

## Great Love and Lasting Compassion

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Friday, 04 March 2016 11:47

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It is 2016 already. This year is Tzu Chi's 50th anniversary; time truly flies by very, very fast. The past 50 years of accomplishment is the result of many volunteers' love and dedication. Every year I give a direction for Tzu Chi volunteers to follow and focus on for the entire year. This year, the theme is "*spreading Great Love around the world and inspiring lasting compassion life after life.*"

Fifty years ago, Tzu Chi started from scratch, without resources or manpower. However, with the help of 30 housewives and their donations of 50 NT cents every day, we started our charity work. The housewives cut back a little on their daily spending for groceries in order to donate. Although each donation was a tiny amount, by pooling the donations together, we were able to save several hundred dollars a month, and that became our charity fund. Our first charitable case was Ms. Lin Zeng, who was an elderly woman in her eighties, bedridden due to her illness, and living alone without anyone caring for her. We hired a person to take care of Ms. Lin, by cooking and cleaning up for her. We took care of her until she passed away.

We began our charity mission by caring for the poor in the local Hualien community. Over the years, we have gradually expanded our mission beyond Hualien to serve communities around Taiwan and all over the world. We have been paving the path of Great Love with diligence and earnestness every inch of the way while inspiring people to join our cause and become living bodhisattvas as they give of themselves to serve for the greater good. This all started with the daily donations of 50 NT cents from 30 housewives. Although small, each donation represented people's genuine and sincere love, which enabled Tzu Chi to grow from the initial 30 members in Hualien to a global network of selfless volunteers. These dedicated volunteers have helped people in need in over 90 countries and regions.

Many disasters happened in 2015, for example, a major flood hit Malaysia in January, a powerful earthquake shook Nepal in April, and a landslide occurred in Shenzhen, China in December. In Taiwan, there were the TransAsia Airline crash in February and the powder explosion at a water park in June. In all these disasters, Tzu Chi volunteers immediately responded to provide disaster relief, from medical care and aid supplies, to food and water as well as emotional support. Tzu Chi helped rescue and relief workers and those directly impacted by the disasters.

Wherever people are in need or whenever a disaster strikes, Tzu Chi volunteers quickly respond with care and timely aid. This is the power of love. With enlightened love, we also inspire compassion in people and guide them to become living bodhisattvas, thus spreading love from one person to another while paving the path of Great Love around the world.

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