

A Classroom of Humanistic Culture, a Palace for Children

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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An earthquake is without mercy, it has destroyed their community. It has left children with no means to go to school. They spend the whole day in makeshift tents, with nothing to do. Tzu Chi volunteers set up humanities classes, bringing not only care and concern but also happiness and humanistic values to the youngsters. In the morning, they taught Jing Si (Still Thoughts) Aphorisms. In the afternoon, they bring the children out for hands-on activities. Facilitated by six young local volunteers, they led the children in collecting rubbish around the tent area and recycle them.

Jing Si Aphorism taught for first time in the tents

The simple classroom for the humanities class is right beside the Tzu Chi free clinic. They use the foldable beds as chairs. Hung on the walls are the lyrics of the Tzu Chi song "prayer" in Nepali, English and Chinese and the banner of Tzu Chi. With this very simple setup, the class is good to go!

The lesson starts with volunteer Lin Shu-zhen teaching sign language which immediately catches the children's interest. The Jing Si Aphorism for today's class is "Those who have self-discipline are loved by all". Written in English on a piece of cardboard, young local volunteer Ria explains it in Nepali.



To find out whether the children have understood the meaning of the aphorism, Chen Ding-bang, department head of communication studies in Tzu Chi University, invited three of them to share their understandings. One of them was Aina, a girl with long hair and wearing a yellow dress. With a broad smile, she said: "I must first learn to be disciplined and then love others."

Humanities class is palace for heart of children

Most people who escaped from the earthquake are living in the tents, many of them are children. In the light of this, Xie Li-hua, a department head at the Tzu Chi College of Technology, brought many teaching materials from Taiwan, such as word cards in English and films on tablet about the story of Little Ants. The teachers use films to attract children to the classroom. At just the right moment, they would take out crayons and gather the children for drawings.

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