

## Addressing the Suffering in Our World: A Brief Overview of Tzu Chi

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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In a conversation with visitors from the Buddhist Japanese humanitarian organization, Rissho Kosei-kai, Dharma Master Cheng Yen explains the thinking behind Tzu Chi and the work it is trying to accomplish through its four missions of [Charity](#) , [Medicine](#) , [Education](#) and [Culture](#) . Below is an excerpt of this conversation, compiled into English.

With Tzu Chi being only in its fourth decade, it is not a very old organization. What Tzu Chi has been able to accomplish in these short decades has been made possible by one thing—the pooling together of contributions from each and every person involved. Every individual and every contribution have been integral—it is these that have made Tzu Chi into what it is today.

What motivates people to dedicate their efforts to Tzu Chi is ultimately a religious spirit. In Tzu Chi, we welcome people of all religions and together everyone works as one, in great harmony. Yet our work is based upon the Buddhist principle of living out the spirit of a Buddha and carrying out the bodhisattva mission. Because of this, as we witness the hardships of others, our hearts go out to them deeply and we reach out to offer aid and care so that their suffering may be lessened or relieved.

The hardship and suffering experienced by people can mostly be attributed to poverty or illness. Our society, however, also has its share of suffering and problems. The solution to these lies in education—not only the education of our young, but of society as a whole. Relieving all of these kinds of suffering is the work that Tzu Chi is trying to do through its four missions of Charity, Medicine, Education, and Culture.

Over the years, we have broadened and deepened these four missions. We have expanded charity work worldwide—now there are Tzu Chi volunteers in over 40 countries in the world and Tzu Chi's international relief missions have brought us to over 70 countries. Through our medical mission, we have striven to make medical care widely accessible across Taiwan, establishing a network of hospitals and holding medical outreaches in remote outlying regions. In this way, our medical and charitable missions go hand in hand, and our volunteers and medical personnel work together as a team to improve the lives of patients. In addition, we also promote bone marrow donation, organ donation, and the donation of one's body for medical training.

Tzu Chi's educational and cultural missions can also be said to be interlinked. Besides imparting knowledge and developing students' minds, our deeper goal is to instill wholesome values that can guide the students' daily lives. We hope that these values become so deep a part of the students that they can be manifested in their thinking and actions in everyday life. This will create a good society, and it is where the hope for our society lies.

Every day, we carry out the work of all four missions simultaneously. Because our aspiration is

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to address the suffering of our world, until the day there is no more suffering in the world, our work will not end. In this sense, Tzu Chi's work has only just begun.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks  
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