

佛國慈悲行紀

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尼泊爾以兩大高峰聞名於世，一是全球最高的喜馬拉雅山脈，二是人類最高靈性智者之一佛陀的故鄉，也是佛教的發源地，每年吸引許多遊客前來。然而，居住在這片土地上的人民，千百年來卻過著窮苦的生活；2015 年 4 月 25 日的一場大地震，使得這種困頓的情形更為加劇。

作為佛教團體，慈濟基金會在獲知訊息的第一時間，立刻召集志工，組織賑災團隊，並於地震發生兩天後前往尼泊爾。首梯賑災醫療十五位團員中有五位醫護人員，隨行攜帶一點四公噸的醫療用品及賑災物資趕赴救急。此行並不容易，由於當地沒有慈濟志工，無法事先確認種種賑災事宜；雖然慈濟在 1993 年尼泊爾水患後，曾於馬克萬普、勞特哈特及薩拉衣等三縣為災民援建一千八百戶永久屋，但交屋之後，即斷了聯繫。二十二年後，慈濟重返這片土地，幸而透過尼泊爾前科技部長卡夏·曼·釋迦的協助，賑災團成員抵達當日，得以拜會當地政府官員，說明慈濟此次救援的目的與行動，得到官方的協助與指導，並幸運地在抵達隔日便取得醫療許可證。

從 5 月到 8 月，災後一百多天的日子裡，慈濟有近百位醫護人員前

往尼泊爾賑災、義診，超過一萬五千位傷患獲得治療。而當地醫療人員受到慈濟醫護人員的愛心鼓舞，也開始籌設尼泊爾的「慈濟國際人醫會」，加入這項慈濟從1996年創立，現今在二十三個國家地區進行的國際醫療服務。

5月中某個夜裡，突來的一場暴雨，讓加德滿都災區的慈濟義診站帳篷幾乎倒塌，當地居民不顧自家的帳篷也可能瀕臨傾倒，趕忙在豪雨中用手撐扶慈濟義診站的帳篷，整整淋了將近兩小時的大雨。

這景象讓團員們見證到當地居民感受到慈濟醫療人員的愛心關懷，從而感恩回饋的行動。

雖然醫療義診取得居民信任，但第一週團員們即感覺到在尼泊爾賑災的困難。難處之一便是要取得當地政府認同，及通過購買物資的評估耗時過久，影響發放的進度。於是印尼慈濟分會出面協助，協調印尼軍機從雅加達載送物資到加德滿都，十四位志工隨行帶著超過六十個軍用帳篷抵達，並為當地居民提供熱食。全球志工分工合作，印尼志工負責購買物資，而來自臺灣、馬來西亞及美國的志工們則向政府確認巴塔普災區需要物資關懷的鄉親名單。從5月10日臺灣的浴佛節開始進行第一次物資發放，共有兩萬五千多位鄉親

收到物資及關懷，截至8月底已逾二十萬位鄉親受益。在急難救援階段，慈濟也提供臨時避難所，安置數百戶當地居民。

當急難救援階段告一段落，慈濟開始思考中長期的援建計畫。經統計，尼泊爾因地震損毀的教室計三十九萬間，其中包含高中及大學等校舍。慈濟志工先行前往加德滿都當地的學校勘察評估，同時由來自臺灣、馬來西亞的營建專家與透過印尼慈濟志工黃榮年介紹的尼泊爾實業家納瑞許·杜加的專業營建公司合作援建。

杜加的女兒蘇莉絲汀因為受到感動而加入慈濟志工的行列，一起為受災鄉親服務。在尼泊爾傳統種姓制度的文化裡，「婆羅門」身分的她不應碰觸底層「賤民」，可是她卻親自為他們投藥除頭蝨，這是前所未有，也是慈悲的力量超越了各種隔閡的展現。

自地震起將近四個月的時間，證嚴上人幾乎每天親自主持視訊連線會議，與身處尼泊爾的慈濟志工們討論賑災事宜，提供他們和納瑞許先生、尼爾蒂斯醫師、馬坤達先生、勝偉醫師、葛雷神父等當地朋友們慈悲的洞見。這次成功的賑災行動，應歸功於上人的慈悲與智慧引導，以及來自臺灣、印尼、馬來西亞、美國及中國大陸等不

同國家地區的志工，在慈善、醫療、教育、人文及建築等領域發揮專長，以共同的理念、感恩的心情，合作無間地付出。他們自行負擔旅費，至少在當地待上兩週，為尼泊爾受災鄉親付出他們的慈悲與愛。

來自地方與尼泊爾中央政府的支持，更是對慈濟在緊急救助及重建計畫上有顯著的幫助。值得一提的是，巴塔普的地方首長在當地報紙上刊登慈濟賑災發放物資受惠者名單，展現慈濟賑災的透明度與當地政府負責任的態度。

TZU CHI FOUNDATION

其實，讓慈濟志工最感動的是尼泊爾當地受災的鄉親。身為佛國子民，他們表現出一分純真的心，即使是在最艱困的時候，從未失去笑容與感恩心，許多人協助賑災，無論是投入慈濟志工的行列或是參與援助專案的規畫，他們都歡喜付出，樂天助人；他們是慈濟的好朋友，更是慈濟的家人們。

本書的出版，旨在表揚所有為尼泊爾地震苦難而付出的在地與全球的志工們，我們由衷地相信且期待，經歷這場世紀性的災難後，這群志工們展現出來的慈悲力量，將為尼泊爾鄉親帶來光明的新希望。

RETURNING WITH COMPASSION TO THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHPLACE

There are two peaks in Nepal. One is the mighty Himalayas and the other a pinnacle of human civilization -- Buddhism. Nepal is the birthplace of the Buddha. As such, it attracts thousands of tourists; but, for many centuries, her people have been living in poverty and suffering. When a devastating earthquake struck Nepal in April 25, 2015, living conditions became even worse for them.

As a Buddhist organization, Tzu Chi Foundation inspired its volunteers and they departed for Nepal two days after the earthquake. Fifteen of them, including five medical doctors, brought 1.4 tonne of medicine and relief materials; they hoped to provide immediate support to the victims of the earthquake. Tzu Chi's mission to Nepal was no simple matter; it had no prior connection to the country – except for one project in 1993. The foundation built 1,800 permanent homes for the survivors of severe flooding in the Makwanpur, Rautahat and Sarlahi districts. After that, it ended all its relationships in the country. Therefore, the volunteers were particularly grateful that Dr. Keshab Man Shakya, former Minister of Science, Technology, and the Environment, met us the moment arrived at the airport of Kathmandu. He introduced us to local government officials that very day, to let them know our principles and motivation in coming to support the survivors of the earthquake. It was also an opportunity for us to ask for their support and advice. It was really fortunate that, on the very next day, we received permission to conduct medical clinics.

From May to August, over a period of more than 100 days, Tzu Chi sent nearly 100 doctors and nurses to provide medical services to over 15,000 patients. The love and compassion of Tzu Chi doctors inspired many local physicians to organize the TIMA in Nepal. That is the Tzu Chi International Medical Association that was established in 1996 and has since worked in over 23 countries and regions.

In mid-May, a major monsoon hit Kathmandu. During the night, the heavy rain almost overturned the medical tents which Tzu Chi had set up in the resettlement areas. Despite the rain, the residents came out to protect these tents with their own hands for almost two hours – disregarding the fact that their own tents might have collapsed. This story shows how much they were touched by the care and compassion of Tzu Chi’s medical personnel.

The first week in Nepal was difficult for the volunteers. It took time to earn the trust of local government officials. It also involved long-term negotiations and evaluation to purchase the relief materials they needed. It was the branch in Indonesia that made the breakthrough; they worked with the Indonesia military to arrange a military cargo aircraft which flew directly from Jakarta to Kathmandu. It brought 14 volunteers of the foundation and more than 60 military tents. They started to cook hot meals for those living in the tents. The volunteers from Indonesia were responsible for purchasing relief materials. The other volunteers, from Taiwan, Malaysia and the United States, were responsible for negotiations with city officials regarding name lists of people eligible to receive relief distribution in the city of Bhaktapur. In Kathmandu, Tzu Chi started its first distribution on May 10, the Buddha Day in Taiwan. More than 25,000 people received the relief materials. As of August, over 200,000 people have received Tzu Chi’s relief goods. During this stage of emergency relief, Tzu Chi also built tents as temporary shelters for hundreds of families.

As the stage of emergency relief came to an end, the foundation started to think about and plan relief for the medium term, as well as long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. The earthquake ruined more than 390,000 classrooms; Tzu Chi volunteers first considered reconstruction of

schools in Kathmandu, including high schools and colleges. The foundation sent architects from Taiwan and Malaysia; they worked with a construction company owned by local entrepreneur Mr. Naresh Dugar. Mr. Dugar joined Tzu Chi's relief work in June; he was introduced by Indonesian volunteer, Mr. Frank Huang. He and all the members of his family devoted their energy to Tzu Chi's mission in Nepal.

One of his daughters, Ms. Shristi Dugar, joined the volunteers in cleaning lice from the heads of residents. She belongs to the caste of Brahmin, who are forbidden to touch people known as Dalit; they are the lowest caste, considered 'untouchable' in the traditional Hindu system. Despite this ban, Shristi touched and cleaned the head lice from Dalit people. That was seen as unprecedented in Nepali society; it shows how the power of compassion can break the barriers of caste and ethnicity.

Almost every day during the four months since the earthquake struck, Dharma Master Cheng Yen held a video conference with volunteers in Nepal. She gave instructions, insights and compassion to all the volunteers and local friends, including Mr. Naresh Dugar, Doctor Nirdesh Shakya, Mr. Mukunda Bista, Doctor Sarvesh Gyawali and Father Gregory Sharkey. The success of the relief work has been the result of the wisdom and compassion of Dharma Master Cheng Yen and the joint efforts of volunteers from around the world, especially Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the United States and mainland China. These volunteers come from different countries and professions, including, charity, medicine, education, humanities and construction; they share one ideal – to give with gratitude and work altogether as a team. All paid their own travel costs and stayed at least two weeks -- some even more than a month -- to give their love and compassion to the suffering people of Nepal.

The support from the local and central government of Nepal also significantly contributed to Tzu Chi's emergency reliefs and rehabilitation plan. The Bhaktapur city office published in a local newspaper the names of the recipients of Tzu Chi's relief; this showed the transparency and accountability of the government of Nepal.

Finally, what impressed all the volunteers most of all has been the people of Nepal. As descendants of Buddha, they have pure and loving hearts. Even in this most devastating situation, they never forgot to smile and be grateful. Many have joined Tzu Chi's relief mission, as volunteers or participants in the relief work. They are now good friends and have become members of the Tzu Chi family.

This book aims to recognize all the love and effort of the volunteers, both local and international, for those who were victims of the Nepalese earthquake. We sincerely believe and expect that, after the tragedy of this century, these volunteers represent the strength of compassion and a new hope and enlightenment for the people of Nepal.

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