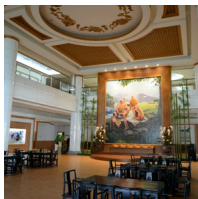


## Opens Health Screening Center in Suzhou

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Wednesday, 03 April 2013 00:00

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On March 27, the Tzu Chi Foundation opened a Health Screening Center in Suzhou, in the eastern province of Jiangsu -- a milestone in its 22-year history in mainland China. Representing the government at the opening was Chen Yunlin, chairman of the Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits; he is the most senior official in charge of cross-straits ties. He came to express his best wishes for the center.

The center took six months of preparatory work and will concentrate on preventive medicine. It is based in the Tzu Chi Suzhou Grounds.

Volunteers first arrived in the mainland in the summer of 1991, to bring relief to thousands of people affected by devastating floods in east China. In the more than 20 years since then, the foundation has spread its unconditional love to 27 provinces, cities and autonomous regions and earned widespread approval. On August 20, 2010, it became the first NGO from outside the mainland to establish a foundation in China, also in Suzhou. The opening of the health center is, with the setting up of the foundation, a milestone in Tzu Chi's history in China.



The flooding in 1991 left many people stricken with grief at the loss of family members and of homes and farmland. It also put the foundation into contact with new people, among them Chen Ronghua, former president of the Nanjing Medical University: "we should say that, after the flooding in east China, Tzu Chi did a great deal to help the survivors," he said. "In doing so, it built bridges between the two sides of the straits, especially with Jiangsu and Hunan. We have built excellent relations with them. My person opinion is that, in developing cross-strait relations, Tzu Chi has been an ice-breaker."

That year, the volunteers delivered relief goods to the disaster areas and built homes. They were especially active in Quanshu county in Anhui province, one of the worst hit areas, which is close to Nanjing city. They saw that the residents badly needed better medical facilities. So Master Cheng Yen had the idea to build a hospital in Nanjing, in the hope of bringing love to those who were suffering.

Professor Chen recalled: "at that time medical conditions in the mainland were not good. The objective was to be able to bring the best treatment." With this in mind, Master Chang Yen wanted to help the poor and the sick and promote co-operation between the two sides. The foundation asked Nanjing Medical University to train more than 560 medical students for the project.

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