

Creating Blessings and Nurturing Wisdom

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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[[Master's Teachings](#)]

Last year was Tzu Chi's 50th year. In April, we will celebrate our 51st anniversary. This will mark the beginning of a new era for us. During the past half-century, Tzu Chi has overcome many obstacles to become the foundation it is today, with volunteers giving of themselves just as they did when we first began to help those in need in Hualien. Over the course of time, our work has gradually extended to the whole of Taiwan and around the world. Tzu Chi has now provided aid to nearly half the countries in the world. Although we began our affinity with many countries due to disaster relief, we always hope to set foot in more countries in order to spread seeds of love rather than to provide aid after disasters.

Last year our direction was "spreading Great Love around the world and inspiring lasting compassion life after life." Tzu Chi celebrated 50 years of voluntary service in which volunteers had been sowing the seed of Great Love globally and encouraging people everywhere to care for others with compassion. We regard all living beings in the world as family and care for them with enlightened love. As we diligently dedicate ourselves to serving among people, we pave the Tzu Chi Path around the world and carry on the Jing Si Dharma Lineage. The Tzu Chi Path is a gateway to enlightenment which we shall pass on to future generations.

In 2017, the direction of our focus is:

Create Blessings: Every Grain of Rice Delivers Eternal Love
Nurture Wisdom: Each Tiny Particle Holds Life's Truth

Ever since Tzu Chi was first established, we have been distributing rice to our care recipients so that they have food to eat. For the first couple of our monthly aid distributions, only a handful of people came to receive aid. After attending a Dharma service following the distribution, they stayed for lunch, which was a simple porridge. As times were difficult, whenever we ran short of rice, we would borrow rice from Pu Ming Temple.

However, the number of people coming to our monthly aid distribution soon increased because there were more care recipients and more volunteers helping out at the distribution. If a volunteer said, "Master, we don't have enough rice to feed everyone today." I would tell the volunteer to add one or two more ladles of water to the porridge. However, since we only added more water without adding any rice, the porridge became a light soup, which was so clear that it reflected mountains, clouds, the sky, trees, and many other things in Nature. It was truly not easy for us to obtain rice and this made each individual grain very precious. Likewise, the small donations we collect from our members are also very precious, and we have always put every cent towards charitable efforts.

This is why "Every Grain of Rice Delivers Eternal Love" symbolizes how each donation, however small, when donated regularly and pooled together with other's donations, still makes

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a great impact. This concept comes from the humble beginning of Tzu Chi: though many donors were only able to donate NT \$5, NT \$10, or NT \$20 a month, by collecting everyone's small contributions we were able to help many, many people in need. The grain of rice represents not only the small donation but each donor's thought of kindness, a thought to help others. Moreover, when this thought of kindness is carried on, even a grain of rice that we give to recipients delivers eternal love. One should never look down on a small contribution, nor underestimate the importance of a small good deed. We need to seize every opportunity to carry out all sorts of good deeds, big or small; that is how we create blessings.

For Tzu Chi volunteers, creating blessings and nurturing wisdom go hand in hand, and our wisdom comes from the Dharma. "Each Tiny Particle Holds Life's Truth" means that the Dharma, or life's truth, exists everywhere. The tiny particle symbolizes something small, even infinitesimal. Take a seed for example; even a magnificent tree with a stout trunk began as a tiny seed. A seed has a form, it is something we can see and touch, yet the principle of life that allows the tree to grow is invisible to the eye. The principle of life that allows a tree to grow from a seed is the Dharma, which is wondrous, yet has no form for us to see or touch. When we learn and apply the Dharma to situations that we encounter every day, we nurture our wisdom; this wisdom guides us to help and save people in need, even transforming their life. By learning the Dharma diligently, every part of it helps our wisdom-life grow.

As we start a new year, let's not sit idly while allowing time to slip by. By persistently creating blessings and nurturing our wisdom, we have the essential qualities to be living bodhisattvas to help people and inspire them to walk the Bodhisattva Path with us. With the power of love, let us spread seeds of love and kindness to every corner of the world.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks

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