

The World Prays for Hualian

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Across the world, from Istanbul to Malaysia and Sichuan, people are praying for the residents of Hualian in east Taiwan, the headquarters of the Tzu Chi Foundation, after the town was hit by the worst earthquake on record on the night of February 6.

The children closed their eyes and prayed fervently, their eyes full of tears. They held in their hands the bamboo banks which members of the Taiwan Tzu Chi Foundation had first used to help them. They wanted to give their love back to Taiwan. A young Syrian refugee, said: "I feel distressed. Our religion teaches us that we must do good to those who do good to us." The Great Love in the heart and soul of this young boy has gradually blossomed.

The powerful earthquake struck Hualien on the night of February 6. It caused large buildings to collapse, roads and bridge to crack and left many people dead and wounded. It left many people all over Taiwan in a state of fear and shock! This terrible news spread around the world. Many friends abroad who had received help from Tzu chi have sent their sincere blessings and prayed for Hualian. They also brought out their bamboo banks, to give back to Taiwan a piece of their love.



In Sultangazi city in Turkey, Tzu Chi has established the El Menahil junior and middle school for refugee children. After they gathered for class the next morning, the students learnt that a severe earthquake had occurred in Hualien, birthplace of Tzu Chi. In their morning prayers before class, all 1,300 students and teachers joined in prayer and asked for blessings for Hualien. Professor Cuma led them in praying for peace in Hualien. With deep sincerity, he told the students: "An extremely grave earthquake has struck Hualien, the home of Tzu Chi. We have no way to offer much help to them. So, far away as we are, let us pray for them!"

Support from Malaysia

The same sense of deep sadness was felt in the Great Love kindergarten of Malaysia. The children saw the images of the tall building lying on its side after the quake and felt full of anxiety. Together they prayed with deep sincerity: "we fervently pray for a world without disaster and that everyone can live in peace, spared from disaster." Some children held their hands together as they prayed and wept tears of grief. Lin Yu-han, a student at Tzu Chi's Johor kindergarten, said with a pure expression: "We feel very sad, because their homes have already collapsed."

At the Yatung Great Love kindergarten in Kepong, Malaysia, teacher Wu Di-wen led the class of four-year-olds in holding cards of blessing which they had made and asking that they send

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these blessings to Taiwan. Teacher Wu thought: “the individual strength of us teachers is not enough. So we must gather the children together and together pray with great sincerity and send the blessings to Hualien.”

Huang Si-wen, a teacher at the kindergarten, asked the children: “last night, when you were sleeping soundly, do you know what happened in Hualien, home to Master Cheng Yen?” The children replied loudly with a single voice “Earthquake!” Then the teacher asked them: “small as we are, what can we do?” They replied: “we can contribute to the bamboo bank and help them.”

Although they are small in age, their love is great. With the guidance of the teachers, they made blessing cards. With their small hands, they printed green cards and added an apple shape with their fingers. Everyone printed ‘blessing’ on the top of the large card; this made an apple tree with many apples on it. “We are giving them apple trees, to bring them the blessing of peace”, “I wish you peace and good health” – the children prayed in earnest, to send their love to Taiwan.

Blessings from Sichuan

The children in Sichuan in southwest China had the fearful experience of an earthquake and find it hard to forget. The students of the Luoshui Tzu Chi Middle School, like those in Malaysia, gathered their love and contributed to the bamboo bank; at once, they wrote letters and cards of blessing. Everyone hopes that the people of Taiwan can feel their sincere blessings.



For the people of Penang in Malaysia, earthquake is a disaster unfamiliar to them. But, as they watched every image on Great Love Television, they felt a great closeness with the people of Hualien. A patient in the dialysis centre, Mr. Wang, prayed for peace for those affected: “we use sincere prayers and deeds to express ourselves,” he said. “I will be vegetarian for one day and pray for peace.” In addition, the staff and volunteers of the Jing Si Hall in Malacca used their lunch break to pray for Taiwan.

Taipei doctors rush to help

In the early morning of February 7, Zhao You-Cheng, superintendent of the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital, gathered about 400 people in the main hall of the hospital for a prayer meeting. They included the heads of different departments, doctors, volunteers and those visiting the hospital. They came together to pray for those in Hualien who had suffered from the earthquake.

During the meeting, Superintendent Zhao said: “yesterday, at close to midnight, a devastating earthquake happened in Hualien. Master Cheng Yen, the masters of the Jing Si Abode and the staff of foundation did not sleep the whole night. They immediately gathered news of the disaster and prepared hot food. Early this morning they delivered flour buns to the refuge places and give them to the relief workers, Hualien residents affected by the quake and tourists.”

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In addition to explaining the disaster situation, Zhao said in a somber tone: “the psychological damage inflicted by the earthquake is not something we normal people can imagine. Two years ago, the Weiguan-Jinlong Building collapsed on the very same day. Many people passed away that day. The victims had no idea that, in a second, such a great disaster would fall upon them.”

Chen Yu-long, chief of the Emergency Department of the Taipei Tzu chi Hospital, and Dr Xu Yao-sheng took the first opportunity to join a rescue team from New Taipei city that left for Hualian and prepared to help in the disaster relief.

Tzu Chi university students take on relief work

Following the earthquake on the night of February 6, Wan Ben-rong, Principal of Tzu chi University, was joined by colleagues and many students; in the early morning of February 7, they returned to the campus to understand the situation there and comfort the students. Principal Wang was joined by Lin Sheng-jie, chief of the University Secretariat, Fan Yang-zao, chief of the General Office and Yan Rui-hong, chief of the Education Department.

Because it is a time of university holiday, most of the students had already returned home. But about 152 were still on the campus, including foreign students, interns and some doing experiments. All the students gathered in a low-rise building. They took on the responsibility of volunteers to help with the support work for the Tzu chi Foundation.

The foundation set up comfort stations all over Hualian. Teachers and students from the university joined the work of relief and support. Chen Ding-bang, Director of the Media center, and three students from the broadcasting faculty – Zhou Jia-sheng, Wu Bo-han and Jiang Yi-lin -- went at about 2.00 a.m. to the Marshall Hotel, to join the volunteers there in the relief work.

The blessings continue to pour in from all over the world. Everyone is working together and praying for Taiwan, that its people can enjoy peace, good health and happiness. They pray for a society in harmony and a world without disasters.