

Seize Every Second

Written by Dharma Master Cheng Yen
Monday, 11 May 2009 00:00

Forty-three years ago, Tzu Chi was founded on the 24th day of the third month of the Chinese calendar. On this day 43 years later (April 19, 2009, on the Gregorian calendar), we at the Jing Si Abode held the monthly Medicine Buddha Dharma Service as usual. With 12 months in a year, plus two intercalary months, this was our 532nd service. As it was Tzu Chi's anniversary, 25,000 people at 111 Tzu Chi chapters in 16 countries around the world participated together with us at the Abode via teleconferencing.

Our first Medicine Buddha Dharma Service was held the day Tzu Chi was founded. It was to express gratitude to all those who supported our organization and to pray sincerely for all people in suffering. Ever since then, we have held a Medicine Buddha Dharma Service on the 24th of every Chinese month. At the same time, our aid recipients in Hualien come and receive aid supplies, as well as get free medical consultations and free haircuts.



Reflecting on this, we can see how the passing of time has brought changes—the scope of Tzu Chi's outreach has broadened and the number of people walking this path together has grown. When we first began, there were only 30 housewives who saved a coin each day to help the poor. Today, 43 years later, there are Tzu Chi volunteers in 47 countries, and our footprints of care and aid have been left in 69 countries around the world.

With each day that passes, we have one day less. Time is precious, and while we mustn't be exacting toward others, we must be very exacting with time. Every day we have 86,400 seconds to use. These seconds add up into days, and days add up into months and years. So with every second, we are "creating" our lives and writing its history.

At any given second, anything may happen to us. We must therefore be grateful for every moment that we are safe and well. But at every second, we must also feel a sense of urgency. We must never think that something can wait till tomorrow. With that mentality, we will waste time and end up having accomplished nothing. We need to seize every second, and at that second do something good for the world.

Helping people through hard times with equal respect and compassion towards all Recently, Tzu Chi volunteers helped a man named Mr. Kwong, who was originally from the Philippines. Mr. Kwong came to Taiwan 16 years ago to work and earn more money to support his family in the Philippines. Every month, he would send his salary home so that his two children could receive a good education.

Unfortunately, the company that employed him closed down recently. Out of work and with no money to return to the Philippines, he was forced to stay in Taiwan illegally. To make matters worse, he fell ill and could only rely on his foreign worker friends for help.

A few months ago, he collapsed after a heart attack and underwent emergency heart surgery at Chang-Hua Hospital. Although the doctors saved his life, he could not even begin to pay the resulting medical bills. The hospital referred him to Tzu Chi, and we worked with the hospital to

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cover his medical expenses.

In the process, our volunteers learned that his heart's wish was to go back to the Philippines and reunite with his family, whom he had not seen in seven years. Sympathizing with him, the volunteers resolved to help him by assisting him with all the administrative paperwork required and purchasing a plane ticket for him. On April 10, he was finally able to go home. Tzu Chi volunteers drove him to the airport, and when he arrived at Manila Airport, there were also Tzu Chi volunteers there to pick him up and take him home. This was possible only because there are now Tzu Chi volunteers in the Philippines as well. Such a relay of love from Taiwan to the Philippines is truly very touching.

It was out of love for his children that Mr. Kwong left his home in the Philippines in the hope of providing a better life for them. Meanwhile, also out of love for her children, a Uruguayan mother, Susana, chose to stay in Taiwan.

Seventeen years ago, Susana met a fisherman from Taiwan in Uruguay. She decided to marry him and move to Taiwan, and soon after the couple had two children. Sadly, her husband deserted her and their children five years after they had moved to Taiwan. She was left to provide for her two children without a husband and in a strange country.

It wasn't easy for her to overcome the culture and language barriers and find a job in Taiwan. Some people advised her that since her husband had left her, she could simply return to Uruguay. But, for the sake of her children, she decided to stay in Taiwan and work at odd jobs to raise them.

Last year, she accidentally scalded herself and came to the Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center for treatment. She didn't have enough money to pay the medical bills herself—lacking Taiwanese citizenship, she was ineligible for Taiwan's national health insurance. After learning of her situation, Tzu Chi began assisting her and her family, helping not only with her medical costs, but also with her family's living expenses and her children's school fees.

After she was discharged from the hospital, she received a referral from the local village office to work at a recycling center. After she began working there, she asked Tzu Chi to stop giving her monetary aid, even though her life was still hard. She wanted to be self-reliant. Nevertheless, volunteers continued to visit her and offer her care and love. Now our volunteers are trying to help her obtain permanent residency in Taiwan.

In life, everything is due to karmic affinities, and karmic affinities can indeed be inconceivable. When we have selfish love, a love that is restricted to only certain people, we have a lot of attachments which cause us much suffering. But Great Love—love that extends to all—can liberate us from suffering and give us true peace and joy. This love is what Tzu Chi volunteers practice as they dedicate themselves to caring for people with compassion. No matter who those people may be, they respect and love them equally and try to help them through their hard times. This is the enlightened love of a bodhisattva.

Transforming the sutra teachings into an actual path

In Keelung, Taiwan, there is a Mr. Zhu, aged 40, to whom Tzu Chi volunteers have been giving care for many years. When Mr. Zhu was young, he embraced deviant religious beliefs and became obsessed about supernatural forces. So obsessed was he that he became delusional. He developed severe auditory hallucinations and often thought people were trying to hurt him. His delusions were so real that it made him destroy his family and his neighbor's property. Eventually his mother could no longer endure his ways, and she moved away with his younger sister.

Left on his own, Mr. Zhu's situation deteriorated to the point that he could not take care of his daily needs. Sometimes, however, his symptoms would not be as severe, and during one of those times, when he felt very hungry, he suddenly remembered that Tzu Chi volunteers had once provided help to his family when his father was critically ill. With nowhere else to turn, he phoned the local Tzu Chi office for help.

That was in 2005. When Tzu Chi members in Keelung first visited him, they found him covered with filth and the house full of garbage. They tried to talk to him, but he ignored them. They knew it would not be easy to help him or guide him, but they didn't have the heart to give up on him. With love, patience, and wisdom, they visited him time and again. After a time, he finally came to trust the volunteers, and he eventually agreed to let them clean his home and take him to receive psychiatric treatment.

After some effort, our volunteers found a psychiatrist that Mr. Zhu could accept. However, they were concerned that he would not take his medication as needed. So, three times a day, they would bring the medication to his house and would leave only after he had taken it.

When his condition began to improve, his mother and sister moved back home. Our volunteers continued to visit them, hoping to further help the family get back on their feet.

From all this, we can see that in life, one misguided thought can take a person down the wrong path and lead him far astray. This can be very frightening, as we can see in Mr. Zhu's case, where he started having hallucinations and became so divorced from reality that he could no longer function day to day. At such a time, what is needed is people with the compassion and wisdom of bodhisattvas, who can guide him and help him open his heart. Then, with their upright thinking, they can gradually help him to correct his distorted views.

After around four years under the care of Tzu Chi volunteers, Mr. Zhu now is able to interact with other people, and he willingly goes with our volunteers to sort recyclables at our recycling station.

I am truly grateful to our volunteers, who serve as living bodhisattvas in this world. They not only look after their own hearts and minds, but also dedicate themselves to helping others. Without needing to be asked, they reach out to care for and guide those who are lost. With their sincere love, they win the trust of these people and become their support and refuge.

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The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings says, “Be the eyes for the blind... and set right the minds of the wayward and deluded.” It also says, “Be a source of relief, protection and support.” We can see Tzu Chi volunteers living out these verses. Fearing no hardship or difficulty, they diligently give of themselves, employing both compassion and wisdom. In so doing, they have transformed the concepts within the sutras into an actual path that they walk on.



A warm bond between doctor and patient

In life, there are all kinds of suffering which we often can do little about. Sometimes, however, our unfortunate circumstances turn out to be a situation that leads to better things. One person who experienced this was a man everyone affectionately called “Uncle A-ji.”

When Uncle A-ji, 58, was a young man, he was a member of his school baseball team. When he was in his early twenties, he developed ankylosing spondylitis, a disease of the spine. In the course of 30 years, he became more and more stooped over due to the illness. To make matters worse, a stroke aggravated his condition. He had difficulty breathing and even lost consciousness several times. In October 2001, he was urgently transferred to our Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital.

I was taken aback by Uncle A-ji’s appearance the first time I saw him. His spine had curved to an angle of over 100 degrees, making him unable to raise his head, eat, or speak. His jaw touched his chest, his tongue stuck out, and as a result saliva would keep flowing out of his mouth. Unable to move about, he could only lie in bed. Seeing him like this, my heart really went out to him.

At Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, Dr. Chien Jui-teng (陳其騰) was able to save Uncle A-ji’s life after performing a neck operation. How to proceed with treatment, however, was a dilemma for Dr. Chien. The nature of Uncle A-ji’s condition meant a very arduous and painstaking treatment process. Should any small step go wrong, he could die. Dr. Chien felt tremendous pressure and was not sure whether to take the risk. Uncle A-ji, however, said to him, “Don’t worry, doctor. I have faith in you.” Seeing his resolve to undergo the treatment and endure whatever pain it would entail, Dr. Chien could not help but have great respect for him.

Alleviating a patient’s suffering takes not only a good relationship between doctor and patient, but also a doctor with both humanity and great skills. Besides treating Uncle A-ji like family, Dr. Chien treated his illness as his “teacher.” He continually researched Uncle A-ji’s case and devoted considerable time and effort to conducting the proper treatment. Through his efforts, Uncle A-ji is now able to lie down flat, stand up, and even walk. In essence, he has been given a new life.

Indeed, when I saw Uncle A-ji a few months later, I almost did not recognize him, so much had he changed. When he was first hospitalized, he could not talk, so the hospital staff gave him a

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thick notepad for him to write down what he wanted to say. When I went through the notepad, I was deeply touched by the warm interactions between the medical team and the patient. I was deeply moved by the love and care shown by our medical team.

Uncle A-ji was very grateful to Dr. Chien for freeing him from an illness that had tormented him for so long. He frequently served as a volunteer at the hospital when he returned for follow-up checkups. He even printed some name cards and used them to introduce himself to people. He told them of the treatment he had gone through in the hope of helping patients with the same condition. Uncle A-ji later moved into a nursing home in Tainan. Because there was some distance between the nursing home and Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, he could not visit the hospital as often as he wanted. Cooped up in such a small space, he began to feel depressed. Learning of this, our medical team and volunteers began caring for him again. Dr. Chien and his family also visited him. Their visits helped lift his spirits.

Our volunteers discovered that Uncle A-ji was good at drawing, so they encouraged him to draw illustrations for Jing Si Aphorisms as a way to educate children. His arms were stiff and powerless, and he had double vision caused by the stroke. Even drawing a straight line was very challenging to him. Yet he overcame his physical limitations and did his best. On April 6, he held an exhibition at Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital. He donated all the proceeds from the sale of his paintings to Tzu Chi.

When the body is ill, besides the need for good doctors, the patient also needs to have considerable willpower and inner strength—only with both can the patient complete treatment and be freed of suffering. When the mind and spirit are ill, the medicine that is needed is the Dharma. Uncle A-ji not only faced his illness with courage, but he also learned the Dharma, as we can see in his drawings. His inner strength and resilience has enabled him to live out a new life.

I truly hope that from these stories of people's suffering, we can realize how blessed we are, and with gratitude make the most of our lives to benefit others. We must furthermore try to understand more deeply the root causes of suffering, so that we do not create more seeds of suffering through our wrong actions.

All accomplishments come from efforts accumulated through time. I am very grateful to Tzu Chi volunteers for their dedication these 43 years. With sincere love untainted by selfishness, they have given of themselves to Tzu Chi's Four Missions and Eight Dharma Footprints. On this path, their every thought has been sincere and upright, their every step steady and solid. That is what has made possible the Tzu Chi of today, with members around the world who are living out the Tzu Chi spirit of love in their families and their societies.

Tzu Chi has now entered into its 44th year. I hope that as Tzu Chi volunteers, we will all carefully look after our hearts and minds, making sure we are indeed moving forward in our spiritual cultivation. At the same time, we must seize every second to walk on the Bodhisattva Path diligently, with solid steps, making sure that our direction is correct. Let us cultivate ourselves with a pure and uncomplicated heart and give of ourselves with gratitude. May we, with compassion and wisdom, help heal the suffering in the world. In this, let us always be

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mindful!

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Translated by Teresa Chang and Jing Si Abode Translation Team

Его "[Учет продуктов питания в бюджетных учреждениях](#) "; трюмы были полны не чернокожими, а белой слоновой костью, желтым "
[Учет продукции на складе средствами программы 1С:Предприятие на примере ООО 'Альтаир'](#)
"; золотым песком и страусовыми перьями.

Казалось, Чиун "[Учет производства и реализации готовой продукции](#) "; просто вышел прогуляться.

И никто не "[Учет производственной деятельности](#) "; знает, что такое Пасадена и что такое "
[Учет производственных запасов](#)
"; Калифорния.

Уселись они прочно на "[Учет производственных запасов на примере ОАО 'Ижевское'](#)
"; наших местах, а теперь попробуйте заставьте-ка их "
[Учет производственных запасов](#)
"; снова
[Учет производственно-хозяйственной деятельности предприятия](#)
"; обратиться на "
[Учет производственных запасов в строительных организациях на примере 'ООО СтройДом'](#)
"; свои голые горы или равнины!

Если бы я совершил что-нибудь бесчестное, "[Учет производственных запасов](#) "; я бы ни за что не признался,-сказал сапер Водичка.

Даже у нас на Земле изобретение стоящее, а здесь прямо-таки бесценное.

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