

What a Good Way to Educate Doctors

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The Tzu Chi Medical College, established in 1994, was the only medical college in Eastern Taiwan in that era. Towards years-end, Ms. Hui-min Lin from Changchun made a call to the office of the college principal offering to donate her body for anatomical training in the medical college's dissection class. With a letter of authorization signed on January 1, 1995, she became the first bodhisatva to offer her body to [Tzu Chi University](#). She later passed away on February 3rd, and her body was used in June of 1996. She was the first silent mentor, and was made available to third year medical students during 1996.

[Master Cheng Yen](#) was very touched by Ms. Lin's noble deed. She then appealed to others to follow a similar path to offer their bodies for medical education purposes after death. Since then, the dead have been referred to as 'anatomy teachers' and 'silent mentors' who preach the dharma. In 1995, a total of 387 individuals pledged their donation. With the idea getting more and more acceptable to the public, as of the beginning of 2009 the number of volunteers pledging their bodies to Tzu Chi University has exceeded 24,000.

As of 2008, a total of 266 individuals have their aspiration realized for becoming an anatomy teacher for medical students; of these, 179 were used by third year students and 87 were for simulated surgery classes by sixth/seventh year interns. In addition, with the consent from donors and/or donors' families, and after appropriate memorial services by Tzu Chi, some 295 anatomy teachers were transferred to five other medical colleges in Taiwan.

Some of the great anatomy teachers are Tzu Chi volunteers such as shipping tycoon Chun-jiat Lee, Professor Tsan-hui Chen who is a Christian, resident Master De-En from the Jing Si Abode. There are, of course, many others who may be Buddhists, Dharma Masters, Christians, Atheist, etc., from Taiwan, with the youngest aged 14 years, and the oldest 94. In addition, there are some who came from as far away as Japan.