

# The Sutra of Infinite Meanings: Chapter on Virtues

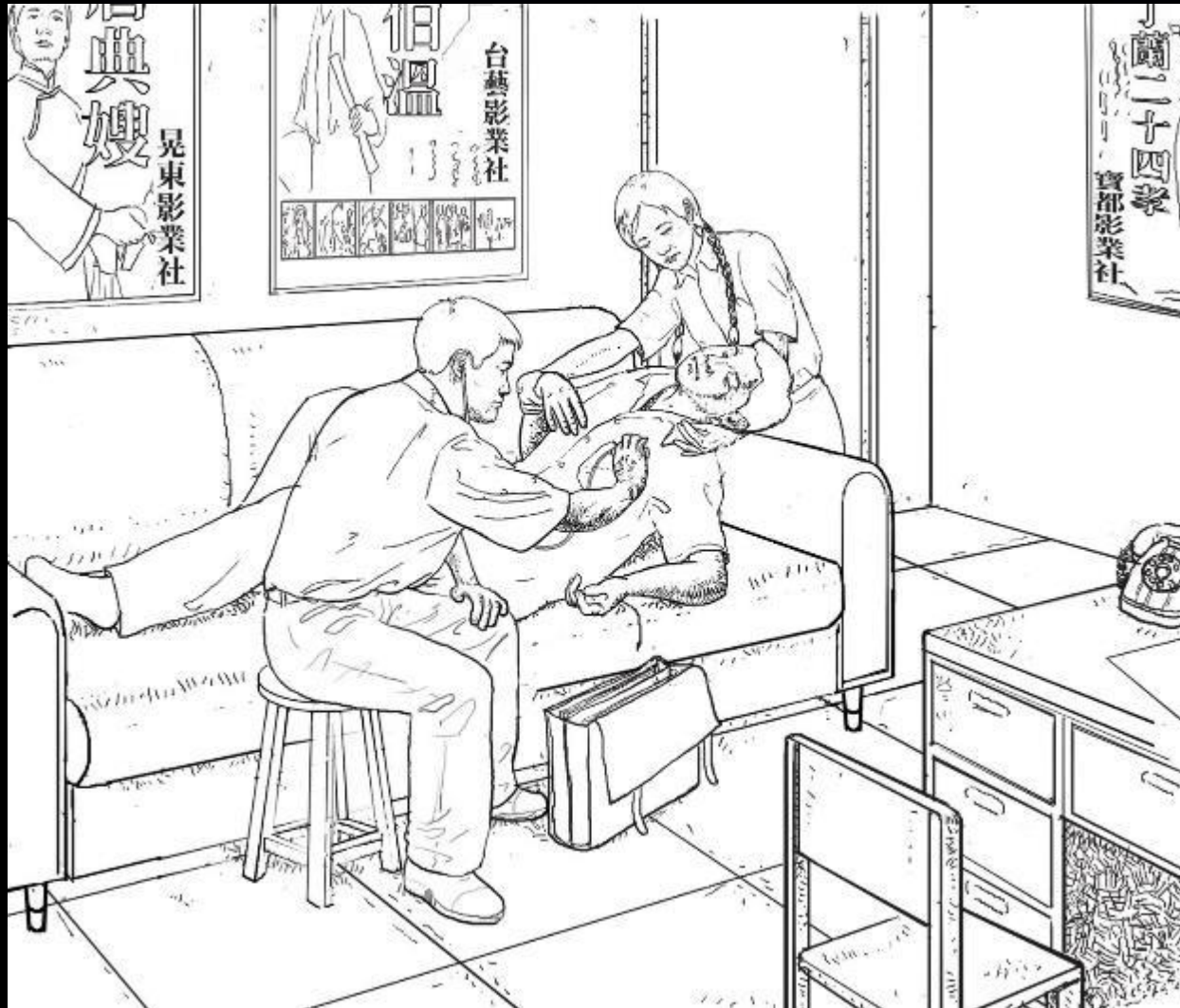
The Buddha attained enlightenment  
more than 2,500 years ago.  
Now, over 2,500 years later, Tzu Chi  
puts the Bodhisattva Path into  
practice.

# Why do people hurt each other?



The Pacific War began in 1941. In 1943, the Allies began bombing Taiwan, which was occupied by Japan at the time. In 1945, Master Cheng Yen was eight years-old. Once, following an air raid, as she stepped out from an air raid shelter, she saw corpses and casualties everywhere. She heard adults crying out loud, “**Why didn’t Guanyin Bodhisattva protect us?**” An elder replied, “It is not that she did not protect us; we did not listen to her.” This left a deep impression in Master Cheng Yen’s young mind, and she remembered clearly that “Bodhisattvas are compassionate and worry about sentient beings who create much evil karma.”

# Losing Her Father



In 1958, Master Cheng Yen's father passed away from a stroke. She realized that life only exists as long as we are breathing, and she contemplated, “**Why are we born? Where do we go after death?**” She thought about the origins of life. That year, she was twenty-one. As she recited Emperor Liang's Repentance, she realized how we cannot bring anything with us when we die; only our karma follows us. She reflected on how she wanted to live her life and was determined to pursue the Buddha Dharma.

# Transforming Limited Love to Great Love



Master Cheng Yen once asked Dharma Master Xiu Dao of Ciyun Temple, “What kind of woman is the happiest?” Master Xiu Dao replied, “A woman who carries a grocery basket is the happiest.” Master Cheng Yen thought that women should not simply carry a grocery basket; instead, they can transform limited love to great love and **carry the great basket for the world.**

In 1960, Master Cheng Yen left her lay family and traveled with Master Xiu Dao to Luye, Taitung. For three years, the two of them moved from place to place in the Hualien and Taitung area, living a difficult life of spiritual practice while teaching the sutras.

“These compassionate Bodhisattvas are all great saints of the Dharmakaya.

With meditative and still minds, they remain always in the state of Samadhi.

Bodhisattvas are peaceful, content, uncontriving, and free from desires.

No delusions or discursive thoughts can affect them.”

# Studying the Lotus Sutra in the Little Wooden Hut



In 1963, after Master Cheng Yen took refuge with Master Yin Shun and took the monastic precepts in Taipei, she returned to the small wooden hut behind Puming Temple in Xiulin Township, Hualien. There was no water or electricity, so she had to carry water and chop firewood. She had very few possessions, and her mind was free of worry. Every day, she transcribed and prostrated to the words of the Lotus Sutra, and every month, she made offerings by burning incense on her arms. With such sincere reverence, she repaid the grace of the Buddha, her parents, and all sentient beings in the world.

“With minds tranquil and clear,  
vows as vast as the universe,  
Bodhisattvas remain unwavering  
for countless kalpas  
Infinite Dharma-doors  
appear in front of them  
They attain great wisdom and  
completely understand all Dharma.”



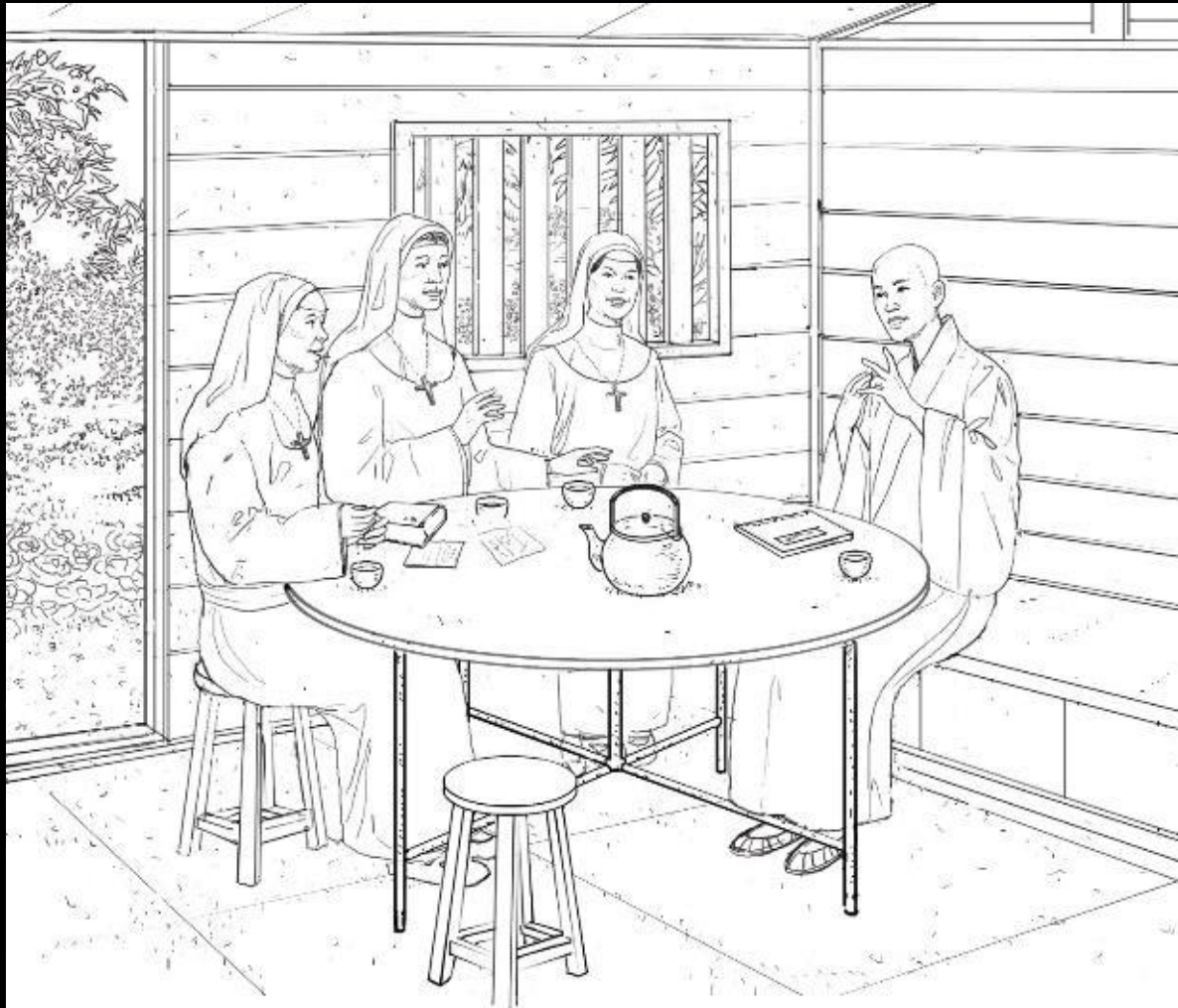
# A Pool of Blood in Fenglin



The indigenous woman lost so much blood simply because she could not afford 8,000 Taiwanese dollars. Was she able to survive?

In early spring of 1966, Master Cheng Yen and her disciples went to visit someone at a clinic in Fenglin Village. At the door, they saw a pool of blood. It turned out that an indigenous woman had a miscarriage, but since she could not pay the deposit fee of 8,000 Taiwanese dollars, the clinic refused to admit her for treatment. Master Cheng Yen then realized that when used appropriately, money could save lives.

# Everyone Can Be a Guanyin Bodhisattva



A few days after Master Cheng Yen returned to Puming Temple from Fenglin, three Catholic nuns came to spread the gospel and discuss life and religion with her. The nuns shared that the Catholic Church implemented their love of humanity in society by setting up facilities to help the poor and suffering. They asked Master, **“What has Buddhism done for the world?”** Master Cheng Yen gave rise to faith and was determined to awaken kindness in people’s hearts, gathering everyone’s efforts to go among people to provide relief to the poor and sick. She hoped that everyone can be a Guanyin Bodhisattva or Amitabha Buddha, providing timely relief for the suffering.

“They comprehend and distinguish the nature and appearance of reality; existent or non-existent, long or short, it is very clear and apparent to them. With the unhindered power of eloquence, they constantly turn the wheel of Dharma. First, they let fall drops of dew to immerse the dust of desire.”

# Living a Self-Sufficient Life



On May 14, 1966, the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the leap 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month, the Tzu Chi Merit Association was established. At the time, Master Cheng Yen and her disciples were still living in a wooden cabin, living a frugal ascetic life. They insisted on being self-sufficient, not accepting offerings from the followers. They made a living by making handicrafts. Despite the hardship, they still sought to help others.

# Living a Self-Sufficient Life



At the time, Master Cheng Yen and her disciples sewed baby shoes as their main source of income. Each pair of baby shoes was worth four Taiwanese dollars, and Master Cheng Yen and her five disciples would each sew an extra pair every day, making twenty-four Taiwanese dollars per day, 720 dollars a month. In addition, with thirty housewives donating fifty cents a day, they raised an additional 450 dollars a month. With a total of 1,170 dollars a month in charity funds, they began charity work for the poor from a very small scale but in a meaningful way.

# Hidden in a Grain of Rice are the Sun and Moon; Cooking in the Pot are the Mountains and Rivers



Master Cheng Yen refused to let any distribution recipients go home hungry. Even when they ran out of rice, they kept adding water to the porridge pot. The clear porridge broth reflected the surrounding scenery.

“Fanning the wind of liberation,  
they eliminate the fiery afflictions of the world.

The coolness of the Dharma  
is rained down upon ignorance.

They pour the stream of the Great Vehicle  
to nourish sentient beings.

They spread the seeds of goodness  
over the fields of merit and virtue.”



## Building a Home for the Poor for the First Time

In 1967, Master Cheng Yen dug the first shovelful of dirt and broke ground for the first Tzu Chi housing for a blind elder, Li A'pao.





# Poverty and Illness Are Like Twins



Once, Master Cheng Yen visited a care recipient in Shoufeng Township. The house was dark and narrow. A man lay in bed, while a mouse chewed on his foot. The man was injured at work and had been paralyzed from his shoulder down for five or six years. His family had run out of money treating his neck injury.

Master Cheng Yen noticed that the number of cases that required assistance kept increasing and discovered that many families fell into poverty because a family member had fallen ill. She felt that charity and medical services must go hand in hand and decided to start free medical clinics.

“They inspire all to develop Bodhicitta.  
With infinite compassion,  
they relieve the suffering of sentient beings.”

# Establishing the Free Clinic



On September 10, 1972, Master De Tzu's adoptive mother, Huang A'nai, donated a building on the first floor of No. 28 Ren Ai Street, Hualien City, to start the Tzu Chi Merit Association Free Clinic for the Poor. The free clinic operated for fifteen years, serving more than 140,000 counts of patients.

# Free Medical Outreach

After the free clinic opened, Tzu Chi would charter buses to go to Yuli, Guangfu, Fenglin, Shoufeng, Ji-an and other rural areas to provide medical outreaches. The staff of Provincial Hualien Hospital joined in to provide free medical care, and Tzu Chi also distributed everyday necessities and food.



# Sending a Care Recipient to Kaohsiung to Get a Prosthetic Leg



Chen Yuchi was the president of a mining company whose left foot was crushed by a rock, at work. To keep his foot, he refused to have an amputation. For seven years, he spent all his wealth to treat his leg, but it continued to fester and he ended up disabled and bankrupt. Tzu Chi began to support him from 1978, paying more than 40,000 Taiwanese dollars for his multiple hospitalizations and for him to go to Kaohsiung to be outfitted with a prosthetic leg. Tzu Chi helped him stand up again and support himself.

# Sending a Care Recipient to Taipei for Heart Surgery



Wang Qinghuo was a miner, but after developing a lung disease, he became a care recipient in 1971. In 1979, his eleven-year-old son fainted while playing and was diagnosed with a heart condition. As there were no heart specialists in Hualien, Tzu Chi arranged for him to have a surgery at Linkou Chang Gung Memorial Hospital in Taipei. Several commissioners in Taipei took care of the boy. The surgery went smoothly and the boy recovered fully.

“They are genuine, spiritual friends  
for all living beings.  
They are the great fields of blessings  
for all living beings.”



# The Hospital had to Be Built!

What was possible in Taipei was impossible in Hualien. Though the free clinic could treat patients with common colds, malnutrition, high blood pressure, and so on, patients with serious conditions still had to be rushed to Taipei for treatment. A hospital had to be built in Hualien, as all lives are priceless!

# Where to find the land, money, and doctors?



Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital broke ground for a second time in 1984. As Master Cheng Yen watched the ceremony, she bit down on her lower lip to hold back her tears of both joy and worries.

On February 5, 1983, Tzu Chi Hospital held its first ground-breaking ceremony at the Guofu Village site. At the time, after three years of fundraising, Tzu Chi raised less than 30 million of the projected cost of 800 million Taiwanese dollars.

Later on, the land was taken back due to planned military base development, and Tzu Chi had to search for another plot of land. At the time, Master Cheng Yen said, “I have no money, just my life. I would donate my life and build this hospital no matter what!”

“They are the unsummoned teachers  
for all living beings.  
They are the safe, stable, and joyful refuge  
for all living beings.”

This field of blessings invites all good people in the world;  
ten thousand heart lotuses bloom to create the world of Tzu Chi



To raise funds for the construction of the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, the commissioners worked hard and traveled around soliciting donations, awakening loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity in everyone. Entrepreneurs donated large sums of money; laborers donated from their hard-earned money; and people also donated jewelry, artwork, and antiques for charity auction.

On November 6, 1983, at the Airmen Activity Center in Taipei, Tzu Chi held a large charity auction for the first time to raise funds for the hospital construction. In the picture, the emcee Li Jizhun and singer Li Peijing were auctioning dictionaries.

# The Greatness of Our Strength Reflects the Greatness of Our Vows



On April 24, 1984, Tzu Chi Hospital broke ground for a second time. The past four years since the preparations began were filled with obstacles; people put in hard work and shed tears over the process. At the time of groundbreaking, Tzu Chi had only raised 140 million Taiwanese dollars. The pressure to secure the funds also reached the highest point with the groundbreaking.

# Building the Hospital was Hard, Finding Talent was Even Harder



In 1986, after much hard work, the hospital was completed, but there were no doctors willing to relocate to Hualien. In order to encourage young doctors to relocate to Hualien, National Taiwan University Hospital adopted the same guidelines it had set to encourage doctors to go abroad, to places such as Saudi Arabia. National Taiwan University Hospital promised the doctors that they could become attending physicians back at NTU Hospital after two years in Hualien. Chen Ing-ho and Chang Yao-jen came first and set the foundation for the surgery department at Tzu Chi Hospital.

“They are the source of relief, protection,  
and great support for all living beings.  
They are the great guiding teachers  
for all sentient beings everywhere.”

# Seven Tzu Chi Hospitals in Taiwan – Safeguarding Lives, Health, and Love



Following the opening of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, Yuli, Guanshan, Dalin, Taipei, Taichung, and Douliou Tzu Chi Hospitals were completed over time. Tzu Chi's medical care network expanded across Taiwan, extending from the cities and reaching remote villages through medical outreach.



# Yuli & Guanshan Tzu Chi Hospitals



Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital opened in March 1999, and the Guanshan Tzu Chi Hospital opened in the following year. From that time, there has been a Tzu Chi Hospital each at the beginning, middle, and end of the 216 km section of Provincial Highway Nine across the Hualien-Taitung Valley. These three Tzu Chi Hospitals safeguard the health of locals and tourists.

# Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital



Master Cheng Yen felt the importance of combining medical care with humanistic culture and recognized the severe lack of healthcare resources in Yunlin, Chiayi, and Tainan. So, she aspired to help build a hospital to make healthcare more accessible to the locals.

On June 28, 1998, the Dalin Township Office invited various institutions and organizations to hold a large-scale charity bazaar, in hopes of raising funds to support the construction of the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital. In the picture, Dalin Township magistrate Lin Jinmin rang the gong of love.

# Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital



What was once a large sugarcane field is now a medical campus. The Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, which was a culmination of Master Cheng Yen's compassionate vows and everyone's love, opened on August 13, 2000.

# Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital



At one time, medical resources in the greater Taipei area were mostly concentrated in Taipei City. Patients with serious conditions from New Taipei City's rural areas had to be transferred to Taipei City for treatment. In addition, Tzu Chi volunteers in northern Taiwan have dedicated themselves and supported Tzu Chi's missions for many years, so setting up a Tzu Chi Hospital in New Taipei City was also a way of giving back to the Tzu Chi volunteers there.

On May 8, 2005, the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital opened.

# Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital



On January 8, 2007, the Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital opened, forming a comprehensive medical care network with Tzu Chi hospitals in eastern, southern, and northern Taiwan.

# Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital



On January 5, 2019, the Douliu Tzu Chi Clinic, which had been operating for 15 years, formally became the Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital. Yunlin County has the second highest population of seniors in Taiwan. The Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital focuses on providing in-home care, in-home rehab, and other long-term care services, while bringing humanistic medical culture into the families and hearts of locals.

“They serve as eyes for the blind.  
They turn those who are confused, in chaos,  
and in panic toward right mindfulness.”



In 1987, a little more than a year after Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital opened, Lin Chuanqin, who was an apprentice in a car repair shop, was crushed by a large marble stone. When he was sent to the ER, his lower body was almost completely crushed, and his organs were exposed and covered in debris. To save his life, the doctors had to amputate both of his legs with only his upper body remaining. After all the hardship, Lin Chuanqin survived, started his family, and began making a living with balloon art.





Uncle A-ji was a patient with ankylosing spondylitis. His first and second cervical vertebrae were displaced, but as he kept delaying his treatment, his head drooped down and tongue drooped out, threatening his life. In 2001, Dr. Chien Jui-Teng worked through many challenges to treat him. Two months later, Uncle A-ji was able to get out of bed and be discharged. With the volunteers' encouragement, he picked up his drawing tools, and with his remaining weak eye-sight, began drawing pictures. The hospital helped host a charity art auction to fulfill his dream to help others.

(First time)

“As Great Medicine-kings,  
they discern the forms of diseases,  
know well the properties of medicine, and  
dispense it according to the disease.

As great master boatmen,  
they carry all living beings  
across the river of cyclic existence  
to the shore of Nirvana.”



In June 2003, Leah and Rachel, a pair of conjoined twins from the Philippines, came to the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital accompanied by Tzu chi volunteers from the Philippines. They went there to go through a separation surgery. This was the first conjoined twin surgery at the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital. These sisters came to Taiwan multiple times for follow up visits. As time passed by, they have become fine young ladies and now give to others, going out to help the poor neighborhoods.



Curled up on a chair, with a bent-over body that was unable to be treated for more than ten years, this man closed his heart off to the world. The only wish that he had deep in his heart was to lie flat on his bed.

In 2013, the thirty-one-year-old Yang Xiaodong traveled from Xiamen to receive treatment at the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital. After five surgeries and rehabilitation, he was finally able to stand up straight, take his first steps with a smile on his face, and see the life that awaits him.



Chen Tuanzhi from Xiamen, China, suffered from severe congenital genu recurvatum (knee hyperextension), and her knees were bent forward in an L-shape. Since the time she was young, she could only walk on her knees, with great difficulty. In December 2013, she came to receive surgery from Dr. Chen Ing-ho of the orthopedic department. After ten months of treatment, the team was able to help her walk on her two feet and turn her life around.

(Second time)

“As Great Medicine-kings,  
they discern the forms of diseases,  
know well the properties of medicine, and  
dispense it according to the disease.

As great master boatmen,  
they carry all living beings  
across the river of cyclic existence  
to the shore of Nirvana.”



Li Shiwei was 186 cm in height and nearly 170 kg in weight. He was paralyzed due to a spinal cord abscess. A hospital near him had pronounced him permanently paralyzed, so he ended up bedridden for nine months. Tzu Chi volunteers from Keelung sent him to Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital for treatment. After months of care, he lost weight and was discharged. Not only did he start to volunteer for recycling work and medical outreach, he also quit smoking and drinking and became a changed person.



In 2017, Zeng Youde, a house painter, fell from the fourth floor at work. His face was severely fractured into twenty-three pieces. Doctors at the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital reconstructed his face using a total of 108 orthopedic screws. Zeng Youde spent a month in the ICU and another month in the regular ward. After he recovered, he was grateful for Master Cheng Yen for building the hospital and for the medical team at Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital for saving his life. He decided to quit smoking and drinking, and he further turned inspiration into action and became a certified volunteer in 2019.





A twenty-one-year-old woman from the Philippines suffered from severe spinal scoliosis with a combined curvature of 140 degrees. The bulge on the right side of her back was her rib cage that had rotated toward the back. The severe deformity was pressing into her organs, and her condition was worsening by the day. However, her family was too poor to afford care. In 2017, Dr. Zeng Xiaozu from Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital, and his team, were able to give her spinal correction surgeries. After two surgeries, her scoliosis was corrected to 60 degrees. After recovery, she could wear long pants without problem; she no longer had a hunchback, and she could walk without running out of breath.

# Save A Life with No Harm to Ourselves



This is a matter of life or death. As long as there is a glimmer of hope, I am willing to do it.

In 1992, Wen Wenling, a student who was studying abroad in the US, was diagnosed with leukemia. As there was no bone marrow match for her in the registries in the US and Japan, she returned to Taiwan to push for legislation change to allow bone marrow transplants outside of the family in hopes of finding a lifeline for ethnic Chinese people with similar conditions. In January 1993, she went to Hualien to visit Master Cheng Yen, asking Tzu Chi to help patients with blood diseases and build a bone marrow registry in Taiwan.

# Save A Life with No Harm to Ourselves



In March 1993, a law was passed to allow bone marrow transplant outside of the biological family. After Master Cheng Yen confirmed that donors can save lives without causing harm to themselves, Tzu Chi officially set up the Tzu Chi Foundation Bone Marrow Registry in October 1993. Tzu Chi volunteers in Taiwan began to promote signing up for the registry.

# Saving a Life with No Harm to Ourselves



Master Cheng Yen traveled around Taiwan to promote the concept of “saving a life with no harm to ourselves.”

Volunteers responded with “I will do it!”



# Only You Can Save this Life

In Taiwan, on average, there are 300 patients looking for a bone marrow match every month. However, only an average of thirty patients are fortunate enough to be matched for a transplant.

This is not a miracle; as long as one is willing, one can save a life. When one saves a life, one is actually saving a family.

# Only You Can Save this Life



Over the years, volunteers have constantly promoted correct information about stem cell and bone marrow donation, encouraging members of the public to register as donors. The Stem Cells Center regularly held reunion meetings for the donors and recipients.

“They are able to give up all that is hard to give up,  
such as wealth, wife, children, and kingdom.  
Never begrudging anything, internal or external,  
their head, eyes, bone marrow, and brain  
were all given to others.  
They uphold the pure precepts of all Buddhas.  
Even at the cost of their lives,  
they never cause harm.”

“Even when harmed with knives or clubs, or  
abused and insulted with words,  
they never get angry.

For many kalpas, though their bodies are  
worn down, they never tire nor slacken.

Day and night, they focus their minds and  
remain in a state of meditation.”



# Transforming Something Useless into Something Useful



We have no permanent ownership of our life, only the right to use it.

In the process of nurturing excellent doctors, it is crucial to have sufficient cadavers for anatomy class. Since 1996, Tzu Chi established a body donation center. Tzu Chi has promoted the concept of “making full use of the right to use our life” and on body donation for medical education and research, leading the body donation movement in the medical field in Taiwan.

# Donating Our Bodies and Leaving a Legacy of Love



Most people find it hard to accept body donation for medical students' training. However, the families of these donors fully supported their family member's dying wish of donating their bodies. So, the students have high hopes for themselves; they have benefited greatly from the great love of these donors and study hard to give back to them.

# Respecting Life and Making Use of Our Altruistic Potential



Tzu Chi University's Department of Medicine upholds the spirit of "respecting life and making use of our altruistic potential" and cultivating excellent doctors. For the gross anatomy course, the medical students hold an inauguration and appreciation ceremony before classes begin. After the course, they hold a funeral and memorial for the silent mentors to thank them and their families, recognizing their giving out of great compassion and great equanimity.

“They extensively learned the Dharma of all  
paths;  
their wisdom deeply penetrates  
the capacities of sentient beings.”

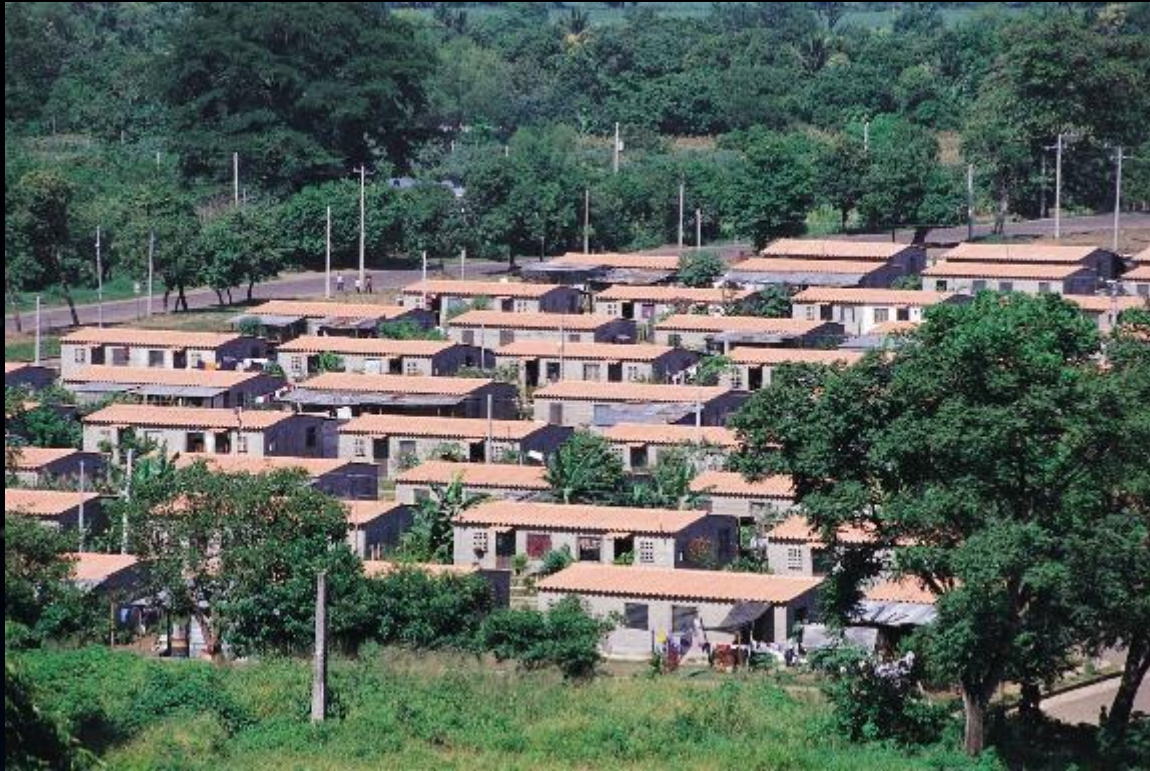
# Body Donation



Body Donor Li Hezhen was an ordinary public servant. He suffered from terminal pancreatic cancer. While he was sick, he peacefully said, “I will leave myself to the medical students.” He said to the students, “You can make dozens or even hundreds of wrong cuts on my body, but do not make any wrong cuts on your future patients.”

“At the state of the Tathagata,  
they remain firm and unwavering.  
They abide in the power of their vows and  
extensively purify Buddha-lands.”

# Permanent Housing Projects Worldwide



Following the earthquake in El Salvador in January 2001, Tzu Chi helped build Great Love Houses.



Jakarta, Indonesia, suffered severe flooding in January 2002. Tzu Chi helped build Great Love Houses to relocate the residents living in the slums along the banks of the Angke River.

# Permanent Housing Projects Worldwide



In late 2004, following the Indian Ocean tsunami, Tzu Chi helped build 649 Great Love Houses in Hambantota, Sri Lanka. In Aceh, Indonesia, which had the highest casualty numbers, Tzu Chi had built 2,568 Great Love Houses for the survivors as of 2009.



# Permanent Housing Projects Worldwide



In August 2009, Typhoon Morakot made landfall in Taiwan. Destruction brought by landslides and flooding to Namaxia, Taoyuan, Maolin, Jiaxian, and Liugui Districts caused many residents to lose their homes. Tzu Chi built a Great Love Village in Shanlin District, Kaohsiung, to provide survivors with safe housing to rebuild their lives.

# Permanent Housing Projects Worldwide

As of March 31, 2022,  
Tzu Chi has completed 21,565 houses  
in 17 countries/regions  
(excluding ongoing projects).

# School Reconstruction Projects Worldwide

As of March 31, 2022,  
Tzu Chi has helped rebuild 246  
schools in 16 countries/regions.

# Body Donation

As of April 1, 2022,  
41,010 individuals have signed up to  
donate their bodies.

1,096 individuals have completed  
their donation, with ages ranging  
from 14 to 101 years-old.

# Stem Cells Center

As of February 28, 2022,  
there are a total of 455,282  
registered donors.

There have been 6,152 transplant  
cases across 31 countries/regions.