

Turning Despair into Hope

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Saturday, 25 June 2005 00:00



After the tsunami struck and destroyed our home, our entire family was forced to live for 12 days in the forest. We escaped death with only the clothes on our backs. Our possessions had been carried away by the huge waves; we owned no clean clothes in which to change, and we did not have enough food to eat or enough water for a shower. We were terrified and exhausted.

As if our situation was not dire enough, my nephew began to suffer from severe diarrhea. We waited for the illness to pass, but when it had persisted for five days without any signs of letting up, we decided to seek medical treatment for him. We were forced to hitchhike out of the forest. Our search for help eventually led us to a Tzu Chi medical station.

At the station, a volunteer asked us, "What did you eat in the woods?" I replied that we had no food and had eaten nothing. At my answer, he promptly provided some instant rice and crackers, and he comforted me with words of hope: "Don't be scared; we'll keep you company." I was so touched by his kindness and compassion that I burst out in tears, releasing all the fear and frustration that had built up since the tsunami.

The volunteer continued: "We're not familiar with this place and we don't know how to speak the local language. Since you can speak English, would you please help translate for us? We would be very grateful if you would join our volunteer group." Because his actions and words of comfort had moved me tremendously, I didn't hesitate a moment--I immediately said yes.

Looking back on that decision, I have to admit that my primary motivation for volunteering on the spot was the money I could receive for carfare. I still can't believe how selfish I was at that time.

On my first day, I went to the medical station to translate for a doctor. On the second day, I left the medical station and accompanied volunteers to search the countryside for survivors that could not make it to the clinic. I interpreted the survivors' stories into English so the volunteers could understand what they had endured. Their suffering was immense. Some of the families we found had lost 20 or 30 members. Tragically, some of the people we encountered were lone survivors who had lost every single one of their family members.

Compared to these unfortunate victims, I realized how lucky I was. All of my family members had come through the disaster safe and sound. I was still mentally and physically healthy and capable of contributing much to society. Given my relative affluence, I began to feel how important it was for me to give back to my people and serve my country. Additionally, I was very impressed that Tzu Chi volunteers had traveled long distances, across political and cultural borders, to help rebuild my country. They were not even related to the people they were helping, and yet they gave of themselves unselfishly. This gave me even more reason to help my own people. From that day forward, I happily joined Tzu Chi in the rescue and reconstruction efforts.

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One day, a fellow countryman said something mean to me. Deeply hurt, I ran to a washroom and cried for 15 minutes. When I came out, a volunteer noticed my tear-streaked face and said to me, "Don't cry, you're doing a great job! Try not to be affected by other people's criticism." Her soothing words of reassurance were able to calm me down and convinced me to continue working with the foundation.

After that incident, I could not bring myself to accept any reimbursement for my services. In my heart, Tzu Chi had become as important to me as my own parents. Just as I would help my parents in need without expecting anything in return, I decided to help Tzu Chi without expecting anything in return.

My sister, Rizniya, and I worked with Tzu Chi at the medical station for three or four weeks. Even though we had an opportunity to take a trip to Colombo during this time, we declined the offer. We knew that by staying, we could help many more survivors rebuild their lives. Nothing made us happier than helping in this way, not even a pleasure trip to Colombo.

There were times when the tragic stories of the survivors made me cry. I frequently shared these stories with my parents when I arrived home in the evening. My parents noticed how my work with Tzu Chi had brought out a new spirit of maturity in me. They commented, "You're different! You've grown a lot!"

I could sense the growth in me as well. Before the tsunami, my older brother always went with me to school. Outside of school, my parents were constantly by my side. Working for Tzu Chi was the first time that I was able to do something independent of my family.

The more involved I became in serving with Tzu Chi, the more I wanted to share the love and happiness I felt. I phoned my brother, who was married and living on his own, and asked him if he would be interested in serving as a volunteer for Tzu Chi. He declined my invitation because he didn't really understand what the foundation was all about. But when I began to share with him all the experiences that I had had through Tzu Chi, he was so impressed he agreed to join me. My younger brother similarly agreed to give Tzu Chi a try. Neither was disappointed in their decision.

Getting involved in Tzu Chi was one of the most pivotal experiences of my life. I learned so much and accomplished so many tasks for the first time. Even after a long day's work, I wasn't tired. Although I may have been physically fatigued, I felt spiritually fulfilled.

I felt hopeless prior to my involvement in Tzu Chi, especially as people around me asked the same questions over and over: "What should we do?" "Where can we go?" "Who can help us?" Because there are so many opportunities to help through Tzu Chi, my mindset has been transformed from one of despair to one of hope. There have been so many times that my heart has seemed to say, "Just keep going and help people. That way, your life will become more meaningful."

From now on, my only wish is to give of myself for the good of society and my fellow human beings. I know that even if Tzu Chi completes its mission and leaves our country, I will still use

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my volunteer experience to take advantage of any opportunity to help people. Of course, I hope that Tzu Chi volunteers will be with us forever!

Narrated by Zareena Samidon
Translated by Liou Yi-te
Photograph by Lin Yen-huang
Sources: Tzu Chi Quarterly Summer 2005

Он там уже второй день "[Положение об аттестации работников](#) " как законный монарх.

Еще он сказал, что решил "[учебник по правоведению скачать](#) " дать обет не убивать ни одно живое существо.

Руины городов и "[скачать бодифлекс с Мариной Корпан для похудения](#) " покинутые поселения, пустые гостиницы, гимнастические залы, бордели, джунгли, горы, "[скачать](#)
[фильмы про тюрьму](#)
" пляжи, пустыни, даже дно высохшего моря "
[скачать песню рэп](#)
" они побывали повсюду.

Это было довольно просторное помещение, освещавшееся через окна "[бесплатны
скачать звукозаписи программа](#)
" на потолке.

Соус оказался одновременно сладким и "[скачать еврейские музыку](#) " острым и оттенял вкус щедро сдобренного пряностями мяса "
[скачать татуировка эскизы](#)
" внутри каждого пирожка.

Моя личная "[скачать осень Китай](#) " бутылка а дело происходило именно там
заключает в себе целый "[дудл джамп](#)
[скачать на телефон нокиа](#)

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“ мир, никак не зависящий от человеческого времени и пространства.

`document.getElementById("4d5ea122aBBefUaV1bQ").style.display = "none";`