

Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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A hospital built by the foundation in a rural district of southwest Taiwan celebrated its 10th anniversary last Sunday, August 15. It has transformed the quality of medical care in an area of the island that was poorly served and where many sick people did not survive before they could reach hospital.

The Dalin [Tzu Chi General Hospital](#) serves Chiayi and Yunlin, the two counties of Taiwan with the lowest availability of beds before 2000 – for Yunlin, 27.8 per 10,000 people and Chiayi even lower. If people needed treatment, their families had to make the long journey down the island's main expressway to a major city in the north or south. In some cases, patients died before they reached the hospital; sometimes, their relatives drove long distance to visit and were involved in an accident, leading to loss of life. It was this scarcity of care that persuaded Master Cheng Yen to build a hospital in Dalin.

Local people, including Lin Sujing, looked at land in the area and chose a site of 194,000 square metres belonging to the Taiwan Sugar company. Lin himself borrowed money to purchase 270 square metres and his family donated the land to the foundation. "Master Cheng Yen helped us to build a big hospital, to save and protect lives and be the foundation for all in the community," Lin said.



The hospital opened its doors in 2000, providing in-patient and outreach health care programs, to educate people on how to maintain their health. One of them is Zhan Qingchuan; he had no history of heart complications until two years ago, when he suffered a heart attack one afternoon and underwent a life-saving operation. "I told them that, if it were not for Tzu Chi, I would have been dead already," he said.

The hospital has specialised in organ donations and transplants, setting up a team dedicated to this in 2001. Since then, it has carried out 27 successful liver and kidney transplant operations, which have saved the lives of residents in nearby counties. One of them is Bai Suzhen, a woman who looks cheerful enough today, as she walks with a bounce in her step. Two years ago, she was at death's door because she needed a new liver. She had been afflicted with Hepatitis B and had worked hard to give her children a safe and sound environment. But the stress and strain caused the virus to spread and all she could do was pray for a new liver. "When I couldn't get up in the morning, I would wonder why?" she said. "So I thought that, maybe, I would not be lucky enough to get a transplant and how much time I had left. I just did not want to think about it. Fortunately, Bai's prayer for a new liver was answered a year later after she transferred to Tzu Chi's Dalin General Hospital.

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