

Veteran Editor Works in Tzu Chi Documentation Team For 20 Years

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Zhou Yun has been documenting the work of the Tzu Chi Foundation for 20 years. He joined the Tzu Chi Writers Group in 1993 and his passion has never diminished, whether writing with a pen or typing on a computer keyboard. At 80 years, he is an inspiration to the younger members; he helps them patiently and carefully and never loses his temper.

His home is in a quiet alley in Taichung, central Taiwan. The open air house has become a recharging station for volunteers of the foundation's Documentation Team. At 80, Zhou is gentle in his action and speech; he carries out his duties with reason and common sense, which is why everyone calls him 'Father Zhuo'.

He joined the writers group for two main reasons. First, having worked at a radio station for 35 years, he had extensive editing, interviewing and writing skills. Second, he was recommended by his wife Lee Ling.

With a military background, Zhuo Yun had rich experience in life; he was not passionate about religion. But he is deeply influenced by the traditional Chinese cultural teachings of Confucius. He has taken as his ideology in life the words of the Sage in The Great Together: "respect the elderly as you respect your own parents and grandparents and love children like your own."

After joining Tzu Chi, he came to realize that Master Cheng Yen's teachings are more encompassing than those of The Great Together. They include not only the large picture of life covered by Confucianism but also daily acts of charity. He was deeply moved by the acts of kindness and compassion he witnessed in Tzu Chi; this prompted him to start contributing his talents as a writer to the foundation.

In the summer of 1995, with the members of the Central Region Cultural Publicity group, Zhuo went to Hualien to help record and document the activities of a five-day Tzu Ching training camp. He joined lectures and volunteered at Tzu Chi hospital with Tzu Chings. During his time at the hospital, he was touched by the goodness in the interactions between doctors, patients, and the volunteers. Since then, he has been an essential member of the documentation team when his group of volunteers reports large camps at Hualien.



When the massive earthquake struck Taiwan on September 21, 1999, he followed Tzu Chi's disaster relief team to Puli, Nantou to assess the situation and interview the victims. In 2003, volunteers from overseas came to Taiwan to witness completion of Tzu Chi's "Hope Project" where schools were rebuilt for the earthquake victims. From Tzu Chi's Guandu Complex in Taipei city all the way to Hualien, he accompanied the overseas volunteers, meticulously covering the touching stories they had shared and turning them into a heart-warming chapter of Tzu Chi history.

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That same year, he brought his wife into Tzu Chi; together they contributed their time and effort in the Tzu Chi's Documentation Team.

Fostering talent on the front line and behind the scenes

In 2004, after the foundation encouraged implementation of local community volunteering programs, the role of the Media Coverage team become more significant. Taking the form of three-in-one (articles, pictures and videos), the Media Coverage team branched out into local communities and worked hard to cover stories from all walks of life. Besides proof-reading, composing electronic thank-you cards and selecting articles for Tzu Chi publications, Zhuo was also actively involved in teaching young volunteers writing skills during local community group study meetings.

In addition, Lee Ling has superb writing ability. Her involvement has greatly improved the standard of the media coverage. By helping to edit the work of his "prized" student Lee Ling, Zhuo has earned the title of "make-up artist" in article writing.

After 2010, Zhuo gradually felt his stamina declining. He started to take on a more behind-the-scene role; he continued to accompany and provide guidance to young, aspiring volunteer writers. He provides detailed advice and explanations to writers and has helped nurture many young talents in the process.



Despite moving behind the scenes, he does not rest. He and his wife continue to attend Central Region's Media Coverage team meetings and group studies each month. He also continues to accompany new volunteer writers in covering local volunteer activities. Their articles are often mediocre; but he is always able to find their good points and finds something to praise.

"Your knowledge of literature is not bad, there are just some minor mistakes....," he tells them softly, as if he is worried he might scare them away. "Mistakes in punctuation are very common in writing. Articles written by others in Tzu Chi Monthly Magazine, Da Ai TV and other publications are very good references, try reading more of those. You can write about any touching stories that happen around you. You will definitely improve if you write more..."

Discovering one's character through personal interaction

His walking has turned from light and swift to slow and limp. His vision has become blurred and his reading glasses seem to grow thicker each day, after years of editing and proof-reading. Nonetheless, he does not delay in passing down his knowledge to the younger generation. He continues to strive to improve the quality of the Media Coverage volunteers and, at the same time, to pass down his editing skills to the next generation.

"You can learn more about your own weaknesses in writing through editing the work of others."

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In his humble opinion, he feels that he is the one who is growing and improving through editing articles written by others.

His bi-weekly sessions with the volunteer writers have improved their writing skills. In these sessions, volunteers do peer assessments of each other's work. He encourages the volunteers to learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses, in order to write articles that are smooth and concise. Through this, the volunteers also realize that the job of an editor can be very tiring. Zhuo never loses his temper and never blames the volunteers. Instead, his love and tolerance towards new volunteers makes them more diligent and inspires them to work harder and improve their literary skills.

Through Zhuo's careful guidance, volunteer Zhang Mei-ling does not feel pressurized any more when she writes articles. "When I first started writing, I would literally write out every single word that the interviewee said. I do the same when I'm recording the content of activities. After a few editing sessions with Father Zhuo, I have finally grasped the secret of success in writing great articles." Now Mei-ling is responsible for documenting and writing up volunteer activities. Because of Father Zhuo's encouragement, she is determined to turn every touching daily encounter into a heart-warming article.

Volunteer Lin Mei-Hong was glad that she can be under Zhou's guidance. She reminisces on the time when she first took on the responsibility to document volunteer activities five to six years ago: "At that time there was huge pressure. I was worried that the articles were not written well due to the rush. I am glad Father Zhuo accompanied and encouraged me along the way. It really helped me overcome my stress and restlessness. He is truly our greatest support!"

A senior at home is a treasure

"Having a senior at home is like having a treasure." Zhuo's gentleness and the rashness of his wife complement one another in an interesting way. They often argue over little things; Zhuo smiles and does not fight back. His gentlemanly demeanor, together with his wisdom and forgiveness, really set a good role model for the rest of the Media Coverage team.

Time flies while Zhuo Yun helps the younger generation behind the scenes. To him, the opportunity to document the history of Tzu Chi is a contribution he is honored to make.

Chinese

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