

A Boundaryless Mission

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Thursday, 29 July 2010 18:11



[[Master's Teachings](#)]

On July 19, 2010, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation was officially granted Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). As one of the non-governmental organizations with such a special consultative status, Tzu Chi can attend ECOSOC meetings and other related international conferences and learn much from the experience of other NGOs. [Dharma Master Cheng Yen](#) has spoken of this as a great milestone for Tzu Chi. Below is a compilation of her thoughts on this great milestone, taken from speeches and conversations with Tzu Chi volunteers and other visitors.

With Tzu Chi given special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the scope of our mission, more than ever before, will include the entire world. It will be without boundaries. In truth, this boundarylessness of mission has always been my vision. I have always cherished the hope that the spirit of Buddhism can be manifested in every corner of the world. At its heart, Buddhism is concerned with relieving human suffering and awakening in all living beings the innate wisdom and compassion that is their true nature. This potential for wisdom and compassion, when awakened and translated into action, can transform our world. This is to transform the world by transforming the people in it.

Many people have lost sight of life's true meaning and purpose. In their ignorance, they live selfishly, and their actions harm others, the environment, and in the end, themselves. But if Buddhism's wisdom and compassion can be manifested in action, this spirit can reach and transform people's hearts. In action, this spirit is manifested as feeling others' suffering as one's very own and giving of oneself without seeking anything in return, with selfless love that embraces all people as a precious human being, no matter their race, nationality, or religion. When people live out this spirit, boundless good can be done. And others, touched by this spirit and living example, will see life with new understanding and become motivated to use their talents and energies for the good of humanity.

Within every person, there is the potential for pure wisdom, love, and compassion—wisdom, love, and compassion that is equal to the Buddha's. The Buddha, as the Awakened One, has awakened and brought forth this profound potential. In us, it lies dormant, and we do not even realize it is there.

Tzu Chi's work over the past four decades has been an effort to awaken this potential in people's hearts, by bringing people together to do works of love. One person can accomplish little; it takes a collective effort to carry out projects that can relieve suffering and improve others' lives. By gathering people together to work for a common purpose and joining together their strength, great works become possible. The more people there are, the more can be done. Through these works, the spirit of wisdom and compassion is given concrete form. The work is

A Boundaryless Mission

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Thursday, 29 July 2010 18:11

a channel that brings this spirit to people, touching their hearts and inspiring in them the same. And it is through this work that this spirit is practiced and deepened in the hearts of those doing the work.

As with all work, it had to begin somewhere. And so, over forty years ago, Tzu Chi was founded in the small rural town of Hualien, in an area that was considered the backwoods. It was a time of general poverty, and we ourselves lived in scarcity. Nevertheless, with what few resources we had, we began the work of giving aid to people in need in the small town of Hualien.



In that era of great hardship, under conditions of material and financial shortage, the scope of our work was very small. But, that work was the seed. With dedication, we worked, always holding in our hearts the Buddha's spirit of wisdom and compassion, never questioning whether our work was too little to matter. Our aspiration was very big, and what was within our means to do, we did actively, willingly, and with a joyful heart. We knew that what work we would be able to do depended on causes and conditions, and we were patient in doing what we could steadily, as we waited for causes and conditions to ripen and come together, and watched the seed grow. As people gradually noticed the work we were doing, they were moved to join us in our work. Each act of love or work of charity was hence like a brick paver laid down, paving a path. With more people, more of the path could be paved, and the path was extended further, its width broadened. Each work, done with a pure heart of wisdom and selfless love, planted a seed and created a karmic cause.

This has been our journey these forty plus years. In truth, our journey has only just begun. Buddhism is about opening the hearts of living beings so they can discover life's true meaning and walk on life's correct path, liberating themselves from suffering and afflictions. When the spirit of Buddhism reaches people's hearts, it can transform people's lives, from their inner world to their outer world. This is the mission encapsulated by the words "For Buddhism, for all living beings". This mission has no end, for wherever there are living beings, it continues.

It is a momentous mission, made possible only by the coming together of remarkable causes and conditions. As we have the karmic affinities to be a part of this, let us cherish and take hold of this precious affinity. And from now, we must train in ourselves the ability to shoulder a heavier load; and spiritually, we must broaden and deepen our spirit of selfless Great Love so we may be able to carry out this boundaryless mission.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks
Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

[Life Wisdom](#) : [07/20/2010 A Milestone in Tzu Chi's Internation Relief Work](#)