

## Volunteers From New Countries Attend Global Conference in Taiwan

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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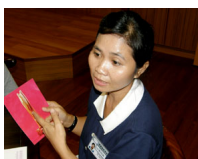


Members from Chile, Haiti and Denmark attended the foundation's Volunteer Leaders Conference for the first time. One Indonesian member saved up for three years to take part and present [Master Cheng Yen](#) with a sculpture made by herself and her husband.

The annual conference began in 1995 and was held in the foundation's Banqiao and Sanchong branches, in the greater Taipei area, from June 20-24. The number of participants has increased every year; this year more than 1,000 volunteers from 30 countries in five continents came to share their experiences and insights and deepen their study of the Buddhist dharma, so that, when they return home, they will do a better job of bringing universal love to wherever it is needed. For those unable to come to Taiwan, Da Ai (Great Love) television provided two satellite vans that delivered live footage of the conference, via the Internet and satellite television, all over the world.



In her address to the participants, Master Cheng Yen thanked them for all their hard work during the year and gave everyone a clock. "This means that we in Tzu Chi seize every moment. We do not waste even a second. So cherish this Tzu Chi clock and this bean as a souvenir. Cherish every single moment. To walk the Tzu Chi path is to serve society." Inspired by her words, the volunteers vowed to do as she asked. "When we return home, we will continue to do our best to serve the cause of Tzu Chi," said Xie Lina, a volunteer from New Zealand. "I shall not be a small candle," said Li Qiuhua, a volunteer from China. "No, I will be a gear in a large engine. As I turn, I will inspire more people to join me. I walk away from this conference, knowing that I have a mission to accomplish."



It was a special occasion for Neneng Sopiah, a 46-year-old resident of the [Da Ai \(Great Love\) village](#) which the foundation built in Jakarta for people who lived on the banks of a heavily polluted Angke river in the city. When it flooded in 2002, she and many others lost their homes. She moved into the Da Ai village and became a volunteer. It took her three years to save the money required to fly to Taiwan for the conference. To express her thanks to her life-mentor, she and her husband made a wooden sculpture of two hands folded in prayer. "I carved this sculpture with love and wanted the present to be delivered into the hands of the Master," she said. "I was so grateful to see her. I was lost for words in front of her. I saved for three whole years just as to have enough money to come to Taiwan." It was an opportunity to get closer to the roots of Tzu Chi and motivate herself to do a better job as a volunteer when she returns home.

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