earnestly practicing environmental protection. To promote waste reduction and motivate recycling regardless of age or social stature and without fear of filth, conservation volunteers humbly and selflessly give all of their care to the earth. From protecting our earthly environment to protecting our mental environment, Tzu Chi advocates a healthy diet of more fruits and vegetables and discourages meat consumption. If we live a simple lifestyle and reduce our carbon footprint while constantly cherishing the earth, we shall slow down the global warming crisis.

Community Volunteers

“By supporting and caring for each other, they make a beautiful neighbourhood”

Since its campaign on Community Volunteering in 1996, Tzu Chi volunteers are encouraged to cultivate themselves in their own community, through the sharing at group gathering, their professionalism and volunteering spirit are elevated. To recruit more volunteers, they will carry out "Spread the Seeds of Love" tea parties, encouraging the neighborhoods to join the Great Love activities. Also, they actively look for people in need in their community. The founding of the "Community Volunteering" system is a realization of the Confucius ideal "The Beauty of Community". Through the initiative of the volunteers, a network of inter-connected communities is set up, so the community residents can live at ease in the peaceful community, and they can also help and watch other communities.