

Charity with Medicine for the Hearts

Lin Chin-Lon vs. Stephen Huang

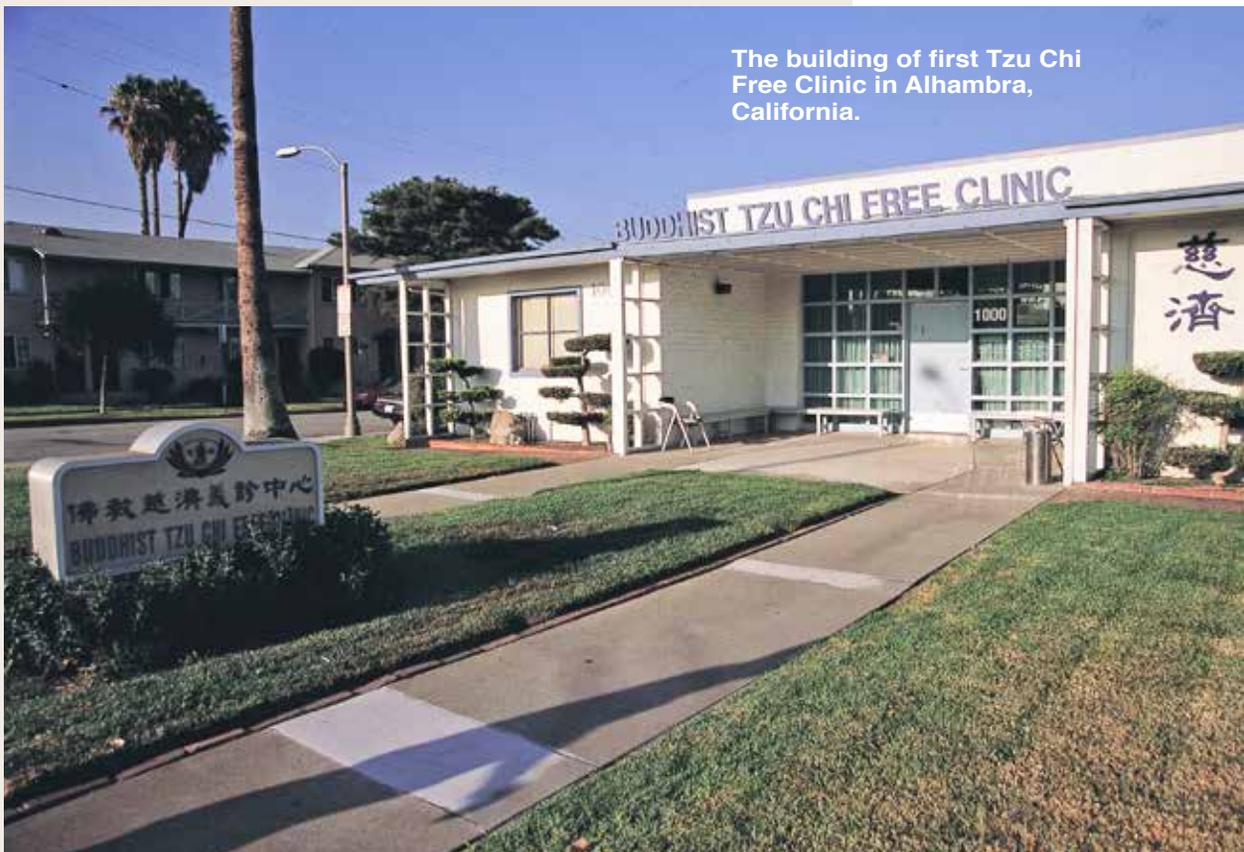


Participants of the 2016 TIMA annual convention.



Lin Chin-Lon, CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and TIMA(Tzu Chi International Medical Association), is a cardiologist, he was once the superintendent of the Northridge Medical Center in Los Angeles; Stephen Huang, Tzu Chi's Executive Director of Global Volunteers, once an entrepreneur across many countries, and was the first-term chief executive for the U.S. Tzu Chi Foundation. They two have had many good conversations and discussions on their experience with Tzu Chi from U.S. to Taiwan and to the world.

Toward the end, the chief executive officer of the Philippines Tzu Chi Foundation, Alfredo Li, in a wheelchair and accompanied by Dr. Antonio Say, Dr. Robert Sy, Dr. Josefino Qua and Commissioner Lin Shioh-Zheng. These seven followers of Dharma Master Cheng Yen for over twenty years came together to share their experience and wisdom.



The building of first Tzu Chi Free Clinic in Alhambra, California.



September 2013, Dr. Paul Terasaki (center) at the conference of the 20 anniversary of Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center, with CEO Lin Chin-Lon (right), Dr. Shinichiro Okamoto in discussion.

Founded the Free Clinic in the USA – Raise Fund and Provoke Hearts of Compassion

Lin Chin-Lon: This is my 21st year upon returning to Taiwan, we have experienced many things together. For Stephen Huang, he is always on the front line because philanthropy or charity is always on the front line and medical services follow right behind. Charity and medical services are inseparable. Our medical services follow the patients and their needs. Stephen first came back to Taiwan in 1989, then later we attended some Tzu Chi's fundraising dinner parties, together we held many activities together. Look, this is Stephen's picture with a mustache on his American driver license. Under the advice of Dharma Master Cheng Yen, he is completely changed to a different person. We will let him explain how he became a different person today.



Stephen Huang: You have seen the horrible picture of me with a mustache. As a matter of fact, I was a totally different person before. I spent a lot of money to curl my hair, worn a mustache, and I thought I was pretty handsome then. However, when I met Master Cheng Yen in 1989, I promised to have a Jing Si Hall. Whatever Taiwan had at the time, U.S. would copy, only in a much smaller scale.

Then I met Executive Dr. Lin, and I pledged, “I can’t save people with medicine so I do fundraising instead.” Thus, we did our best with all our talents and money and founded a free clinic. I know Master Cheng Yen had a tough road previously; we need a devoted doctor who understands Buddhism. Therefore, we asked Dr. Lin to help us. Dr. Lin then came back to Taiwan with no hesitation to support us 21 years ago. Thus, I really appreciate Dr. Lin’s wholehearted support.

Devoted as a Buddhist, Seized This Life Time Opportunity

Lin Chin-Lon: After graduated from college in 1970, I went to the United States and lived there for 25 years. In 1977, I had everything I wanted: a degree, a house, a wife, a son, cars, and later a grandson. Then I started studying philosophy and Buddhism. Although I worked in a hospital that belonged to the Catholic Church where nuns and priests asked me every day about the catholic philosophy, I always had different views toward Christianity. I spent much time in studying Buddhism, which requires one not only to listen, to contemplate, and to practice, but also to believe, to vow and to deliver through action. I know there are many different Christian’s hospitals; but there were none that belongs to Buddhism.

It was 1991, the first time I visited Hualien. The conversations with Dharma Master Cheng Yen opened my mind and answered many questions that I had for a long time. It changed the second half of my life. Buddhism is not without “doing”, everything Master Cheng Yen did was for Buddhism. Therefore, I promised I would



work hard for Tzu Chi after my retirement. Upon my return to Los Angeles, I founded the first Tzu Chi Free Medical Clinic in the city of Alhambra.

During the 20th anniversary of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center in 2014, Professor Paul Terasaki, known for tissue typing and organ transplant medicine, came to Taiwan to participate the anniversary and held a presentation, he visited me then. When I decided to leave Los Angeles and back to Hualien, he took me out to lunch, and said, "What's wrong with you? Why did you give up all your 25 years hard work and come here (in the US) ?" I told him, "I am a Buddhist; this is my only chance for my life." In 2013, he was invited to our conference, he said, "You made the right decision to come back." When I retired, the hospital held a retirement party for me; they thought my retirement would be on the beach, enjoying the sunshine. For 20 plus years, I have not been on the beach, I am here, with you all.

Attacked While Helping Others - Endure the Uncertainty of Life

Lin Chin-Lon: In 1998, we founded the International Tzu Chi Medical Association (TIMA); the same people from the old days in the Philippines are still here today. We also have a very important chief executive Alfredo Li who will share with us what he just experienced in Ormoc City about the uncertainty of life.

Alfredo Li: I am 62 years old, and have participated in Tzu Chi for 21 years (dated 2016). I have been responsible for medical surgeries in the Philippines. I helped patients on wheelchairs to the operating room. At that time, I was on wheelchair and being pushed to the operating room by someone else. I have had deep feeling about this experience.

After typhoon Hai Yen, Tzu Chi built a large Da-Ai village in the city of Ormoc, and I was responsible for the building of Da-Ai village. Since then, we have built 1,585 houses. This final phase will end next month. Every time I go to Ormoc, I will share Jing Si aphorisms with the locals. That day when I was sharing



the concept of uncertainty of life, I said something like “after this sharing, I don’t know what will happen to me”. Something happened to me soon after.

In the Philippines, it is no easy task to take a shower. We need to get water ourselves. Tzu Chi dug a well for them, so they could take showers. When I heard their joyful laughing, I ran to record the precious moments. While I was taking the pictures, I didn’t notice someone approached me from behind with a stone.



2013, Typhoon Hai Yen, volunteers from Tzu Chi joined the rescue mission. The CEO of the Philippines’ office, Alfredo Li, explained Tzu Chi to the crowd.

When he came near me, his vicious eyes were very scary. It was a very unusual pair of eyes. He hit me with the stone, and then hit me with his fist. I fell down. When I got up again, he tried again. I pushed him away, and then the neighbors came to help and took me to the hospital for examination.

On my way to hospital, I felt the physical pain but it was not too bad. The real pain was in my heart. These two years, we came here so many times and spent so much energy. Our goal is to provide a better life for the villagers. I don't understand why this happened. The villagers were sad and felt guilty, because they thought they didn't protect me. I remember when we ran into many problems with Hai Yen Typhoon, Dharma Master Cheng Yen said, "We are Buddhist, and volunteers, we went there in our own will. No one asks us to go, we want to go ourselves. We can't complain when we encounter something bad."

Alfredo Li (left 1) accompanied by Philippines' Tzu Chi doctors: Antonio Say (left 3), Robert Sy (left 4), Dr. Josefino Qua (right 1) Lin Shiow-Zheng (left 2), and Stephen Huang(right 2), sharing his experience about the attack.



Forgive Others and Treat Yourself Well, Do Tzu Chi Till the Last Breath

Alfredo Li: I kept thinking if I had to retreat because of this incident, I would regret for the rest of my life. Therefore, I must overcome this fear. I forgive the person who attacked me. He is not guilty because he has mental issues. Dharma Master Cheng Yen said, “Forgive others means taking care of your own self.” The next day, Master Dar Cheng called me and told me that Dharma Master Cheng Yen is very concerned about my wellbeing that I should go back to Tzu Chi’s hospital for further treatment. I promised that I would go back to Taiwan next day. But my wife and my son were opposed. They said, “Dad, here is more convenient, because we are all nearby. If you go back to Taiwan, we can’t take care of you.” I said to them, “It is because of Dharma Master Cheng Yen, she is my mother in my mind, whatever she said, I will listen and follow. If I go back to Taiwan, she would feel better.”

I arrived at Taipei Sung Sun Airport, and immediately saw the head of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital Dr. Lin Shinn-Zong, Dean of Tzu Chi medical school Yang Jen- Hung and other medical staff. We arrived in Hualien at 6 pm that day, there were already a medical team ready for me. Quickly, they performed all the examinations and arranged surgery the next morning in less than 24 hours. I really appreciated Tzu Chi medical team’s high efficiency. Plastic Surgeon Dr. Wang Chien-Hsing did a great job. I wished my “black eyes” would not disappear so fast that you’ll see that I’m injured on the face now.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen had said, “Tzu Chi appreciates your effort to help. ” During my recovery period from the surgery, many of these doctors and nurses, and volunteers came to visit. I felt that I was surrounded by warmth and love. I was very touched. It is worthwhile to be a volunteer in Tzu Chi for 21 years. I promise I will dedicate myself to Tzu Chi until my last breath.

(Content from the 2016 TIMA annual convention)

