

Tzu Chi Held First Local Volunteer Training in Nepal

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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An earthquake brought Tzu Chi volunteers onto the tormented soil of Nepal, the birthplace of Buddha. As volunteers carried out relief works, bringing love and care to disaster victims, Master Cheng Yen expressed her wish to bring Buddhism back to Buddha's homeland, Nepal. To this end, Tzu Chi's disaster relief and medical team held its very first local volunteer training seminar in Khwopa College on the 30th May. A total of 73 local volunteers attended the seminar. It is hoped that these seeds of love would take root, grow and flourish in Nepal.

First local volunteer training seminar

"What is Tzu Chi Facial Cream? Who wants to buy some of it?" asked Tzu Chi volunteer Shih Ya-chu. Nobody raised his or her hands. She continued, "Tzu Chi Facial Cream* is free." Then a lot of people raised their hands, accompanied with a ripple of laughter.
(*To put on the "Tzu Chi Facial Cream" is another way of saying putting a "smile" on the face.)

Yu Mei-yun of the program-planning committee said that while Tzu Chi volunteers bring relief and care to the residents, they also encouraged locals to volunteer themselves so they can help their fellow countrymen. She explained that this is important because every tier of Tzu Chi volunteers visits for only two weeks, which is too short. She added, "It is crucial to let locals join in the ranks of the volunteers, so that the relief work can be sustainable. To achieve this, we placed strong emphasis on the humanistic values that Tzu Chi upholds as well as share with them the stories of Tzu Chi in this first volunteer training seminar."

As a warm-up, the seminar starts with a sign language song "Happy Face" to break barriers and get to know each other. Subsequent activities include learning the Tzu Chi etiquette and listening to Master Cheng Yen's sermon and Tzu Chi stories. Tzu Chi volunteers also performed a segment of "The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings"

Due to power outage during the seminar, Shih Ya-chu was quick in handling the situation. She started telling the volunteers the origin of Tzu Chi. Tzu Chi was established based on the teachings in "The Lotus Sutra" and "The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings". Shih Ya-chu told the story about the puddle of blood**, and also the story about 30 housewives and the bamboo coin banks. Tzu Chi began with only a handful of volunteers, and today, it has chapters in 51 countries in the world. Lastly she encouraged everyone, that most Tzu Chi volunteers are not wealthy individuals as well, but volunteers who are willing to give their time and effort, to spread love to the world.



Small money, big love

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From the sharing by volunteers, everyone learned from each other. Tulsu shared, "I was very touched by volunteer Cheng-hao's introduction on 'Gratitude, Respect and Love'." Tulsu feels that gratitude is to thank and appreciate others, while respect has to be shown not only to ourselves, but to others too. To him, love is very important and has to be shown to everyone including ourselves. He hopes that he can implement all three in his daily life because he realized its importance.

To Dorje Lama, Tzu Chi's bamboo coin bank concept hit him the most. "If we save up a little everyday then it will accumulate more and more. The strength to help other people will become stronger as well," shared Dorje Lama.

According to Urusha, Tzu Chi has been helping Nepali victims since the early days after the earthquake. Although the volunteers were from different countries, they were able to provide the Nepalese not only with material items, but also with emotional help. During the small group sharing segment, he learned that love and respect is very vital. "This cycle of love can create a huge impact. Therefore, I hope that everyone can stand up and move forward. Don't stay put in this situation," urged Urusha.

"Tzu Chi began with the savings of 30 housewives. Housewives are mothers, and we know that the greatest love of all is a mother's love," Penpa shared. Out of 10 of his group members, one of them was seriously affected by the quake. Even so, these people still volunteer together with everyone else. Soon, the feeling of difficulty was gone. Penpa said, "Tzu Chi taught us to cultivate our minds. We learnt to help others and through which we will gain happiness! So all 10 of us are willing to join in the volunteering work."

"Let us pray for peace in our land, keep our hearts from sorrows and pain, bless us all with joy and hope, love and care for each one in this world..." With sincere singing of the song "Love and Care for All", the first local volunteer training seminar ended with many hearts touched.

(Report by Li Mei-ju, Ku Chi-hung, Li Lao-man in Nepal. May 30, 2015)

**Read more about the story of the puddle of blood here:

http://www.tw.tzuchi.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=302%3Ano-work-nomeal&catid=101%3Aphilosophy&Itemid=265&lang=en